THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND THEIR SELF-PERCEIVED PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE IN ALABAMA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

Amy Gist Jones

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

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APPROVED BY:

Kurt Y. Michael, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Roger H. Stiles, Ed.D., Committee Member

Gregory P. Risner, Ed.D., Committee Member

Scott B. Watson, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Advanced Programs

ABSTRACT

Years of teaching experience have been found to increase student achievement more than advanced degrees, formal training, and in-service professional development. Additionally, teachers with high pedagogical competence levels have achieved excellent academic results and have also taught and led students to be well-rounded. It has been competent teachers who have lain at the heart of the educational process, as a bridge between the curriculum and the learner. The purpose of this correlational study was to determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between years of teaching experience and elementary teachers' self-perceived effective pedagogical competence. A convenience sample of 159 elementary teachers from three school districts in northwest Alabama participated in the study. Pearson correlations were utilized to test three null hypotheses to describe the strength and direction of the relationship between years of teaching experience and three factors of teachers' self-perceived pedagogical competence as measured with the Elementary Teachers Instructional Auto-perceived Competence Evaluation Scale. It was discovered that no significant relationships were found between years of teaching experience and the socio-emotional, communicative-relational, or instructional factors of the participants' pedagogical competence. It was concluded that teachers need quality professional development opportunities to maintain and upgrade their pedagogical competence throughout their teaching career. Since professional development was considered the next logical step in the process of building teachers' pedagogical competence, it would be helpful to conduct a study that seeks to determine the types of professional development opportunities teachers want and need.

Keywords: elementary teachers, pedagogical competence, years of teaching experience

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

Years of teaching experience have been found to increase student achievement more than advanced degrees, formal training, and in-service professional development (Harris & Sass, 2011). As teachers have gained experience, new self-conceptions have been added and self-schematas restructured to allow for the accommodation of new experiences and the expansion of effective teaching practices (Boekaerts, 1991). The assumption has existed that beginning teachers' cognitive schematas have been less elaborate, less interconnected, and less accessible than experienced teachers, and beginners' pedagogical reasoning skills have been less developed (Borko & Livingston, 1989).

Characteristically, teachers with more years of experience have practiced a greater sense of personal control in the classroom, which may have been due to an increased knowledge of their work and the educational setting (Sherman & Giles, 1981). According to Sato, Akita, and Iwakawa (1993), experienced teachers have (a) practiced reactionary thinking, (b) viewed situations from a comprehensive perspective, (c) incorporated active, sensitive, and deliberate involvement in observed situations, and (d) related instruction to content, cognition, and context. In general, experienced teachers – more than beginners – have been more reflective, talkative, and concerned with the overall classroom climate and instructional strategies used to reach students (Krull, Oras, & Sisask, 2007). This has supported the need for experienced teachers to mentor beginners by sharing different viewpoints openly and helping develop varied perspectives on teaching practices to deepen collegial conversations and the community of practice (L'Anson, Rodrigues, & Wilson, 2003).

Mentoring beginning teachers has been critical to not only avoid turn-over costs associated with hiring new teachers but to have been able to develop new teachers into productive, experienced teachers (Harris & Sass, 2011). Experienced teachers have achieved excellence in particular contexts, have been more flexible and opportunistic during instruction, and have been more sensitive to task demands and social situations when solving problems than their inexperienced counterparts (Berliner, 2001). Teaching experience has been directly related to a deeper understanding and a broader knowledge base for effective educational practices (Liu, Jones, & Sadera, 2010).

