

## Exploring Self-Efficacy and Emotion Regulation as Predictors of Iraqi EFL Teachers' Burnout

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### Abstract

This study explores how emotion regulation and teacher self-efficacy influence burnout among 100 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Salah Al Dhein Governorate, Iraq. Using a convenience sampling method, participants completed standardized questionnaires assessing their emotion regulation, self-efficacy, and burnout levels. Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant relationships: emotion regulation was positively associated with self-efficacy, while both were negatively related to burnout. These results indicate that as emotion regulation and self-efficacy increase, burnout levels decrease. The findings suggest that enhancing emotional regulation techniques and reinforcing self-efficacy beliefs can help reduce burnout and improve teaching performance in the Iraqi EFL context. The study also highlights the importance of integrating emotional skills training into teacher education programs to support educators' psychological well-being and professional growth. This research contributes to the understanding of how internal psychological factors affect teaching effectiveness and underscores the need for targeted interventions in EFL environments.

*Keywords:* burnout, EFL teachers, emotion regulation, self-efficacy

### 1. Introduction

Teachers are widely acknowledged as one of the most influential factors in students' academic achievement across different educational stages (Murphy et al., 2004). They are responsible for a variety of tasks, such as organizing classroom environments, planning and delivering lessons, guiding student development, and facilitating effective learning (Mohammad Hosseinpur et al., 2024). Given the central role teachers play in educational settings, their psychological and emotional well-being is crucial. The emotional condition of teachers significantly affects the emotional climate of the classroom, which in turn influences how students perceive and respond to instruction (Fathi et al., 2021; Greenier et al., 2021; Rezaei & Mohammad Hosseinpur, 2011).

Burnout is a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, typically resulting from chronic stress in the

workplace (Maslach, 1982). It is often described as a state where individuals struggle to cope with work-related pressures, experience fatigue, and lose motivation in their professional roles (Maslach, 1982). As the teaching profession demands high levels of interpersonal interaction, emotional investment, and instructional responsibility, educators are especially at risk of developing burnout (Frenzel & Stephens, 2013).

Research has shown that various classroom stressors—such as disruptive student behavior, classroom management difficulties, and high workload—can negatively affect teachers’ sense of self-efficacy (Chang, 2009; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Mohammad Hosseinpur & Parsaeian, 2023; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Maslach proposed a widely accepted model of burnout based on the analysis of workplace interactions and social contexts (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). This model outlines three interrelated dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, which refers to feeling emotionally drained; depersonalization, which involves developing negative attitudes toward others; and reduced personal accomplishment, which reflects a decline in professional effectiveness (Chang, 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Given the impact of emotional and psychological factors on teaching performance, this study aims to examine the relationships between emotion regulation, self-efficacy, and burnout among Iraqi EFL teachers. It seeks to provide empirical evidence on how these internal psychological constructs interact within the specific educational context of Iraq, contributing to a deeper understanding of teacher well-being and professional development in EFL settings.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Emotion Regulation

In recent years, emotion regulation has become a focal point in second language (L2) education, particularly within the framework of positive psychology, as scholars seek to understand how emotional dynamics affect both teachers and learners (Wang & Guan, 2020). According to Wang and Guan (2020), emotion regulation involves the processes through which individuals influence the type, timing, and expression of their emotions, emphasizing its internal and self-regulated nature. This concept has since been broadened to include both internal strategies and external influences that individuals use to manage emotions for personal or situational purposes (Thompson et al., 2008).

Scholars generally distinguish two main forms of emotion regulation: upregulation, which involves enhancing positive emotions, and downregulation, which focuses on minimizing negative emotions (Bielak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020). In emotionally charged environments such as language classrooms, both types of regulation are essential for maintaining effective instruction and fostering constructive interpersonal relationships.

Emotion regulation can also be classified as intrinsic, where individuals manage their own emotions, or extrinsic, where one person attempts to influence another’s emotional state. While early research primarily focused on individual self-regulation, more recent studies have highlighted the significance of interpersonal or extrinsic regulation, especially in educational settings where social interactions are frequent and impactful (Barthel et al., 2018; Gkonou & Miller, 2019).

