



## **Designing and Validating a Scale for EFL Instructor's Apprehension Sources Considering Students' Achievement**

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### **Abstract**

Stress and anxiety might be destructive factors in the learning or teaching journey. Enough research is required to overcome the difficulties and understand the depth of these problems. The aim of the current study was twofold: 1) to design and validate a scale for evaluating English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors' apprehension sources and, 2) to understand the relationship between apprehension and instructors' gender. The module consists of four factors, including, organizational, attitudinal, L2-related factors, and classroom management. A 34-item scale on a 5-point Likert scale was developed. The scale was distributed between 100 EFL instructors from English institutions in Shiraz, Iran and the score of 700 students related to each teacher was used for analysis. The questionnaires were examined with two other experts to guarantee the content validity of the scales and descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated. The reliability of the scale was estimated by Cronbach's alpha. The correlation coefficient was also used to demonstrate the relationship between students' overall achievement scores and their instructor's apprehension scale. Independent t-test and Pearson correlation test were used to recognize the meaningful relationship between apprehension and instructor's gender. The results showed that the scale was adequate with empirical data. Moreover, the value of correlation coefficient indicated an inverse relationship between apprehension and gender. This implies that apprehension can impede learning in both genders. However, women's apprehension is more than men. The findings can help instructors to enhance their personality and welfare for more effective education.

*Keywords: Attitudinal Factors; EFL Instructor; Organizational Factors; Students' Achievement; Students' Apprehension*

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## 1. Introduction

Li (2021) observed apprehension as a harmful emotional capability caused by the teacher's awareness that their work condition made a menace to their self-esteem or welfare. Teachers need to be fundamentally motivated, release their anxiety, and face their apprehensions since they are supposed to be theoreticians and practitioners instantaneously. This notion highlights the importance of this concept in teaching contexts since it can affect both the instructors' and students' performances. Oxford (2000) reflected that an assured amount of anxiety occasionally aids learners to extend their peak performance stages, but too much apprehension hunk language learning. Harmful concerns are revealed in numerous forms, for instance, worry, self-doubt, prevention, powerlessness, insecurity, fear, and physical presence.

Horwitz (2003) detected trouble in speaking with people both in groups or individually while listening to or understanding a spoken comment as symbols of communication apprehension.

Furthermore, identity could be defined as how a person makes a suitable relationship with the world, how time and space influence such relationship, how opportunities for the future are perceived by a person (Norton, 2001). In other words, identity is created and recreated from time to time and condition to condition; therefore, teachers have to increase their confidence and build a strong identity to overcome their apperception and fear while teaching. This causes them to seek comfort in this sensitive feeling and it may lead to increased confidence and affect in their working life. Moreover, EFL teachers' apprehension positively and expressively may trigger teacher tension.

Furthermore, Scovel (2013) recognized anxiety as a state of nervousness and apprehension or panic caused by the expectation of something. The bases of apprehension are informed by teachers, including apprehension due to prior experience, apprehension affected by a large class, apprehension caused by the feeling of ineffectiveness in teaching, apprehension because of using a novel teaching procedure, apprehension due to spending the time efficiently and apprehension of using a new/not the same device.

Although there is plethora of research (e.g., Conley & Glasman, 2008; Ferdowsi & Ghanizadeh, 2017) which exclusively studied teacher stress from



different viewpoints and can guide us with a deeper perspective of what leads a teacher to feel apprehensive; nonetheless, less attention has been paid to design a standardized scale for evaluating the sources of EFL teachers' apprehension. This dearth of studies implies a need to broaden the range of options for developing a scale to measure sources of instructors' apprehension.

The current study aimed to design and validate a scale for evaluating EFL teacher apprehension sources. In this vein, it attempted to bridge the gap in the literature by investigating the relationship between apprehension and learners' achievement in both male and female groups based on some English institutes in Shiraz, Iran.

## **2. Review of the Related Literature**

Research on instructors' apprehension has shown that many factors are related to the amount of apprehension perceived by teachers. The atmosphere in the class, experience, unfamiliar idioms or expressions, teachers' lack of self-confidence, students' demotivation, relationship with administrators, family expectation and concerns, students' disengagement, time restriction, and syllabus coverage are not all but some of the items that affect stress levels and their consequences. [Sammephet](#) and [Wanphet \(2013\)](#) observed that anxiety on the right scale can be a positive force for teachers. They also acknowledged that a large number of teachers feel nervous before meeting a new class, therefore, they desire to plan and arrange appropriate lessons for different classes and pay better attention to what is going on in the class.