Expertise, which has been a process, not a state of being, has developed when people have worked at the edge of their competence to solve difficult issues (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993). It has been competent teachers who have lain at the heart of the educational process, as a bridge between the curriculum and the learner (Brophy, 1997). Teachers with high pedagogical competence levels have achieved excellent academic results and have also taught and led students to be well rounded (Mustafa, 2013). A core assumption of competency development in teaching has suggested that teachers' competence has advanced when they have been actively engaged within their classroom and school environment (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

In the early forties, Corey (1941) reflected on aspects of pedagogical competence, which he referred to as technical teaching competence. He provided six essential components that competent teachers exhibited. Competent teachers had the ability to (a) learn about children so that their development could be wisely directed, (b) describe students' outcomes to bring about desirable changes in their learning and behavior, (c) assess learning to ensure students' growth and achievement, (d) stimulate students' curiosity for them to perceive the connection between the school curriculum and their needs and interests, (e) provide a range of ingenious learning

experiences to offer students a wide variety of learning opportunities, and (f) utilize personal knowledge to connect students' learning across content areas. Corey summarized that the most important aspect of teachers' technical competence had been their ability to bring about positive change in their students.

The most important factor contributing to students' educational successes has been an effective teacher (Bright, 2012). Teaching students has required specific competencies related to content knowledge and pedagogical skills (Abdul-Razaq, Ahamad-Rahim, & Seman, 2013), and effective teachers have been capable of combining competencies related to knowledge and skills successfully (Norlander, 2009). Additionally, Stronge (2002) reported that (a) knowledge and caring, (b) communication and classroom management skills, and (c) process and mastery of content were all vital and effective teacher practices that have led to students' achievement.

Effective teachers have been able to conceptualize teaching and learning as encompassing both affective and cognitive domains in order to have a balanced view of the school, students, learning, and teaching (Demetriou & Wilson, 2009). Getzels and Jackson (1963) have discovered that the most significant indicator of classroom teaching effectiveness was a teachers' personality. Pittman (1985) found that when students noted their teachers' effectiveness, it was highly correlated with affective personality traits such as warmth, organization, and creativity. When elementary teachers were asked to identify effective teaching traits of their peers, they noted an affective trait, the capacity of love, as effective, as well as, risk-taking, independence, assertiveness, and maturity (Easterly, 1985).

For teachers to effectively impact students' learning and achievement, they have had to develop an image of themselves as an effective teacher (Kagan, 1992). Classroom teaching experience has been valuable, but experience alone has not guaranteed more effective teachers

(Berliner, 1992; Zeichner & Tabacnick, 1981). Beginning teachers who have possessed the prerequisite skills, knowledge base, values, and attitudes associated with effective teaching practices could have spent time in continual reflection and developed into competent and effective teachers (Sutadipura, 1985). Equipping pre-service teachers with the needed knowledge and skills required to work well with students has been essential for competency development. Providing professional development for current classroom teachers to enhance their pedagogical competence has also been crucial (Pillay, Goddard, & Wilss, 2005). Huang and Li (2012) noted that knowing the relationship between years of teaching experience and teachers' self-perceived pedagogical competence levels could help better identify areas that need fostering at various stages of the teaching career.

Problem Statement

Huang and Li (2012) noted that knowing the relationship between years of teaching experience and teachers' self-perceived pedagogical competence levels could help better identify areas that need fostering at various stages of the teaching career. Kunter et al. (2013) stated that more studies were needed that combine different aspects of pedagogical competence over the professional career. The problem of this study was that the literature was unclear about whether or not years of teaching experience has an effect on teachers' self-perceptions of their effective pedagogical competence.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between the predictor variable, *years of teaching experience* (self-reported by teachers as the number of years they have taught in a pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade classroom), and the criterion variable, *teachers' self-perceived effective pedagogical competence* (the interplay of skills, knowledge,

attitudes, and motivational variables—which are not innate but learned and taught—that teachers need to master in order to be successful in the classroom). Additionally, this study was also conducted to determine how reliable the newly developed Elementary Teachers Instructional Auto-perceived Competence Evaluation Scale (ET-IACES) was when translated from Spanish to English.

Significance of the Study

Mustafa (2013), Edmond and Hayler (2013), and Huang and Li (2012) noted the importance of teachers possessing a level of pedagogical competence to effectively instruct and manage students. Liu, Jones, and Sadera (2010) and Harris and Sass (2011) concluded that teachers with more years of teaching were more instructionally effective and knowledgeable about educational practices. However, research is still needed to examine the relationship between years of teaching experience and teachers' self-perceived pedagogical competence to identify areas of effective teaching that may need fostering at various stages of the teaching career (Huang & Li, 2012).