Despite growing interest, there is still limited empirical research specifically examining emotion regulation among EFL teachers. Existing studies suggest that both teachers’ and students’

emotional experiences significantly influence classroom dynamics, with positive emotions facilitating learning and negative emotions hindering it (Benesch, 2017). Cross-cultural studies from Japan, Iran, and China indicate that effective emotion regulation contributes to professional growth and psychological well-being (Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019; Yin, 2016). However, more research is needed to fully understand its role in EFL settings, particularly regarding teacher burnout and instructional performance.

## 2.2. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, defined as a person's belief in their ability to execute actions necessary to achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 2012), is a key psychological construct that influences behavior, motivation, and resilience under stress (Bandura, 2012). As a metacognitive and proactive concept, it includes processes such as self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-regulation, enabling individuals to set goals, persist through challenges, and adapt to changing circumstances (Bandura, 2012; Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

In educational settings, teacher self-efficacy plays a critical role in shaping instructional practices, classroom management, student engagement, and overall teaching effectiveness (Moè, 2016). Research shows that teachers with high self-efficacy tend to demonstrate greater commitment, motivation, and resilience, while experiencing lower levels of emotional exhaustion and burnout (Chen, 2018; Barni et al., 2019; Martin & Mulvihill, 2019; Mohammad Hosseinpour & Bagheri, 2025). Additionally, teacher self-efficacy has been linked to improved student motivation, academic performance, and emotional outcomes.

Recent studies have also highlighted its influence on various aspects of teaching quality, such as classroom climate, cognitive engagement, and emotional regulation (Bagheri Nevisi et al., 2022; Buric & Frenzel, 2019). Within the field of second language education, self-efficacy has been associated with traits like teacher grit and emotion regulation, further reinforcing its importance in promoting professional well-being and instructional effectiveness (Li et al., 2022). Fathi et al. (2021) also found that individual self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of psychological wellness than collective teacher efficacy among Iranian EFL instructors.

These findings highlight the importance of integrating self-efficacy development into teacher education and ongoing professional training, especially in high-stress environments like language teaching.

## 2.3. Burnout

Over the past decade, much of the research on teacher burnout has focused on novice teachers (Desimone et al., 2014; Muller et al., 2011), often overlooking the significant impact of stress and burnout on experienced educators. A common misconception—referred to as the “quick fix” assumption—has led to the belief that teacher retention and student achievement can be improved through generic interventions or standardized programs (Williams, 2011). Additionally, insufficient preparation for teaching has been identified as a contributing factor, with many new teachers entering the profession unprepared to handle classroom challenges, leading to early burnout and attrition.

External factors such as insufficient time, lack of resources, and inadequate compensation are frequently cited causes of teacher burnout (Martinetz, 2012). McCarthy et al. (2012) argue that

providing teachers with effective coping strategies can improve retention and build resilience. However, some policymakers continue to view teacher turnover as a lack of dedication, rather than recognizing systemic issues such as low respect, poor student behavior, and excessive accountability demands.

Governmental policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and Race to the Top (2009) have increased pressure on educators by linking teacher evaluations to high-stakes testing and rigid qualification standards (Cody, 2014). These reforms have particularly affected experienced teachers, some of whom were reassigned or left the profession due to certification requirements, despite having years of valuable experience (Kafele, 2015).

Studies indicate that such policy-driven pressures contribute to declining morale and increased burnout, especially in high-need schools where recruitment and retention are already difficult, thereby worsening educational disparities (New Jersey Department of Education, 2014; Ravitch, 2014).

#### **2.4. Related Empirical Studies**

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers face unique professional challenges that may make them more susceptible to occupational stress and higher turnover compared to other educators (Cook, 2005; Acheson et al., 2016; Swanson, 2012), highlighting the need for further research on burnout in EFL contexts (Khani & Mirzaee, 2015). Burnout is understood as a psychological response to chronic workplace stress and is characterized by three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. It has been consistently linked to factors such as teacher self-efficacy (McLean et al., 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010) and emotional intelligence (Mohammad Hosseinpur & Sarbandi Farahani, 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Recent studies have explored how various psychological constructs—such as emotional labor, emotion regulation, personality traits, and social support—influence EFL teacher burnout. For example, Fathi et al. (2019) found that emotional labor strategies and effective emotion management significantly reduce burnout levels among Iranian EFL teachers. Similarly, Pishghadam and Sahebjam (2012) found significant links between teachers' personality characteristics, emotional intelligence, and burnout dimensions.

