Research paper

EFL Teacher Reflection in Relation with Teacher Autonomy & Resilience

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Abstract

Many scholars claimed that poetry is High learning and student achievement are dependent on the skills teachers use and the existence of professional expertise such as teacher reflectivity. This paper examines the relationship between EFL teachers' reflectivity and teacher autonomy and resilience. Totally, 123 EFL teachers were selected through convenience sampling. This quantitative research used three questionnaires as research instruments to gather the data: English Language Teacher Reflectivity Inventory (ELTRI)(developed by Akbary. et al,2010), the Teaching Autonomy Scale (TAS), presented by Pearson and Moomaw (2005), and Teacher Resilience Scale (TRS) by Daniilidou and Plasidou (2018). The data were gathered from different online platforms. Data analysis by SPSS software through the Spearman correlation coefficient revealed a significant relationship between reflectivity and resilience among Iranian EFL teachers. The results also demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' reflectivity and resilience components. However, the findings of this study showed no relationships between resilience and autonomy and between reflectivity and autonomy. The results of this study may be useful for EFL teachers, educators, material developers, and educational authorities.

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Introduction

Teaching is a complicated and multidimensional phenomenon. Thus, language teachers must be equipped with different workable techniques and strategies to improve their teaching

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profession and overcome the challenges in the classrooms. In this regard, Bartlett (1990) says that "the development of the teaching technique is regarded as the most important means for helping teachers to improve their practice" (P. 202). Among these strategies, reflective teaching has gained importance as an essential characteristic of EFL teachers. Teacher reflectivity seems necessary to analyze and resolve problems before the performance, during, and after the class (Boody, 2008). This enables teachers to do constructive operations rather than proposing a quick solution to problems (Safari, et al., 2020). As the second characteristic of the EFL teachers, autonomy is a valuable area for study because it is related to the humanistic perspective of teaching. According to Pearson and Moomaw (2006), if teachers are to be empowered and regarded as professionals like other professions, they must have the freedom to choose the best treatment for their students as doctors do for their clients. This freedom is teacher autonomy. The third characteristic that can come into consideration by EFL teachers is resilience, which refers to people's capacity to bounce back and cope despite hardships (Stavraki & Karagianni, 2020). Resilient teachers possess enough competence to succeed in difficult situations, are good at classroom management, establish good relations with their students, have positive perceptions, and are more committed to their profession (Howard & Johnson, 2004). These three concepts are psychological and individual variables of teachers that must be accounted into consideration for making decisions and teaching well in the classroom. In this area, the majority of studies have examined the relationship between teacher resilience and reflectivity (Mc Kay & Gibbs, 2020; Shirazizadeh, et al.,2019) resilience and autonomy (Kajabadi et al., 2016), autonomy and reflectivity of teachers (Noormohammadi, 2014; Fani, 2017; Mahmoodiet al., 2019; Thi Thanh, 2019), and resilience itself (Botou, 2017; Daniilidou, 2018; Starvaki & Karrajianni, 2020). However, such studies are still lacking in the EFL context, especially regarding the resilience variable. More importantly, no study has ever examined the relationship between teachers' reflectivity, autonomy, and resilience simultaneously so far. Therefore, this study sought to explore the possible relationship among these three educational variables ignored in most studies. Hence, teachers understand the possible advantages of providing teaching with these variables, equip themselves with such factors, and use the association of these factors in their classroom to explain a well-done teaching process and see the advantages in their teaching.

This study sought to answer the following research questions by analyzing survey responses of EFL teachers in different cities of Iran.

1- Is there any statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' reflectivity and their resilience components?
2- Is there any statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' reflectivity and their autonomy?
3- Which components of teacher resilience are predictors of teacher reflectivity?
4- Which components of teacher autonomy are predictors of teacher reflectivity?

Literature Review

In most of the articles and books dealing with reflective teaching, the roots of the term reflectivity are traced back to John Dewey (1933) with his influential book 'How we think: a

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re-statement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educational process and Schon. Dewey defines reflectivity as an action based on ''the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it'' (p. 9). A reflective teacher, according to this definition, is one who critically examines his/her practices, comes up with some ideas as to how to improve his/her performance to enhance student's learning, and puts those ideas into practice, as what Schon (1983) calls the cycle of appreciation, action, and re-appreciation. Teacher reflectivity is a cognitive process accompanied by a set of attitudes in which teachers systematically collect data about their practice and use the data to make informed decisions about their practice both inside and outside the classroom(Farrell,2015). Despite the significance assigned to teacher reflectivity in the past two or three decades, only in the 2010s have some experimental studies focused on reflective teaching in ELT. For example, Moradkhani and Shirazizadeh (2017) compared EFL teachers' reflectivity in public and private institutes in Iran and showed the superiority of private institute teachers over public institutes' regarding reflective teaching.