Valdivieso, Carbonero, and Martín-Antón (2013) stated that the main goal of assessing teaching practice has been to improve the quality of schools and teachers' professional development. Improving teacher quality has been a necessary element to improving education, and it has been generally accepted that the promotion of teacher effectiveness has been essential in improving elementary and secondary education in the United States (Harris & Sass, 2011). Additionally, Kunter et al. (2013) stated that recruiting pre-service teacher candidates with high levels of pedagogical competency characteristics could help to eventually improve practicing teachers' effectiveness.

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and their self-perceptions of effective pedagogical competence?

Null Hypotheses

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *socio-emotional* factor of their self-perceived effective pedagogical competence.

H_o2: There is no significant relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *communicative-relational* factor of their self-perceived pedagogical teaching competence.

H_o3: There is no significant relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *instructional* factor of their self-perceived effective pedagogical competence.

Definitions

1. *Years of teaching experience* – self-reported by teachers as the number of years they have taught in a pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade classroom by the time the data were collected (Liu, Jones, & Sadera, 2010)
2. *Pedagogical competence* – the interplay of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and motivational variables—which are not innate but learned and taught—that teachers need to master in order to be successful in the classroom (Epstein & Hundert, 2002; Kane, 1992; Klieme, Hartig, & Rauch, 2008; Kunter et al., 2013; Weinert, 2001)
3. *Grade level* – the participants' current teaching level at the time the data were collected (Liu, Jones, & Sadera, 2010)

4. *Education degree* – the education degree the participants have earned by the time the data were collected (Liu, Jones, & Sadera, 2010)

5. *Perception* – the extent to which each participant views the various areas related to teacher competence (Liu, Jones, & Sadera, 2010)

6. *Socio-Emotional factor of competence* – made up of variables related to control and the applicability of interpersonal skills and intrapersonal balance skills, which increase the quality of the interactive teaching process (Valdivieso, Carbonero, & Martín-Antón, 2013)

Competencies that related to the socio-emotional factor were:

a. *co-existence* – existing peacefully with others despite differences

b. *mediation* – intervention between conflicting groups to promote reconciliation

c. *group dynamics* – the interacting forces within a group of people

d. *emotional bonding* –a group of people emotionally growing closer together

e. *adaptive communication* – communication intended to assist someone else

f. *communicative sensitivity* – an awareness and understanding that how one communicates can affect the feelings of other people

g. *empathy* – the ability to share someone else's feelings

h. *self-efficacy* – a belief in oneself that he/she has the power to produce a desired outcome

7. *Communicative-Relational factor of competence* - made up of variables directly related to the management of the interaction and communicative dynamics involving cognitive, metacognitive, psycholinguistic, sociocultural, and psychopedagogical skills and abilities, which mediate the teaching-learning process (Valdivieso, Carbonero, & Martín-Antón, 2013)

Competencies that related to the communicative-relational factor were:

a. *assertiveness* – having confidence in one's behavior or style

b. *affective leadership* – the ability to develop strong relationships and emotional attachments to others to achieve common goals

c. *executive leadership* – the ability to lead with power

d. *problem solving* – the process of finding solutions to difficult issues

e. *nonverbal communication* – the messages we send through posture, gestures, facial expression, and spatial distance

f. *paraverbal communication* – the messages transmitted through tone, pitch, and pacing of the voice

8. *Instructional factor of competence* – made up of variables related to the promotion of teachers' formative skills and the development of meta-teaching actions. Also, it was related to the processes of managing instructional content according to set curricular goals and students' educational needs (Valdivieso, Carbonero, & Martín-Antón, 2013)

a. *adapting to new situations* – the ability to cope in new situations

b. *instructional control* – the ability to design a learning environment that will facilitate optimal learning outcomes

c. *planning* – the process of making a plan to achieve or do something

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Huang and Li (2012) noted that knowing the relationship between years of experience and teachers' self-perceived competence levels could help better identify areas of effective teaching that need fostering at various stages of the teaching career, and Kunter et al. (2013) stated that more studies were needed that combined different aspects of competence over the professional career. After reviewing studies centered on years of teaching, pedagogical competence, and effective teaching practices and qualities, the literature from the United States and abroad was unclear on whether or not years of teaching has had an effect on teachers' self-perceived effective pedagogical competence. Chapter two was organized as follows: (a) years of teaching experience, (b) pedagogy, (c) pedagogical competence, and (d) effective teaching.