In Turkey, Atmaca et al. (2020) found that positive emotions such as love and joy are indicators of job satisfaction and are inversely related to burnout. In China, Jiang et al. (2016) showed that workplace social support mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout, acting as a protective factor. Chan (2006) also emphasized the role of emotional regulation and emotional evaluation in reducing burnout components such as emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

Moreover, a growing body of literature confirms a strong inverse relationship between teacher self-efficacy and burnout. Sarçam and Sakız (2014) found that self-efficacy predicts burnout dimensions among Turkish special education teachers. Schaufeli et al. (2009) highlighted how workload and available resources influence both burnout and work engagement. Most recently, Fathi et al. (2021) found that self-efficacy is a stronger predictor of burnout than resilience among EFL teachers.

Grounded in positive psychology, this study aims to build on current knowledge by investigating how emotion regulation and self-efficacy predict burnout among Iraqi EFL teachers through a correlational approach.

### 3. Research Questions

Drawing from the significance emphasized in prior studies, this research aimed to explore and provide empirical answers to the following key research questions:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant association between emotion regulation and burnout among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Iraq?

RQ2: Does a significant relationship exist between self-efficacy and burnout levels among Iraqi EFL teachers?

RQ3: To what extent do emotion regulation and self-efficacy, either individually or collectively, predict the level of burnout experienced by EFL teachers in Iraq?

#### 4. Method

##### 4.1. Research Design

To explore the interrelationships among the selected variables—emotion regulation, self-efficacy, and burnout—this study adopted a quantitative, survey-based research methodology. The design was selected to gather numerical data that could be statistically analyzed to determine the nature and strength of the relationships between the constructs. Specifically, the study focused on examining how EFL teachers' emotion regulation and self-efficacy relate to their levels of burnout. As such, the research design is best characterized as correlational in nature.

##### 4.2. Participants

The study involved a total of 100 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers working in secondary schools located in Salah Al Dhein Governorate, Iraq. All participants were above the age of 25 and included both male and female educators. The sampling method used was convenience sampling, where individuals were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. The research objectives were clearly communicated to the participants, and assurances were given regarding the confidentiality of their responses. The sample included teachers with varying years of teaching experience, all of whom shared the same first language (L1).

##### 4.3. Instruments

###### 4.3.1. *The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)*

The Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES–Short Form) is a Likert-scale instrument developed to assess three key domains: instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. This version of the scale was based on the work of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) and includes a total of 12 items. Higher scores on the scale indicate stronger beliefs in one's teaching capabilities. Participants rated their perceived self-efficacy on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("nothing") to 5 ("a great deal").

### **4.3.2. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-ES)**

This instrument consists of 22 items measuring the three core dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion (9 items), depersonalization (5 items), and reduced personal accomplishment (8 items). The scale was adapted from Maslach et al. (1996). Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with response options ranging from 0 ("never") to 6 ("every day"). The scale is widely recognized for its strong psychometric properties, including reliability and validity, as reported by Hastings and Bham (2003).

### **4.3.3. The Emotion Regulation Scale**

This self-assessment scale comprises 10 items and is used to evaluate individuals' habitual use of two emotion regulation strategies: (1) cognitive reappraisal and (2) expressive suppression. The scale was adapted from Gross and John (2003). Respondents rated each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"), indicating the degree to which each statement applied to them.

## **4.4. Data Collection Procedure**

The data for this quantitative correlational investigation were gathered using a distribution of emotion regulation questionnaire, self-efficacy questionnaire and burnout scale. Three validated instruments measuring three variables were provided to respondents in the middle of the summer semester in 2023, who were then given instructions on how to complete the instruments. Following the distribution of the three questionnaires to assess the three aforementioned variables, the participants were given instructions on how to fill the tools of the study. Participants were given two and a half hours to complete the three instruments. Respondents were assured that the information they provided would be kept private. All of the respondents were Iraqi EFL teachers teaching at the secondary schools in Salah Al Dein Governorate in Iraq.