In contrast to this, the group of novice teachers in the class often suffer from stress, the cause of anxiety, which is usually due to over-education and job anxiety ([Zeidner, 2014](#)). Additionally, [Travers \(2014\)](#) according to other scientists working in this field, referred to some kinds of crucial factors which straightly influence teaching, make apprehension or generate constraints. For example, these factors particularly include inappropriate working situations, noise levels, undesirable work environment, insufficient school construction and equipment. [Ipek \(2016\)](#) also pointed out that anxiety could be created with feeling upset, disappointed, overwhelmed, anxious, or worry.

Moreover, there is an essential difference between anxiety and apprehension. Anxiety is an emotion that must be taken seriously, otherwise, one may stop the person from having a balanced life, while apprehension treatment is much easier and needs to be given some thoughts to be coped with. Being aware of apprehension can make it very flexible and manageable ([Kyriacou, 2010](#)). Thus, apprehension has a crucial effect on teachers' classes and essentially on the student's achievements. There is no denying the existence of a multitude of studies (e.g., [Kim & Kim, 2004](#); [Kyriacou, 2010](#)) which worked on instructor's

apprehensions based on various perspectives and gave us better insight into what makes a teacher feel anxious; However, less attention has been paid to recognize the relationship between instructor's apprehension and students achievements. This research does mention a need to extend the range of options for developing a scale to measure sources of instructor's apprehension. For this purpose, the following research questions were reviewed during the present study:

- 1) How reliable and valid are the designed instructor's apprehension scale and its underlying factors?
- 2) Does the scale and its factors show a significant relationship with student's achievement?
- 3) Is there a meaningful relationship between apprehension and instructor's gender?

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Participants*

The participants of this research consisted of 100 teachers (60= female, 40= male) teaching in English language institutions in Shiraz, Iran, who were selected based on convenience sampling. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed (in electronic format) to teachers whose ages ranged from 20 to 58. Based on the distributed questionnaires, around 20 questionnaires were returned and 100 questionnaires were completed. Each teacher presented the overall score of one of his/her classes, including class activity, midterm exam and final exam to be calculated.

The total number of students were 700, which were selected from 100 classes i.e., intermediate and advanced. Out of 100 collected questionnaires, the researcher considered these two levels and eliminated others to reduce the effect of students' level on the results. All of the participants' first language was Persian and they spoke English as a foreign language.

#### *3.2 Data collection and instruments*

##### **3.2.1 Sources of EFL Instructor's Apprehension Scale**

The questionnaire was developed originally based on Ghanizadeh, Goldast and Ghonsooly's (2020) study in which four attributes were examined, namely, L2-related problems, attitudinal factors, classroom management, and organizational factors. The researcher studied several questionnaires to guarantee the content validity (e.g. [Ghanizadeh, Goldast, & Ghonsooly, 2015](#); [Yoon, 2012](#); [Kim & Kim,](#)



2004) and reviewed the attributes to localize the scales. Some redundant or inappropriate items were removed and some revisions were made accordingly. Lastly, a five-point Likert scale was advanced with 34 items ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Appendix A). These items were then categorized into four factors originated from Ghanizadeh, Goldust, and Ghonsooly's research (2015), Yoon (2012) and Kim and Kim (2004):

1. L2-related problems, involving linguistic factors: 1, 4, 5, 19, 24, 26, 32.
2. Attitudinal factors, involving teachers' lack of self-confidence, students' perceptions, and students' demotivation: 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28.
3. Classroom management, involving students' disengagement, time restriction, and syllabus coverage: 9, 17, 18, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34.
4. Organizational factors, involving supervisor observation: 6, 10, 13, 23.

### 3.2.2 Students' Achievement Scores

In the second phase, students' achievement scores from intermediate and advanced levels were collected to seek the relationship between teachers' apprehension scale and their students' achievement scores. Students' contributions to oral discussions in the class and teachers' evaluation of students' interactions determined a single oral score in addition to their class activities, midterm exam, and final written examination score indicating their English vocabulary and grammar knowledge and reading comprehension skill.

### 3.3 Data Collection and analysis

The research was conducted in winter 2022. The researcher examined and discussed several questionnaires with two other experts to guarantee the content validity of the scales. Using convenience sampling, the questionnaires were distributed to the teachers; they were asked to present the overall score of their last class. To determine how well the instructor's apprehension scale had worked considering its underlying factors, descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated. The reliability of the scale was estimated by Cronbach's alpha. Next, the correlations among the four factors were calculated. Moreover, the relationship between students' overall achievement scores and their instructor's apprehension scale was calculated through a correlation coefficient and Independent t-test and Pearson correlation test used to recognize the meaningful relationship between apprehension and instructor's gender.