Years of Teaching Experience

According to GreatSchools (2014), schools should have a balance of beginning and experienced teachers. Teachers with more years of experience have provided stability for a school and mentored new teachers, while beginning teachers have brought enthusiasm and fresh ideas to the classroom. Experienced teachers have been known to possess a deeper understanding about educational practices, exhibit high levels of self-monitoring skills, examine problems and identify solutions quickly and fairly accurately, and process meaningful patterns within their subject area (Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988). Teachers with more years of experience have been more capable of comprehending and describing classroom occurrences and have been able to interpret students' behavior and offer possible solutions for problematic situations (Carter et al., 1988; Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991).

Instructionally, teachers with more years of experience have been more likely to (a) have an elaborate mental plan for lessons, (b) utilize students' questions and responses for classroom discussion and learning, (c) employ flexibility and improvisation during lessons, and (d) be concerned about students' understanding of taught material (Cleary & Groer, 1994). Additionally, Krull, Oras, and Sisask (2007) noted that experienced teachers have characteristically been more reflective, talkative, and more concerned with the classroom atmosphere and general teacher strategy.

Years of teaching experience, described by Harris and Sass (2011) as on-the-job training, has been directly related to higher knowledge and understanding of educational practices. Liu, Jones, and Sadera (2010) quantitatively analyzed teachers ($N = 162$) to explore the participants' knowledge and perceptions of 24 instructional practices commonly utilized in education. The results indicated that the more years of teaching experience an educator possesses, the more understanding and knowledge they have about educational practices. The predictive model that the researchers developed from the study provided a representation of how years of teaching experience directly influences teachers' self-perceptions of educational practices. Liu, Jones, and Sadera did not find the results of their study surprising but noted that the results support the notion that teachers with more years of experience may be more familiar with varied educational practices and the research and theory supporting those practices.

Harris and Sass (2011) explored the relationship between years of teaching experience and productivity. Productivity, in this study, combined a teacher's training and performance quality on their students' achievement assessments. By quantitatively analyzing data from all public school students throughout Florida, the researchers utilized student achievement data for math and reading in each of grades three to 10 for the school years 1999-2000 through 2004-

2005. They also accessed, via a state-wide uniform system, teachers' university transcripts from Florida universities and community colleges, as well as their entrance exam scores, courses taken, and degrees conferred. Using large amounts of data from Florida's students and teachers, Harris and Sass found that the elementary teachers increased students' achievement, or productivity, with more years of experience. However, their formal training and advanced degrees were not found to significantly affect their students' achievement. Since this was a six-year study, it appeared that early career experiences were found to impact students' achievement and a teacher's productivity better than experiences discovered or learned in the latter years of teaching. Additionally, the teachers' in-service professional development was also not found to significantly impact their students' achievement. The less standardized construct of years of teaching experience appeared to increase students' achievement and teachers' productivity most. With these findings, the researcher emphasized the importance of promoting the retention of young teachers to not only avoid the cost of continually hiring new teachers, but to have the opportunity to develop young teachers into productive, experienced teachers.

It has been assumed that years of teaching experience increases a teacher's effectiveness. The actual effects of experience have depended on multiple factors, none of which have been complex. Experience has made a difference, but more years of experience has not always equated with improvement or effectiveness. During a teacher's first few years of teaching, career experiences have produced the greatest gains in a teacher's productivity. For beginning teachers, the measured effect of experience has made a stronger impact than all other possible effects including advanced degrees, National Board certification, and class size. Even though teachers' early-career experiences have paid the largest dividends for improving teachers' performance, the growth begins to level off. Teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience have

been more effective than teachers without experience but were not found to be more effective than teachers with five years of experience. It has been documented that effectiveness tends to decline at some point during the teaching career (Rice, 2010). Evidence has suggested that teachers with 25 years of experience or more may be less productive and less effective than teachers with less experience (Ladd, 2008) or even with teachers with no experience (Harris & Sass, 2011).