Teachers' autonomy is their independence in making professional decisions about classroom and instructional help to learners (Licata & Street, 1989). Thus, teacher autonomy is teachers' feelings of controlling themselves. In recent decades autonomous learning has become more popular among scholars and educators. Holec (1996) refers to autonomy as an individual's ability and his/her previous experience to feel responsible for his/her learning. He delineates autonomy as an "ability to take charge of one's learning, in which to take charge of one's learning is to have and hold responsible for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning.

Resilience does not have roots in academic theories; however, it has been identified through phenomenological characteristics of survivors living in high-risk situations (Richardson, 2020). As Masten, et al. (1990, p. 425) defined it, 'resilience refers to the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation, despite challenging or threatening circumstances. Among others, teachers are the survivors of challenges they face, the responsibilities they bear, and the pressure they feel every day. Different researchers and scholars have initiated studying resilience as an intrapersonal quality, which can aid teachers to deal with the stressors they encounter in their work and enable them to flourish in schools instead of merely surviving (Gloria et al., 2013). Over recent decades, teacher resilience has been conceptualized and operationalized in a range of ways (Beltman, et al., 2011; Yonezawa, et al., 2011). Initially, the term 'resilience' mostly referred to an individual capacity, but 'it has been subsequently shown that resilience is not solely a personal attribute but a complex construct resulting from a dynamic relationship between risk and protective factors (Beltman et al., 2011, p. 186). In that way, many studies have attempted to identify risk and protective factors for teachers (see Beltman et al., 2011). As Rutter (2012) noted, resilience has to be considered a process and not solely a fixed attribute of a person. Despite the significance of this concept, empirical studies on the development, correlates, causes, and effects of resilience are scarce, especially within the domain of EFL teacher education. Day (2008) reported that resilience and reflectivity promote resilience among teachers. In a study, which was quite similar to the present one in its inquiry, McKay and Barton (2018) investigated the relationship between reflectivity and

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resilience qualitatively and reported that art-based reflectivity could promote the teachers' resilience. Although there is no single accepted set of components of resilience, instructional projects have used this set of components more. Social skills are attitudes and behaviors that help people interact with others (Omar, 2015).

Few projects have considered and investigated resilience components, but Botou et al. (2017), in searching teacher resilience during the economic crisis, found that Greek teachers' resilience was very highly correlated to their reflection with family and colleagues. Similarly, Stanford (2001) and Greenfield (2015) concluded that teachers satisfied with their work, family, friends, or colleagues were more resilient. Resilience has some subscales, one of which is personal competence and persistence. It includes learning how to think critically, manipulate complex concepts, and use data and scientific analytics to inform decision-making (Kutcher, , 2019). Another component of resilience is social skills and peer support. Peer support is when people use their own experiences to help each other, generally defined by the fact that people with similar experiences can relate better and consequently offer more empathy and validation (Mead, 2004). The other component of resilience is family cohesion. Melinda et al. (2010) mentioned that family cohesion is a factor associated with better physical, emotional, and educational well-being among children and adolescents. The spiritual component refers to the belief in God and the fact that he helps people overcome their challenges and the things that happen for a reason (Daniilidou & Plastidic, 2018). Hence, the body of research on resilience and stress among EFL teachers is slender, and reflection, which is a significantly useful strategy for teachers' stressful challenges, is not adequately examined concerning occupational stress and resilience. Despite these considerations, only a couple of studies have attempted to consider teachers' resilience as an adaptive process, as highlighted by Hong (2012). In another study, Kajabadi et al. (2016) illustrated the relationship between autonomy and resilience among EFL teachers. They found a significant and positive correlation between high levels of autonomy and resilience. They depicted that resilience could be a good predictor of autonomy. In a qualitative study, Molani et al. (2020) explored the teachers' reflectivity and critical incidents present in the classroom. They explored different types of critical incidents that were present in EFL classes and how EFL teachers reflected on their critical incidents. According to their results, teachers needed to be equipped with reflection to prepare themselves to make quality decisions.