## **4.5. Data Analysis**

The latest SPSS program version was used to analyze the data. The researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistics. In order to determine if emotion regulation and self-efficacy among Iraqi EFL teachers are related to their burnout, the researcher used the Pearson Correlation Coefficient Formula.

## **5. Results**

### **5.1. The Normality of the Data**

The study calculated descriptive statistics for the scores on self-efficacy, emotion regulation, and burnout to evaluate the normality of their respective distributions. To assess normality, two statistical tests were employed: the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test. These methods are commonly used to determine whether data follow a normal distribution by analyzing descriptive statistical outputs. Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics related to the distribution normality of the three variables under investigation.

**Table 1***Tests of Normality*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Self-efficacy	0.071	100	0.200*	0.981	100	0.169
Emotion	0.069	100	0.200*	0.991	100	0.738
Burnout	0.064	100	0.200*	0.994	100	0.925

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The Self-efficacy, Emotion, and Burnout assessment was implemented through SPSS software to evaluate whether the examination scores exhibited a normal distribution. Table 1 presents the statistical values of 0.981, 0.991, and 0.994, along with their corresponding significances of 0.169, 0.738, and 0.925. The normality of data distribution is determined by evaluating the Sig. value against a threshold of 0.05, as per the established normality test criteria. Therefore, it can be inferred that the data exhibited a normal distribution.

## 5.2. Results of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)

The Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES–Short Form) is a Likert-scale tool developed to evaluate three fundamental aspects of teaching effectiveness: instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. This shortened version of the scale was based on the original framework developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) and includes a total of twelve items. Participants' self-efficacy beliefs were measured using a five-point rating scale, where responses ranged from 1 (indicating the lowest level of perceived ability) to 5 (representing the highest level). The total possible scores on the scale fall between a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 54. As shown in Table 2, the mean self-efficacy score for the 100 participants was 40.83, with a standard deviation of 6.43, indicating variability in perceived teaching efficacy among the respondents.

**Table 2***Descriptive Statistics of Self-Efficacy*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Self-efficacy	100	20.00	54.00	40.8300	6.438

Participants who achieved scores above 40 on the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale were categorized as having high levels of self-efficacy, while those with scores below 40 were considered to have lower levels of self-efficacy. Given that the overall score range in the study was from a minimum of 20 to a maximum of 54, the average score of 40.83 suggests that, on average, the participants demonstrated relatively strong beliefs in their teaching capabilities. The distribution of self-efficacy scores among the participants is displayed in Table 2.

## 5.3. Results of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-ES) Scale

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-ES), as adapted by Hastings and Bham (2003), was used in this study to measure burnout levels among teachers. The inventory is structured as a Likert-type scale where each of the 22 items is assigned a value ranging from 0 to 6. It is designed to evaluate the three primary components of teacher burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and

reduced personal accomplishment. Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics for the burnout scores obtained from the participants. The results showed that the average burnout score among the 100 participants was 76.50, with a standard deviation of 8.39. The lowest score recorded was 54, while the highest was 99, indicating a wide variation in burnout levels across the sample.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of Burnout*

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Burnout	100	54.00	99.00	76.5000	8.392

### 5.4 Results of the Emotion Regulation Scale

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the scores related to Emotion regulation. Based on the results, the mean Emotion Regulation score of 100 participants was 38.20, with a standard deviation of 5.94. The data set exhibited a range of scores spanning from 22 to 52, with the upper limit of 52 representing the maximum attainable score.

**Table 4**

*Descriptive Statistics of Emotion Regulation*

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotion regulation	100	22.00	52.00	38.2000	5.949

### 5.5 Research Questions

#### 5.5.1 Exploring the First Research Question

The first research question aimed to investigate whether there is a relationship between emotion regulation and perceived self-efficacy among Iraqi English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. To explore this, a two-tailed Pearson product-moment correlation was performed. The analysis demonstrated a statistically significant and positive relationship between the two variables. Table 5 summarizes these results, illustrating the strength and direction of the association between the participants' self-efficacy scores and their levels of emotion regulation, as calculated using Pearson's correlation technique.