The key difference between teachers with more years of experience and beginning teachers has been found in the ways they have completed tasks or the types of tasks they have attempted (Tsui, 2009). In a mixed methods study, Huang and Li (2012) measured secondary mathematics teachers' levels of noticing during episodes of mathematics instruction. Ten experienced teachers with ten or more years of teaching experience, and ten beginners with three or less years of teaching experience were included in the sample. Videotaped lessons were qualitatively used to measure and rate the participants' noticing behaviors, and participant interviews were used to respond and critique the viewed lesson. Quantitatively, item frequency from the videotaped lesson observations' logs were used for data analysis. The research questions guiding the study were: (a) What important classroom events did Chinese secondary math teachers notice in general? and (b) What similarities and differences – if any – in classroom events were noticed by both groups of teachers? When data analysis was complete, Huang and Li surmised that both the experienced teachers and beginning teachers had some overarching similarities in their noticing behaviors. Both sets of participants noticed effective classroom instructional practices such as instructional objectives, instructional design, instructional process, and teachers' quality and personality. However, during the student-centered teaching events, teachers with more years, who had more experience in the area of classroom management,

seemed more attentive to the learning that was occurring, while the beginners focused on classroom management. Huang and Li emphasized that knowing the differences between experienced teachers and beginning teachers helps identify those critical areas where beginners need improvement. A larger sample from each group – experienced teachers and beginners – would have provided a broader generalization of the results.

In another study that compared teachers' behaviors based on years of teaching experience, Ünal and Ünal (2012) conducted a study in the western Anatolian region of Turkey to investigate the perception and belief differences of elementary school teachers (N = 268) toward classroom management (behavioral and instructional). The Behavior and Instructional Management Scale was used to assess teachers' behavioral and instructional classroom management tendencies. The researcher sought to answer if there were any differences between beginning and experienced teachers in their classroom management approaches. The statistical analysis revealed that the teachers showed significantly different perceptions and beliefs about classroom management based on their years of teaching experience. The teachers with more years of experience were more controlling over their classes' behavioral and instructional management. Also, the data indicated that teachers tended to change their perceptions and beliefs as they gained teaching experience and typically chose a path of interventionism, which resulted in more teacher control in the classroom for both behavioral and instructional management. Neither set of teachers, beginning or experienced, believed students should be provided opportunities to make choices, take ownership for their learning, or express their feelings freely in the classroom setting. The more experienced teachers favored maximum teacher control more than the beginning teachers. Beginning teachers, more than experienced teachers, tended to share

responsibilities for classroom control, focus not only on students' behaviors but their feelings, and paid specific attention to how the classroom environment shaped individual students.

Even though years of teaching experience has been found to be important it should not necessarily have been implied that the longer one has remained in the classroom the more effective that teacher has been (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006). Beginners have been defined as teachers with less than three years of classroom experience (Mustafa, 2013), but teachers who have taught for many years may have aligned more with beginners if they have not been employing reflective practices and fostering improvement in their teaching. Beginning teachers have utilized instruction that has been mostly dependent on telling and explaining because they have not yet developed their pedagogical content knowledge. To have been considered a master in the profession, teachers should have been found providing new opportunities for learners to connect to their background experiences, or schema, which should have made it easier to integrate new knowledge with previous knowledge (Toh, Ho, Chew, & Riley, 2003).

The experiences of a new teacher have paid greater dividends and made a stronger impact on teacher productivity and effectiveness than advanced degrees, teacher licensure test scores, National Board certification for elementary teachers, and class size (Ladd, 2008). As Harris and Sass (2011) noted, mentoring beginning teachers has been critical to not only avoid turn-over costs associated with hiring new teachers, but to have been able to develop beginning teachers into productive, experienced teachers across time.