#### 4. Results

The questionnaire comprises four factors, namely, organizational, attitudinal, L2-related factors, and classroom management. For each attribute, relevant items were composed: 4 items for organizational, 15 items for attitudinal, 7 items for L2-related factors, and 8 items for classroom management. The designed scale including 34 items was administered to the instructors.

Concerning the first research question (How reliable and valid is the designed instructor's apprehension scale and its underlying factors?), the content validity of the survey was reviewed and confirmed by three TEFL experts after the revisions. To further validate the scale, the total Cronbach's alpha estimate of the scales was sought, which found to be significant (i.e., 0.85, including: Organizational = 0.82, Attitudinal = 0.85, L2-related factors = 0.87, Classroom management = 0.89).

**Table 1**

*The Correlation Coefficients among Factors of EFL Instructor's Apprehension*

	Organizational	Attitudinal	L2-related factors	Classroom management	Instructor's apprehension scale
Organizational	1.00				
Attitudinal	0.82**	1.00			
L2-related factors	0.78**	0.85**	1.00		
Classroom management	0.79**	0.84**	0.88**	1.00	
Instructor's apprehension scale	0.88**	0.92**	0.94**	0.96**	1.00

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The correlations among the four factors were then computed. Table 1 indicates that all four underlying factors were highly correlated with each other and with the total instructor's apprehension scale: Attitudinal and instructor's apprehension scale ( $r = 0.92$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), organizational and instructor's apprehension scale ( $r = 0.88$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), L2-related factors and instructor's



apprehension scale ( $r= 0.94$ ,  $p= 0.003$ ), and classroom management and instructor's apprehension scale ( $r= 0.96$ ,  $p= 0.002$ ).

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics of EFL Instructor's Apprehension and Its Four Subscales*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>
<b>Organizational</b>	100	8.00	25.00	16.35	7.52
<b>Attitudinal</b>	100	19.00	58.00	41.05	12.03
<b>L2-related factors</b>	100	11.00	35.00	22.58	8.05
<b>Classroom management</b>	100	15.00	41.00	27.91	9.09
<b>Instructor's apprehension scale</b>	100	56.00	164.00	93.05	31.08
<b>Valid N (list wise)</b>	100				

To check the second research question (Does the scale and its factors show a significant relationship with student's achievement?), descriptive statistics of the instructor's apprehension scale and its four constituents were calculated as presented in Table 2. The highest mean score belongs to attitudinal factors ( $M= 41.05$ ), followed by classroom management ( $M= 27.91$ ), L2-related factors ( $M= 22.58$ ), and organizational factors ( $M= 16.35$ ) respectively. Accordingly, to see whether these four factors show a significant relationship with students' overall achievement, correlation coefficients were applied.

**Table 3**

*The Correlation Coefficients among Factors of EFL Instructor's Apprehension and Achievement Scores*

	<b>Achievement scores</b>
<b>Organizational</b>	0.75**
<b>Attitudinal</b>	0.86**
<b>L2-related factors</b>	0.76**
<b>Classroom management</b>	0.79**
<b>Instructor's apprehension scale</b>	0.84**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 3 reveals the causal relationships among the variables and students' achievement scores. The results demonstrated that EFL instructors' apprehension positively and significantly affected the students' achievement scores and class output (all correlation values are significant and far above 0.5).

**Table 4**

*T-Test for Apprehension Score in both Men and Women*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Sig</b>
<b>Deviation</b>					
<b>Apprehension</b>	<b>Male</b>	118.86	25.36	6.400	98 0.001
<b>Female</b>	88.90	21.44			

Independent samples T-test was used to check the mean value of apprehension score between men and women. The significance of the test for apprehension variable in Table 4 was less than 0.05. As Table 4 indicates, the mean value of apprehension score in groups of male and female had a significant difference and by calculated means, it can be concluded that the mean value of apprehension scores in the male group was more than the female group.



**Table 5**

*Spearman Correlation Test Among Apprehension and Gender*

<b>Statistical test</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>correlation coefficient</b>	-0.609
<b>P-value</b>	0.001

As Table 5 indicates, Spearman correlation coefficient between two variables is 0.609 and the significance level of Pearson correlation test is less than 0.05. According to the rule of Spearman correlation test, it means that there is a significant relationship (significant correlation) between apprehension and gender. Since the value of the correlation coefficient is negative, there is an inverse relationship between apprehension and gender. In other words, between the two groups of men and women, women's apprehension is more than men.