**Table 5**

*Correlation between Emotion Regulation and Self-Efficacy*

		Self-efficacy	Emotion
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.203*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.043
	N	100	100
Emotion	Pearson Correlation	0.203*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.043	
	N	100	100

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

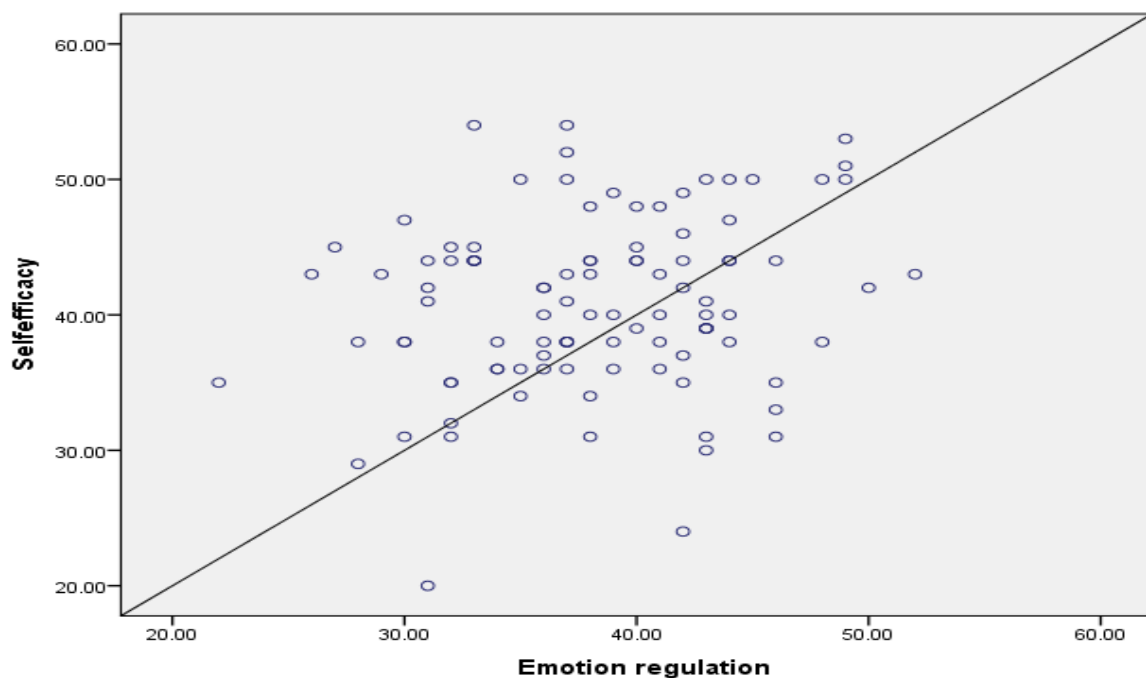
As presented in Table 5, the results of the correlation analysis indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and emotion regulation, with a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.203\*, which is significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level. This suggests that as the level of self-efficacy among teachers increases, their capacity to regulate emotions also tends to improve. The correlation table further reports a coefficient of 0.043, which likewise demonstrates a significant link between these two constructs.

Additionally, Table 5 displays a two-tailed significance value of 0.043. Since this value falls below the commonly accepted significance level of 0.05, it confirms that the observed correlation is statistically significant. While the strength of the relationship is modest, it still reflects a meaningful connection between the variables under study. Overall, the findings confirm a positive and statistically significant association between self-efficacy and emotion regulation among Iraqi EFL teachers ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The original null hypothesis posited that there would be no significant relationship between self-efficacy and emotion regulation in this group of teachers. However, the statistical findings led to the rejection of this hypothesis, thereby supporting the conclusion that a significant relationship does exist between the two variables.

### Figure 1

*Scatterplot of the Correlation between Iraqi EFL Teacher's Emotion Regulation and their Self-Efficacy*



### 5.5.2 Exploring the Second Research Question

The second research question explored the possible relationship between the self-efficacy levels of Iraqi English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and their experiences of burnout. To examine this relationship, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted, comparing participants'

scores on the self-efficacy scale with their scores on the burnout inventory. The purpose was to determine the degree and direction of association between these two variables. Table 6 displays the Pearson correlation results, providing statistical evidence regarding the link between teacher self-efficacy and burnout.