Another recent study focused on the relationship between resilience, reflectivity, and role stress (Shirazizade et al., 2019). The authors concluded that reflection would lead to resilience by strengthening teachers' professional identity while also making teachers prepared and knowledgeable. Similarly, Ayoobian and Rashidi (2021) found a significant relationship between different subscales of teachers' reflectivity and their resilience. Their findings demonstrated that reflectivity could be a good predictor of teacher resilience. In a study, Yildirim and Ermis (2017) determined the relationship between autonomy, critical thinking, and resilience, indicating a statistically significant positive correlation between family, peer, and school support sub-dimensions of resilience and relatedness.

In this regard, it seems that the concepts of reflectivity, autonomy, and resilience are not new in the educational context. The importance of these concepts is widely discussed,

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considering reflective teaching and other factors as the necessary parts of teachers' professional development. Since the theoretical and practical aspects of reflectivity have received increasing attention in educational research and settings everywhere, Iranian EFL teachers are expected to make use of these three concepts in their classrooms. There is a need for more studies to promote results in the field of language teaching to better understand the positive effects of language teaching and to provide the EFL teachers with more guidance. This study tries to lead EFL teachers, teacher educators, and institutes to make sense of the importance of reflective practices in the improvement and development of teaching processes and the importance of autonomy and resilience in the successful actions in the domain of teaching. Positive psychology practices and interventions aim to develop strengths, skills, and resources to prevent mental disorder from occurring, foster resilience and to help people live the best lives possible (kern et al., 2019). Furthermore, this study stimulates EFL teachers to give more value to reflective teaching in their profession by perceiving its relation to other valuable characteristics in teaching such as autonomy and resilience.

Methodology

Participants

The participants of the present study were 123 EFL teachers, teaching English at public high schools and private language institutions in different cities of Iran. The teachers held B. A or M.A degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), English literature, and Translation. They were selected based on convenience sampling. Although during the coronavirus pandemic finding enough participants was difficult. It was attempted to include participants from both genders with various groups of age and teaching experience. There were 33 males and 90 Female English teachers, 20 to 49 years old, and with 1-28 years of teaching experience. Out of participants, 32.8% held a BA degree, 49/2% an MA degree, and 18/7% a Ph.D. degree in different branches of English studies, including English language teaching (80), English literature (25), and English translation (18). All the participants filled out the questionnaire, through a web-based platform because of the breakdown conditions of coronavirus.

Instruments

To collect the data from the participants, a battery of three questionnaires was utilized in this study, discussed thoroughly in the following paragraphs. The teachers received the required information about the aim of the study and the confidentiality of given responses in all three questionnaires.

Teacher reflectivity was assessed by the English Language Teacher Reflective Inventory (Akbari, et al., 2010). This scale includes 29 items, based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always". This scale has some sub-components, including practical reflection (6 items), concerned with the actual practice of reflectivity via lesson reports, talking to colleagues, and group discussions, and cognitive reflection (6 items), which refers to the teacher's conscious efforts for professional development, such as reading books and journals. Affective reflection (3 items), Meta-Cognitive reflection (7 items), and Critical reflection (7 items) are related to teachers' knowledge about the learners' affective and cognitive state,

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teachers' awareness of their strengths, weaknesses, personality, and the teaching profession, and teachers' consciousness of the socio-political aspects of their teaching, respectively. The validity of the mentioned instrument was evaluated and confirmed by its developers among Iranian EFL teachers. Moreover, the Cronbach's Alpha index for the indicators of practical, effective, critical, metacognitive, and cognitive was reported as 0.73, 0.78, 0.84, 0.82, and 0.83 respectively.

Teacher Autonomy Scale (TAS)
The teacher autonomy scale measured the Teachers' Autonomy. This scale, presented by Pearson and Moomaw (2005), includes 18 items divided into 2 Sub-categories: curriculum autonomy (6 items) and general teaching autonomy (12 items). Curriculum autonomy is the selection of materials, activities, instructional planning, and sequencing. General teaching autonomy deals with the issues concerning classroom standards of conduct and personal job discretion. Different studies have administered this questionnaire previously, including (Fadaee et al., 2021; Javadi, 2014; Noormohammadi, 2014). This questionnaire is rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 'never(1)' to 'always(5)'. Its content validity and reliability are high. Moomaw (2005) found acceptable construct validity and internal consistency of r=0/83.