**Table 6**

*Pearson Correlation Test between Apprehension and Learner's Achievement in Male's Group*

<b>Statistical test</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>Pearson coefficient</b>	0.788
<b>P-value</b>	0.001

Based on the data presented in Table 6, Pearson correlation between two variables in this study in the general sample is 0.788 and the significance level is 0.001 which is less than 0.05. According to the rule of Pearson correlation test, there is a significant relationship between apprehension and learners' achievement in male's group. Therefore, the positive value of the correlation

coefficient indicates a direct relationship between apprehension and learner's achievement in the male group.

**Table 7**

*Pearson Correlation Test between Apprehension and Learner's Achievement in Female's Group*

<b>Statistical test</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>Pearson coefficient</b>	0.844
<b>P-value</b>	0.001

In Table 7, the results of Pearson correlation between two variables in general sample shows 0.844 and the significance level is 0.001 which is less than 0.05. Based on the rule of Pearson correlation test, there is a significant relationship between apprehension and learners' achievement in female's group. Moreover, the positive value of the correlation coefficient confirms a direct relationship between apprehension and learners' achievement in the female group. This implies that apprehension can impede learning in both genders. However, it might affect women in a more serious way due to several factors.

## 5. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to design a scale for evaluating some sources of EFL instructors' apprehension. To this end, the researcher gathered the data (Ghanizadeh, Goldast, & Ghonsooly, 2015; Yoon, 2012; and Kim & Kim, 2004), therefore, a 34-item scale on a 5-point Likert scale was designed. The analyzed data revealed that the scale was reliable and valid for recognizing the instructor's apprehension. The researcher utilized two other experts to guarantee the validity of the scale and the reliability was considered by estimating Cronbach's alpha. The instructor's apprehension scale was administrated to a group of EFL teachers, the researcher checked out that two items of the questionnaire were not suitable and meaningful, hence, they should be removed from the scale. Additionally, the researcher added three other factors to the scale. This resulted in a new version of the scale which demonstrates a good equalization between items of the scale. The study found that EFL instructors' apprehension significantly influenced students' achievement. Fundamentally, the degree of apprehension which a teacher encounter during teaching courses can be fully dependent on teachers' self-esteem and the identity they make for themselves.



Therefore, the findings in Table 1 prove that all four underlying factors were highly correlated and had a positive relationship with the instructor's apprehension scale and created major causes of stress among teachers. Hence, among the four items, the attitudinal factor had a higher average which is related to teachers' lack of self-confidence, students' perceptions, and students' demotivation. Therefore, it seems that the feeling of lack of self-confidence affects the personality of the teacher and students feel such behavior in the teacher's teaching. And this process harms their learning and causes students to lose their motivation.

This finding is in line with the findings of [Yusuf, Olufunke and Valentine \(2015\)](#) that teachers' dissatisfaction and lack of self-confidence was accompanied by with dissatisfaction of teacher's administration, salary benefits, material rewards, and progress.

In this vein, [Kim and Kim \(2004\)](#) discovered that students which are poorly motivated can ruin the classroom atmosphere, accordingly, they were concerned that this causes difficulty to successful training and learning process. Additionally, classroom management had a positive and meaningful relationship with the instructor's apprehension scale, which is consisted of time restriction, student disengagement and syllabus coverage. Therefore, the time restriction for a teacher means that they do not have enough time to rest and prepare for class again, and this is a destructive factor for students and causes them not to participate enough in class.

The results are consistent with a study of [Hargreaves \(2006\)](#) who believed that teachers gain experience with increasing time restriction resulting in less time for rest and recovery. It is very necessary that local and central school leaders make an effort to reduce time restrictions on teachers. In addition, a study showed that anxiety and student's disengagement can be related to speaking skills revealing that more anxious students are less proficient in speaking the target language and they do not prefer to engage in the class ([Bailey, 2015](#)). L2-related factor had a significant relationship with the instructor's apprehension scale that involves linguistic factors, this finding supports the idea of ([Schwartz, 2016](#)), that teacher's anxiety may be a result of experience due to linguistic difficulties which instructors face in teaching and using the target language.