**Table 6**

*Correlation between Self-efficacy and Burnout*

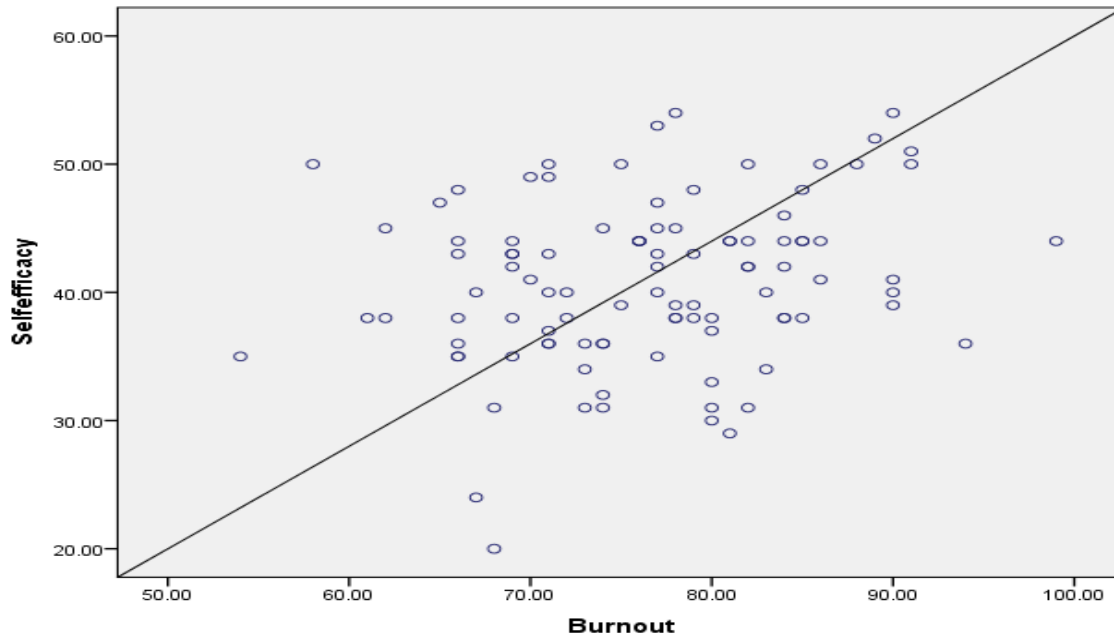
		Self-efficacy	Burnout
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.230*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.022
	N	100	100
Burnout	Pearson Correlation	0.230*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.022	
	N	100	100

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings of the study indicate a moderate positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy and burnout, as reflected by a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.230\*, as shown in Table 6. Additionally, the p-value for the two-tailed significance test was 0.022, which is below the conventional threshold of 0.05, confirming that the observed relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that as self-efficacy scores increase, burnout levels also tend to rise, indicating a moderately positive association between the two variables.

The correlation between self-efficacy and burnout, although modest in strength, highlights a noticeable pattern in the data. Participants demonstrated relatively high scores on both the self-efficacy and burnout measures, suggesting that higher perceived teaching efficacy may coexist with elevated levels of occupational stress. The overall results provide valuable insights into the interplay between these psychological constructs and led to the rejection of the second null hypothesis. This supports the conclusion that a statistically significant relationship exists between self-efficacy and burnout among Iraqi EFL teachers.

Consequently, the data affirm a meaningful connection between EFL teachers' beliefs in their teaching abilities and their experience of burnout. A graphical illustration of this relationship is provided in Figure 2, offering a visual summary of the observed trend.

**Figure 2***Scatterplot of the Correlation between EFL Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Burnout***5.5.3. Exploring the Third Research Question**

The third research question examined how much variance in burnout levels among Iraqi English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers can be explained by their emotion regulation and self-efficacy. To explore this predictive relationship, a correlational approach was utilized, analyzing the connection between the participants' scores on the emotion regulation scale and their self-efficacy ratings.