Teacher Resilience scale (TRS)
EFL teachers' resilience was measured through a questionnaire, which consisted of questions about demographic information, named the Teacher Resilience scale (TRS) (Daniilidou & Plasidou, 2018). TRS includes 26 items and tries to assess four dimensions of teachers' resilience, including teachers' "personal competencies and persistence" (9 items), family cohesion (6 items), "spiritual influences" (3 items), and "social skills and peer support" (8 items). TRS assesses "the prevailing internal and external protective factors that can help teachers overcome the adversities in the school context" (Daniilidou & Plasidou, 2018). This questionnaire is rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 'never (1)' to 'always (5)', too. According to its creators, no other scales address the factors that can determine teacher resilience. The participants answered the questions on a five-point Likert scale.

Procedure
To achieve the goal of this study, the data were collected by the simultaneous distribution of three questionnaires through different web-based platforms due to the Covid 19 pandemic in the summer of 2021. A total of 200 questionnaires were initially sent just electronically to EFL teachers. The link was shared with them individually and out of these,123 were completed exactly (about 61/5 %). Before answering the items of the questionnaires, the participants were supposed to write down some personal information such as age, gender, teaching experience, educational degrees, place of teaching, and the email addresses needed to deliver their gifts. Finally, the teachers were ensured that their information would be kept confidential and used only for this study.

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Data Analysis

The collected data were entered into SPSS software for analysis. Spearman correlation coefficient was used to explore the relationship among mentioned variables. Total scores for each variable were computed as total reflectivity, total autonomy, and total resilience. Also, the scores for each of the components of the variables were calculated to describe the collected data, which were also analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

To evaluate the relationship between EFL teachers' reflectivity and teacher autonomy and resilience, the authors asked 123 EFL teachers, through convenience sampling, to answer the questionnaires. The obtained data from English Language Teacher Reflectivity Inventory, the Teaching Autonomy Scale, and Teacher Resilience Scale analyzed by SPSS software through the Spearman correlation coefficient.

Addressing the First Research Question

The first research question sought to explore the relationship between EFL teachers' autonomy, reflectivity, and resilience. Before running the appropriate statistical analysis, checking the normal distribution of the data was needed. Table 1 displays the results of descriptive statistics for teachers' autonomy, reflectivity, and resilience scores.

Table 1

Results of Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Autonomy, Reflectivity, and Resilience Scores

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Total Resilience	123	41.00	68.00	109.00	86.78	.78	8.73	76.26	.860	.21	-.943	.43
Total Autonomy	123	71.00	4.00	75.00	58.78	.773	8.58	73.66	-1.99	.21	12.41	.43
Reflective Teaching	123	87.00	58.00	145.00	111.60	1.31	14.55	211.7	-.259	.21	1.032	.43
Valid N (listwise)	123											

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As evident in the table above, the Skewness and Kurtosis Ratio values for the variables fell beyond the acceptable range of +/- 1.96 which indicates that the normality assumption is violated (Pallant, 2010). Thus, the researcher used the Spearman correlation coefficient to explore the relationship between EFL teachers' autonomy, reflectivity, and resilience. Table 2 displays the results of the Spearman correlation coefficient for the relationship between EFL teachers' autonomy, reflectivity, and resilience.

Table 2

Results of Spearman Correlation Coefficient for EFL Teachers' Autonomy, Reflectivity, and Resilience

			Resilience	Autonomy
Spearman's rho	Resilience	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.174
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.054
		N	123	123
	Reflective Teaching	Correlation Coefficient	.443**	-.109
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.229
		N	123	123

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results shown in the above table, there is a statistically positive and significant relationship between resilience and reflective teaching ($r = .443$, n = 123, $p = .000 < 0.01$). However, there is no statistically significant relationship between resilience and teacher autonomy ($r = -.174$, n = 123, $p = .054 > 0.05$), nor is there a significant relationship between reflective teaching and teacher autonomy ($r = -.109$, n = 123, $p = .229 > 0.05$).