Several factors may have impacted the effects of years of teaching in research studies. Since it has been found that teachers who have been less effective were more likely to leave the profession (Harris & Sass, 2011), it has been difficult to know whether the results of studies that include the measured effects of teaching experience actually reflect improvement with years of

teaching experience or high attrition levels of less effective teachers (Rice, 2010). These factors may have biased a study's results (Winters, 2011).

Pedagogy

Pedagogy has been known as the art of teaching. For anything to have developed into an art, the individuals involved have had to make decisions based on their beliefs. In the case of teachers, they have engaged with the art of teaching to the extent that they were actually aware of nuances and tensions that existed in their teaching, which may have impeded them from reaching their ideal image of whom and what a teacher should be. Within any pedagogy, teaching or otherwise, consciousness, intentionality, refinement, and belief have all been essential elements. In contrast to instruction, pedagogy has required that a teacher work inside an existing set of beliefs or ideals. Instruction could have occurred with no set of larger beliefs or ideals and could have occurred relatively context free. With a set of larger goals and beliefs that drive pedagogy, teachers have been given, or have given themselves, a purpose for their efforts (Breault, 2010).

For example, in the 1960s, Paulo Freire entered Brazilian villages in an effort to teach the illiterate. He not only employed a set of effective instructional principles, he got to know the villagers by listening to them and learning about their lives and what was important to them. He used what he learned from those experiences to generate literacy lessons with themes the villagers would understand. He also helped the villagers to comprehend the power of literacy and how they could overcome oppression. By empowering the people, and because of Freire's convictions, he was able to help the oppressed people. Effective instructional principles and strategies would have never worked without the set of beliefs that existed within Freire to help the oppressed villagers of Brazil (Freire, 2001).

Venkatraman (2012) stated, “Good teaching involves the head and the heart,” (130). Pedagogy has encompassed more than just what children should know and be taught; it has encompassed the psychological, cultural, political, and socioeconomical processes that accompany teaching. Young children in the elementary grades have needed teachers who have not only understood what they needed to learn (i.e., curriculum), but they have needed teachers who knew how to help them learn, which has been developed through a teacher’s preparation, professional development, and a teacher’s individual school experiences (New & Cochran, 2007). Katz (1995) defined pedagogy as a teacher’s toolkit that has encompassed the teacher’s professional philosophy about teaching, learning, and the purposes of education. There has been a knowledge base that has informed the teacher’s beliefs, as well as a range of instructional methods for putting their views into action within the learning environment.

Piaget (1970), a self-identified constructivist, was opposed to empiricism, which has been the ideal that humans gain new knowledge through the use of their senses as they internalize the external world. Being a constructivist thinker, Piaget stated that people, even small children, develop morals and create knowledge internally, and they are constantly adapting knowledge as they interact with people and objects in their environments (Piaget, 1970).

For teachers to fully understand their learners, they first have had to be able to understand themselves. Teachers’ pedagogies have integrated their knowledge and skills with their personality. Through self-understanding, self-acceptance, and a drive for improvement, teachers have been able to better understand their learners. Teachers must have thoughtfully considered what words they were going to say to students. Teachers must have sensed how their students felt in certain situations. They must also have been willing to honestly admit fault and their mistakes. Teachers’ pedagogies have been rooted in self-awareness and self-understanding,

empathy, tolerance, and flexibility in teaching and managing classroom relationships (Belousa & Uzulina, 2012).

Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence has been defined as the interplay of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and motivational variables—which are not innate but learned and taught—that teachers need to master in order to be successful in the classroom (Epstein & Hundert, 2002; Kane, 1992; Klieme, Hartig, & Rauch, 2008; Kunter et al., 2013; Weinert, 2001). Valdivieso, Carbonero, and Martín-Antón (2013) developed an instrument to measure aspects of effective pedagogical competence. The instrument measured: (a) Socio-Emotional competence, (b) Communicative-Relational competence, and (c) Instructional competence. Social-Emotional competence has been made up of variables related to control and the applicability of interpersonal skills and intrapersonal balance skills, which increased the quality of the interactive teaching process. Effective pedagogical competencies that related to this factor were: (a) co-existence, (b) mediation, (c) group dynamics, (d) emotional bonding, (e) adaptive communication, (f) communicative sensitivity, (g) empathy, and (h) self-efficacy. Communicative-Relational competence has been made up of variables directly related to the management of the interaction and communicative dynamics involving cognitive, metacognitive, psycholinguistic, sociocultural, and psychopedagogical skills and abilities, which mediate the teaching-learning process. Effective pedagogical competencies that related to this factor were: (a) assertiveness, (b) affective leadership, (c) executive leadership, (d) problem solving, (e) nonverbal communication, and (f) paraverbal communication. Instructional competencies have been made up of variables related to the promotion of teachers' formative skills and the development of meta-teaching actions. Also, it has been related to the processes of managing instructional content according to set curricular

goals and students' educational needs. Effective pedagogical competencies related to this factor were: (a) adapting to new situations (b) instructional control, and (c) planning (Valdivieso, Carbonero, & Martín-Antón, 2013).

The crucial skills that have determined a teacher's success in carrying out job related responsibilities have been defined as pedagogical competence. To be considered a pedagogically competent teacher, educators should be able to manage information, problem solve, and actively communicate with students. Additionally, teachers should be knowledgeable about the curriculum they have been assigned to teach, and they should know and understand difficulties faced by their learners (Edmond & Hayler, 2013).

Competent teachers have also been able to effectively manage the classroom environment, teach successfully, and make full use of resources (Mulyasa, 2005). Pedagogical competencies have influenced a teacher's work performance in carrying out instructional duties as an effective social agent to students. Teachers with a high level of competence have been able to help students achieve academically, as well as develop them into well-rounded students (Mustafa, 2013).

Teachers who have exhibited high levels of pedagogical competence have been sensitive to students' needs, nurturing, and caring. They have considered their students' perspectives and refrained from sarcasm and harsh disciplinary practices. In contrast, teachers who have exhibited low levels of pedagogical competence have tended to be disconnected with students. They have disregarded and disrespected them through humiliating or threatening them in front of others. However, when a teacher has created a strong classroom community by responding to students' needs and fostering positive relationships, students' have tended to be more engaged and enthusiastic about learning (Klem & Connell, 2004).

Research conducted in Latvia by Belousa and Uzulina (2012) explored elementary teachers' perceptions and attempted to describe their interpretations of the importance of the social and emotional aspects of pedagogical competence in the classroom. Data was collected by interviewing 14 elementary teachers who represented different lengths of service (i.e., years of teaching). Upon analysis of the interview data, recurrent themes emerged that signified the teachers' understanding of this aspect of pedagogical competence. The themes revealed that first year teachers' understanding of their classroom responsibilities were black-and-white, which ultimately impeded cooperation and collaboration with students during their first year in the classroom. One first year teacher who was interviewed remarked that it was difficult to have a common language with students because everything had to be the teacher's way. Other participants pointed out that relationships between the teacher and students during the first year of teaching were developed based on the teacher's preferences and beliefs, not the students' feelings or needs. Developing relationships with students has been known to motivate them for learning. Over time, the participants noted a difference in the way they understood their students. With more years of teaching experience, the teachers noted that they were able to accept students by exercising tolerance and empathy.

Teachers' abilities to form empathetic relationships with students have been central to teachers' pedagogical competence. It has reduced emotional strain and made learning more successful (Belousa & Uzulina, 2012). Garner (2010) noted that teachers' emotional competence has impacted students' abilities to learn and teachers' motivation. Positive teacher emotions such as facial expressions at appropriate times, culturally accepted emotional responses, and management of emotional intensity have all been aligned with effective teaching strategies. Belousa and Uzulina (2012) noted that gestures and facial expressions were a good way for

teachers to display emotions and interact with students. Also, when teachers have communicated with students it was discovered that humor played an important role and removed barriers. The use of humor seemed to help learners better understand difficult concepts. The effects of teachers exuding positive affect in the classroom have been that students were more likely to exhibit higher levels of on-task behavior and effort. In essence, emotionally competent teachers have been effective in attending to the emotional needs of their students and themselves.