**Table 7***Correlation between Emotion Regulation and Self-Efficacy*

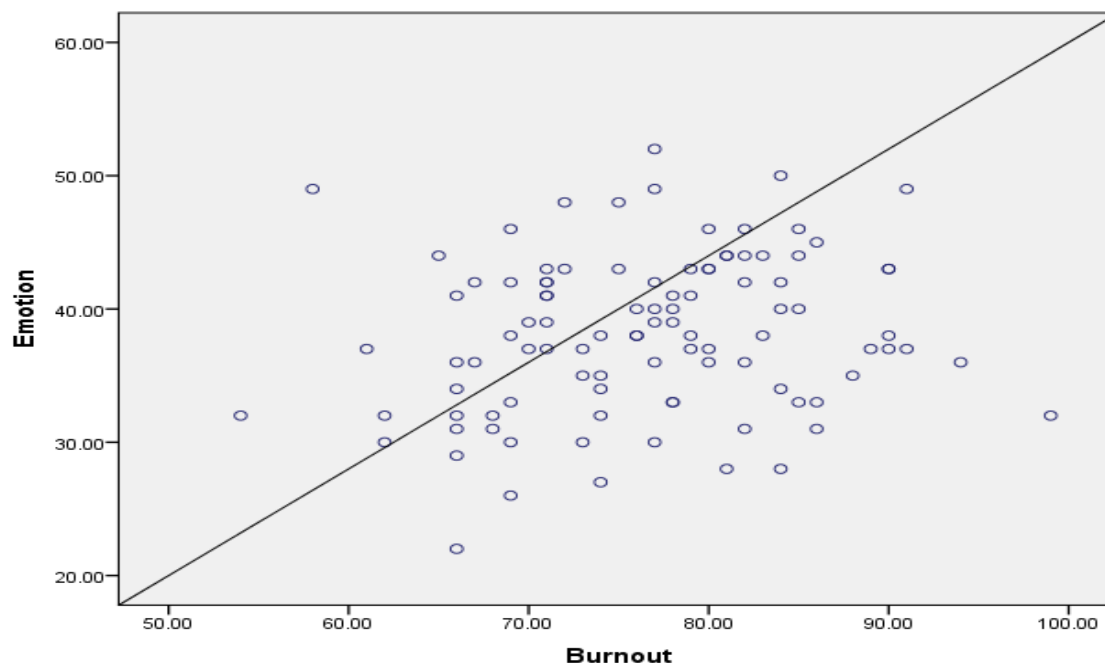
		Emotion	Burnout
Emotion	Pearson Correlation	1	0.183
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.068
	N	100	100
Burnout	Pearson Correlation	0.183	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.068	
	N	100	100

Table 7 presents data indicating that emotion regulation and self-efficacy are positively associated with burnout among Iraqi EFL teachers, although the relationship between these variables is somewhat weak. The Pearson correlation coefficient yielded a value of 0.068, indicating that the p value of the two-tailed significance test ( $p = 0.183$ ) exceeded the predetermined level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Consequently, the third null hypothesis, which posited the absence of a discernible correlation between emotion regulation and burnout among Iraqi EFL teachers, was invalidated. It can be posited that a modest yet affirmative correlation exists between the variables of emotion regulation

and burnout experienced by Iraqi EFL instructors. The graphical representation of this outcome is depicted in Figure 4.6 as presented below.

**Figure 3**

*Scatterplot of the Correlation between EFL Teachers' Emotion Regulation and Burnout*



## 6. Discussion

To examine the first research question, this study aimed to determine whether a relationship exists between emotion regulation and perceived self-efficacy among Iraqi English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. A two-tailed Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to assess the nature of this relationship. The results revealed a statistically significant and positive correlation between the two variables, with a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.203\*, indicating significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level. This suggests that as teachers' self-efficacy increases, their ability to regulate emotions also tends to improve. The correlation table further reports a coefficient of 0.043, reinforcing the statistical significance of the association between these two constructs.

These findings can be situated within the broader context of existing research. For example, Deng et al. (2022) explored the interplay between emotion regulation, self-efficacy, and teacher engagement among a sample of 585 EFL teachers. Their findings indicated that teachers who effectively regulate their emotions are better able to manage emotional demands and respond appropriately in teaching situations. Deng et al. (2022) also found a positive relationship between emotion regulation and self-efficacy, a result that is consistent with the current study. However, there are key distinctions. Deng et al.'s research was not confined to a specific language-learning environment, whereas this study focuses exclusively on Iraqi EFL educators. Furthermore, Deng et al. (2022) utilized a qualitative content analysis method, which differs from the quantitative approach adopted in the present investigation.