Addressing the Second Research Question

The second research question aimed at examining the relationship between EFL teachers' resilience components and teacher reflectivity. Table 3 shows the results of descriptive statistics for EFL teachers' resilience components and teacher reflectivity.

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Table 3

Results of Descriptive Statistics for EFL Teachers' Resilience Components and Teacher Reflectivity

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Resilience Social Skills and Peer Support	123	20.00	16.00	36.00	23.211	.313	3.4 7415	12.070	.630	.218	1.053	.433
Resilience Personal Competence	123	25.00	20.00	45.00	31.495	.463	5.14284	26.449	.530	.218	-.790	.433
Resilience Family Cohesion	123	22.00	11.00	33.00	22.561	.270	2.99493	8.970	.733	.218	2.172	.433
Resilience Spiritual	123	11.00	4.00	15.00	9.5203	.170	1.89628	3.596	-.654	.218	.816	.433
Reflective Teaching	123	87.00	58.00	145.00	111.60	1.31	14.5521	211.74	-.459	.218	1.032	.433
Valid N (listwise)	123											

As seen in the table above, the Skewness and Kurtosis Ratio values for reflective teaching and the components of resilience fell beyond the acceptable range of +/- 1.96 which indicates

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that the normality assumption is violated (Pallant, 2010). Thus, the researcher used the Spearman correlation coefficient to explore the relationship between EFL teachers' resilience components and teacher reflectivity. Table 4 illustrates the results of the Spearman correlation coefficient for the relationship between EFL teachers' resilience components and teacher reflectivity.

Table 4

Results of Spearman Correlation Coefficient for EFL Teachers' Resilience Components and Teacher Reflectivity

			Resilience Social Skills and Peer Support	Resilience Personal Competence	Resilience Family Cohesion	Resilience Spiritual	Reflective Teaching
Spearman's rho	Reflective Teaching	Correlation Coefficient	.355**	.285**	.378**	.035	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.703	.
		N	123	123	123	123	123

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results seen in the above table, there is a statistically positive and significant relationship between reflective teaching and the social skills and peer support component of resilience ($r = .335$, n = 123, $p = .000 < 0.01$). Moreover, there is a statistically positive and significant relationship between reflective teaching and the personal competence component of resilience ($r = .285$, n = 123, $p = .001 < 0.001$). Furthermore, there is a statistically positive and significant relationship between reflective teaching and the family cohesion component of resilience ($r = .378$, n = 123, $p = .000 < 0.001$). However, there is not a significant relationship between the spiritual component of resilience and reflective teaching ($r = .035$, n = 123, $p = .703 > 0.05$).

Addressing the Third Research Question
The third research question sought to investigate the relationship between EFL teacher reflectivity and teacher autonomy components. Table 5 illustrates the results of descriptive statistics for EFL teacher reflectivity and teacher autonomy components.

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Table 5

Results of Descriptive Statistics for EFL Teacher Reflectivity and Teacher Autonomy Components

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Autonomy Curriculum	123	26.00	4.00	30.00	19.650	.432	4.79	22.967	-.872	.218	.863	.433
General Autonomy	123	51.00	.00	51.00	39.138	.503	5.58	31.169	-2.655	.218	18.874	.433
Reflective Teaching	123	87.00	58.00	145.00	111.60	1.31	14.55	211.76	-.259	.218	1.032	.433
Valid N (listwise)	123											

As presented in the table above, the Skewness and Kurtosis Ratio values for the variables fell beyond the acceptable range of +/- 1.96 which indicates that the normality assumption is violated (Pallant, 2010). Thus, the researcher used the Spearman correlation coefficient to explore the relationship between EFL teacher reflectivity and teacher autonomy components. Table 6 shows the results of the Spearman correlation coefficient for the relationship between EFL teacher reflectivity and teacher autonomy components.

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Table 6

Results of Spearman Correlation Coefficient for EFL Teacher Reflectivity and Teacher Autonomy Components

			Reflective Teaching	General Autonomy	Autonomy Curriculum
Spearman's rho	Reflective Teaching	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.161	-.039
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.076	.670
		N	123	123	123

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results shown in the above table, there is no statistically significant relationship between reflective teaching and general autonomy (r = -.161, n = 123, p = .076>0.05). Likewise, there is no statistically significant relationship between reflective teaching and curriculum autonomy (r = -.039, n = 123, p = .670>0.05).