In addition, Table 4 shows the mean value of apprehension score between men and women, it can be concluded that the mean value of apprehension score in the male group was more than female group. Also, Table 5 demonstrates a significant relationship between apprehension and gender, in other words, between the two groups of men and women, the amount of women's apprehension is more than men in teaching circumstances teachers with both genders, it means male and female can teach various subjects in different ways and they may face

anxiety in such situations. In accordance with some studies and experiences the females are more anxious than men; Kumar and Deo (2011) found that some college instructors had more anxiety on most of situations rather than senior teachers and they discovered that female instructors had more stress in comparison to their male colleagues. Furthermore, as can be seen in Table 6 and 7 the value of the correlation coefficient was positive, hence, there was a direct relationship between apprehension and learners' achievement in both male and female groups.

## **6. Conclusion**

Devising the instructor's apprehension scale paves the way for recognizing apprehensions between teachers with a standard scale. EFL teachers want to find the resources of apprehension but they encounter difficulties, for instance, they do not know how to recognize the various anxieties, they cannot cope with them in different situations and the main point is, are students affected in this situation or not?

Therefore, designing the instructor's apprehension scale is very useful because it demonstrates the positive and meaningful relationship between the instructor's apprehension and student's achievements and it attempts to show a meaningful and direct relationship between apprehension and instructor's gender. This proves that apprehension in the teacher plays a significant role in teaching processes and students' grades. Therefore, the extent to which the educational system is defined and adjusted in a way that reduces these factors, it will have a positive effect on the progress of the teacher and the students and the whole educational complex. Consequently, in the present study, the scale is validated and designed to try to contribute to EFL instructors. For example, it enables teachers to find their worries and sources of apprehensions, this information is very effective for teachers to distinguish and facilitate their motivation and their student's motivational situations. Thus, this study does not only demonstrate the importance of the instructor's apprehension scale to measure the level of anxiety and its relationship with student's achievements and gender but also helps instructors to improve their personality and welfare for more effective education.

However, the present study is limited in several ways. First, the most important limitation is the researcher has used a limited number of participants due to the coronavirus and the bad conditions in Iran. Second, the researcher could not access the participants at any time or anywhere and they could not contact each other face to face. Hence, the questionnaires were distributed between teachers only with online communication channels. All in all, in the future researchers could conduct a study to distinguish the relationship between instructor's apprehension and their teaching experience, social class, educational



level, and if the researchers try to utilize interviews as well as questionnaires, they could improve the efficiency of this research.

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## Appendix A

Teacher apprehension scale which is adapted from (Ghanizadeh, Goldast, & Ghonsooly, 2020; Yoon, 2012; Kim & Kim, 2004):

Please indicate your answers to each item by choosing the appropriate rate on the 5-point scale below. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Items	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am anxious when I have to deal with unfamiliar idioms or expressions in English					
2. I am not confident in speaking English					
3. Students' disinterest in-class activities makes me worried					
4. I am afraid that my students ask me about unknown content in English classes					
5. I feel uneasy when my students are bored with my class					
6. I feel apprehensive when I am not well-prepared					
7. I worry when I happen to deal with unknown contents related to culture in English classes					
8. I am afraid that I do not have up-to-date knowledge about English testing and methodology					
9. I feel apprehensive when the students ask irrelevant questions					
10. I am tense when I feel I cannot effectively cover the course syllabus in due time					
11. I feel stressed when the students are expectant					
12. I am afraid that my colleagues who are very fluent English speakers regard me as an incompetent English teacher					
13. I feel stressed when students misbehave in the class					

14. I feel anxious when I cannot build up a good rapport with the students
15. I worry when I happen to deal with sophisticated or unfamiliar vocabulary in English classes
16. It makes me anxious when I feel students do not understand teaching materials
17. When I see my students have difficulty in doing the tasks, I feel anxious
18. I worry about being compared with competent English teachers
19. I feel uneasy when students are anxious in my class
20. I feel apprehensive when I am teased by the students and lose my face
21. I feel anxious when there are students in my class who are highly proficient in English
22. I feel anxious when my students are not motivated
23. When my students do not actively participate in-class activities, I feel apprehensive
24. I feel anxious when words escape me
25. I am afraid of making mistakes when I use English
26. I am not confident in listening to English
27. I feel apprehensive when I make spelling errors
28. I am nervous when I teach English through English
29. I feel as if I lost my face when I recognize my students or colleagues find something wrong in my spoken language
30. I feel uneasy when I feel the supervisor might be dissatisfied with my performance
31. I feel anxious when I am not praised by the students
32. I am afraid that I will not know how to teach certain grammatical rules



33. I am anxious that I cannot have full control of the class

34. I worry when I have to enforce discipline on the students

**1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly disagree**

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