In addressing the second research question, the study analyzed the potential relationship between self-efficacy and burnout among Iraqi EFL teachers. A Pearson correlation was conducted by comparing participants' self-efficacy scores with their burnout scores. The results indicated a moderate positive correlation between these variables.

This outcome can be understood in relation to earlier studies. For instance, Sarfo et al. (2021) investigated the link between teacher self-efficacy and burnout in both school and university settings. Their findings revealed a negative correlation between the two variables among 158 Iranian EFL teachers, which contrasts with the positive relationship observed in this study. These differing results may be attributed to variations in cultural background, educational systems, or participant characteristics. Such inconsistencies highlight the importance of conducting further research across diverse cultural and educational contexts.

In an attempt to answer the third research question, the current researcher tried to examine the degree to which the emotion regulation and self-efficacy of Iraqi English as Foreign Language (EFL) instructors can predict their levels of burnout. The present inquiry involved the utilization of the identical correlation formula to ascertain the correlation between the scores of participants' emotion regulation and self-efficacy.

Data indicated that emotion regulation and self-efficacy are positively associated with burnout among Iraqi EFL teachers, although the relationship between these variables is somewhat weak.

## 7. Conclusion

This research was carried out to investigate three primary areas: (1) the connection between emotion regulation and self-efficacy among Iraqi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, (2) the relationship between their self-efficacy and levels of burnout, and (3) the degree to which emotion regulation and self-efficacy can predict burnout in this group of educators. The results of the study indicated the following key outcomes: first, a statistically significant and positive association exists between emotion regulation and self-efficacy; second, there is a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and burnout among Iraqi EFL teachers; and third, both emotion regulation and self-efficacy were found to have a positive relationship with burnout, although the magnitude of these relationships was relatively low.

Based on these results, several implications can be drawn and are summarized as follows: First, it is essential for teachers to give greater attention to affective elements within the teaching process, particularly in managing their own emotions, maintaining a strong sense of self-efficacy, and recognizing the influence of burnout on professional performance. Educators can better support their students by delivering instruction that accommodates diverse personality types and equipping learners with appropriate coping strategies.

It is advised that educators take concrete measures to increase teachers' sense of efficacy because this would help to lessen their depersonalization and emotional tiredness.

In EFL classrooms, EFL teachers need to be familiarized with the significant impact of emotions regulation on EFL teachers' performance and progressive achievement. Teachers should improve their professional factors in order to increase their efficacy comprehension. ELT stakeholders

and curriculum developers in the Education Institutions of Iraq need to pay closer attention teachers' burnout and its impact on the teaching process.

Teacher education trainings and programs in the Iraqi EFL context should engage teachers in a more developed and standardized programs so as to improve their strategies on emotions regulation and their self- efficacy perception. Though the suggested implications primarily addressed the Iraqi EFL teaching context, the present findings can be interesting to EFL researchers, teachers, teacher trainers and practitioners in other countries either.

The current research did not make any cross-comparisons of teachers' emotions regulation, self-efficacy and their burnout in different demographic groups, for example those with a higher experience of teaching and lower experience, or across different age groups. Similar studies in future can probably explore the effect of different EFL teachers' demographic variables too. Moreover, larger samples of L2 teachers from several language institutes and even cities can provide more generalizable findings. Furthermore, since this study found statistically significant associations between emotion regulation, self-efficacy, and burnout, it is recommended that future research explore the causal links between these variables, especially in connection with various language skills. Investigating these relationships in greater depth could offer valuable insights into how these psychological factors interact and affect both the teaching and learning processes in language education.

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### **Authors' Contributions**

All authors have conducted the study, collected data, analyzed and interpreted the data, and written up the manuscript.

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### **Competing Interests**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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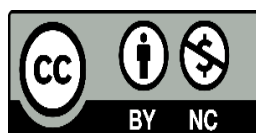
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