The fourth research question sought to find the components of autonomy and resilience which are more dominant among TEFL teachers. The following table indicates the descriptive statistics for the components of teacher autonomy.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for the Components of Teacher Autonomy

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Autonomy Curriculum	123	26.00	4.00	30.00	19.65	.432	4.792	22.967
General Autonomy	123	51.00	.00	51.00	39.13	.503	5.582	31.169
Valid N (listwise)	123							

As presented in the above table, the score means for the curriculum and general autonomy components were 19.65 and 39.13, respectively. However, the means alone cannot be an indication of the dominance of the components as the number of items for the curriculum and general components were 6 and 12. Therefore, to neutralize the effect of the number of items

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in the interpretation, the two means were divided by their corresponding item numbers in each component.

Mean of curriculum autonomy/number of items for the curriculum autonomy component= 19.65/6=3.27

Mean of general autonomy/ number of items for the general autonomy component= 39.13/12=3.26

Thus, it can be concluded that the numerically homogenized means for the curriculum and general components were 3.27 and 3.26 indicating that neither of the components dominates the other one.

The following table indicates the descriptive statistics for the components of teacher resilience.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for the Components of Teacher Resilience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Resilience Social Skills and Peer Support	123	20.00	16.00	36.00	23.211	.3132	3.4745	12.070
Resilience Personal Competence	123	25.00	20.00	45.00	31.495	.463	5.142	26.449
Resilience Family Cohesion	123	22.00	11.00	33.00	22.561	.270	2.99	8.970
Resilience Spiritual	123	11.00	4.00	15.00	9.5203	.170	1.89	3.596
Valid N (listwise)	123							

As seen in Table 8, the score means for the social skills and peer support, personal competence, family cohesion, and spiritual components of teacher resilience were 23.21, 31.49,

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22.56, and 9.52, respectively. The numerically homogenized means of the components were: Mean of social skills and peer support/number of items for the social skills and peer support = 23.21/8= 2.90

Mean of personal competence/ number of items for the personal competence component=31.49/9=3.49

Mean of family cohesion /number of items for the family cohesion component=22.56/7= 3.22

Mean of spiritual / number of items for the spiritual components component= 9.52/3=3.17. As it can be seen, the order of the dominance for the factors in descending order is personal competence (3.49), family cohesion (3.22), spiritual (3.17), and social skills and peer support (2.90).

Discussion

As an attempt to shed more light on the role of teacher-related variables, the present study tried to contribute to the relationship of teacher's reflectivity with autonomy and resilience. Overall, the findings showed that sometimes there was a significant relationship between these three variables, while some of these relationships did not come into consideration. The first research question of this study examined the relationship between teachers' reflectivity, autonomy, and resilience. The results suggested that there was a statistically positive and significant relationship between reflective teaching and resilience. This result confirms the findings of Shirazizade et al. (2019), who explored the relationship between resilience, reflection, and stress, indicating that reflectivity can predict resilience and help teachers to attend more knowledge in teaching. Moreover, this result is in line with a recent study (Ayoobian & Rashid, 2021), showing an important relationship between reflectivity and resilience, according to which reflectivity could be a good predictor of resilience. Thus, when a teacher is reflective, he/she can deal with different sources of stress and control unsuitable conditions. Therefore, a reflective teacher is a resilient one, too.

The other objective of this study was to explore the relationship between teacher resilience and reflectivity with autonomy. As the findings displayed, there was neither a significant relationship between reflectivity and autonomy nor resilience and autonomy. The findings of this study were contrary to the result of most investigations that supposed these variables had a positive relationship (Kajabadi, p.2016; Fahima Kamaly, 2011; Yildimir & Ermis, 2017). It seems that the difference between the finding of these studies and the current research is related to the questionnaires they used. These questionnaires (Connor & Dividson (2003); Spratt & Chan (2002) and their participants are learners' not teachers (Kajabadi, 2016); (Noormohammadi, 2014).

The other objective of this study was to examine the relationship between EFL teachers' resilience components and teacher reflectivity. The results revealed a statistically positive and significant relationship between reflective teaching and social skills and peer support, which is a subcategory of resilience. Moreover, there was a positive relationship between reflection and

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personal competence as a component of resilience. A similar relation was revealed between reflective teaching and family cohesion as a component of resilience. These findings are in accord with Shirazizadeh et al. (2017), who presented an overview of reflectivity and resilience components in the educational contents and found a close relationship between these concepts. By the same token, Mckay and Barton (2018) confirmed the relationship between reflectivity and resilience. In the same way, Melinda (2010) emphasized the crucial role of resilience in the success of teachers.

The third objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' reflectivity and the components of autonomy, including curriculum autonomy and general autonomy. The results showed no statistically significant relationship between either reflectivity curriculum autonomy or general autonomy. However, this result is not consistent with other researchers. It can be said that there are only a handful of studies yielding such results. Most results show a positive relationship between the two variables (Sahin, 2017). The difference in the results of some studies may be due to the presence of other variables such as self-efficacy (Noormohamadi, 2014). Furthermore, different results may be due to the only online way of filling out research questionnaires in the COVID-19 pandemic, the differences in the sample size, or the changes in the teaching methods during the COVID-19 pandemic. The last objective of the current study was to find which components of autonomy and resilience were more dominant among EFL teachers. Descriptive statistics indicated that general autonomy was more dominant than curriculum autonomy among Iranian EFL teachers, but considering the number of items of each component in the questionnaire, none dominated the other one.

This means that EFL teachers are creative in their teaching approach, the selection of student-learning activities and use of time are under their control, and they can solve major problems in teaching (Melenyzer, 1990). This finding is close to the result of Piaget's interpretations of autonomy and similar to the results obtained by Pearson and Moomaw (2005), who considered the association between curriculum autonomy and job satisfaction. They demonstrated as the curriculum autonomy of the teachers increased, they had the best treatment with their students. Furthermore, the more dominant component of resilience among EFL teachers in the current study was personal competence. It means that according to the statistics of this study, the mean score of the "personal competencies" component was increasingly upper than other components of resilience. This difference in mean scores can be very significant because none of the past studies have reached any results like this.

Conclusion

Many psychological and sociological factors can help teachers improve their teaching. Hence, this study aimed to explore three important variables that seemed necessary for teaching. In particular, it aimed to explore the interaction of and relationship between three determining aspects of EFL teachers' behavior, namely reflectivity, autonomy, and resilience.

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The results obtained, represented a significant correlation between Iranian EFL teachers' reflectivity and resilience. However, there wasn't any relation between autonomy and reflectivity. These results highlighted the role of these variables in teachers' professional success. Furthermore, according to the results, among resilience components, personal competence had more importance and was more in accord with teachers' reflectivity. The findings of the present study contribute to the existing knowledge of how teachers can solve their teaching problems, have control over various choices, adapt to changes and adversity, be independent individuals, communicate effectively, accept responsibility for their behavior, and finally choose suitable methods and techniques to achieve the objectives. As demonstrated, even if these factors are not related, they must still be considered in the teaching profession.

There have been many studies on language learning and teaching, and researchers have tried to carry out different projects with a focus on fundamental factors in this field. One of the implications of this study is that the findings can help teachers to provide themselves more with the necessary expertise, use their experience, and be more dynamic in the classroom. Also, teachers' familiarity with these variables would increase the quality of their teaching by identifying their weaknesses and improving their strengths. Also, teacher education programs should focus on teachers' professional competencies to be more reflective, resilient, and autonomous to become more attached to their job. Also, the findings can help authorities, material developers, and researchers to provide the teachers with some references to use in their classes to be more reflective.

As far as the limitations of this study are concerned, face-to-face interaction with people was impossible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, all the participants of this study filled out the questionnaires via web-based platforms. Moreover, being a new project, there were no scientific references, investigating the relationship among these three variables among teachers to understand what their results were and have more citations. Another limitation concerned the cross-sectional nature of the study, considering the resilience, autonomy, and reflectivity among EFL teachers at the time of conducting the research. The other limitation was the lack of quantitative research on different subcomponents of resilience and autonomy to compare and achieve better results.

The same research can be carried out via a broader population, with more participants from different parts of the world. This study also can be performed using some other instruments such as observations, surveys, and other data analysis methods. This study did not consider the impacts of other variables such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status of teachers and thus needs further investigations. The other important area on which researchers can focus in the future is comparing different components of these three variables, finding their relationship with the instructional and psychological concepts, and examining the effect of the details of different subcategories of these variables in instruction.

Acknowledgments

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Authors' contributions

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The author has no competing interests.

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