By creating a positive classroom climate and a stimulating learning environment, Moè, Pazzaglia, and Ronconi (2010) noted that there should be a positive payoff for teachers, as well as students. Within a stimulating classroom environment, teachers should experience high self-efficacy and positive affect, which improves overall teaching effectiveness. With a convenience sample of 399 primary, middle, and high school teachers from eight schools across various towns in northern Italy, the researchers quantitatively analyzed participants' responses to multiple data sources. An instrument was employed to measure job satisfaction, and another was a self-report instrument to measure affect. The researchers discovered that positive affect and self-efficacy beliefs had a significant relationship with job satisfaction. Good teaching was not enough. Good teachers were needed who taught well, loved what they did, and adopted good practices and strategies. The researchers concluded that being able to do a job has not guaranteed satisfaction. In other words, a teacher also must have experienced positive affect and felt self-sufficient. Having ability and developing a skill set have been needed for good teaching performance; however, they have not been enough. Teachers may have possessed all the needed strategies and tools for successful teaching and still have experienced dissatisfaction, burnout, or anxiety at their workplace. Job satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, has been related to a person's work well-being and has been defined as an evaluative judgment one makes about his job (positive or

negative). High job satisfaction rates have increased a teacher's motivation, and motivated teachers have raised the intrinsic motivation of students, which have promoted students' vitality. Teachers should have been able to (a) teach effectively, (b) experience high self-efficacy within their teaching position, and (c) experience positive affect by creating optimal learning environments.

When teachers have not been well prepared to handle the social and emotional issues that may surface in the classroom, they experience emotional stress, and high levels of stress may lead to poor job performance and eventually lead to burnout. Consequently, emotionally positive learning environments have enabled teachers to do their jobs effectively and have helped to maintain teachers' emotional well-being (Frenzel et al., 2009). After teachers have experienced mastery over the social and emotional challenges of the classroom, high levels of competence have developed, and teachers have enjoyed teaching more and felt they were more effective (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004).

Jennings and Greenberg (2009) proposed a tripartite model of a prosocial, stimulating learning environment based on what has been determined about teachers' pedagogical competence. The model suggested: (a) Teachers' competence was important in the development of supportive teacher-student classroom relationships. (b) Teachers with high levels of competence demonstrated more proactive and effective classroom management strategies by utilizing their expressions and verbal support to guide student learning and management of students' classroom behaviors. (c) Teachers with high levels of competence instilled values in their students by modeling a social and emotional curriculum as outstanding role models in the classroom. In essence, teachers who were pedagogically competent had high self-awareness, exhibited prosocial values, made responsible decisions, and managed their emotions, behaviors,

and relationships with others in addition to attending to their instructional responsibilities in the classroom. Belousa and Uzulina (2012) noted that aspects of social and emotional competence were transformed over the course of a teacher's professional teaching career.

Results from Belousa and Uzulina's (2012) study revealed that the Latvian elementary teachers improved their pedagogical competence in one of four ways. During their initial years of teaching, the participants mentioned feeling fearful, insecure, and not self-assured, but through motivation, reflection, and self-reflection, they were able to learn from their mistakes and enhance their pedagogical competence. The participants intrinsically wanted to become good teachers. Additionally, some participants stated that their pedagogical competence grew during their first year because of a colleague-mentor who, on friendly terms, could empathize with them and whom the new teacher could trust. However, some teachers stated that they had to improve their pedagogical competence independently, without another's support. Thirdly, teachers mentioned that their pedagogical competence improved by sharing positive and negative experiences with one another. These exchanges may have occurred during informal talks among teachers, but the teachers believed that the implications were lasting. Lastly, participants mentioned that their pedagogical competence improved due to a supportive administration that made the teachers feel appreciated and secure in their positions.

Fernet, Guay, Senécal, and Austin (2012) conducted a study regarding the work-related well-being of 806 classroom teachers in Quebec, Canada. The underpinning of the study was the self-determination theory, and the researchers sought to test a model, which suggested teachers' perceptions of their job's demanding aspects and resource-based aspects may predict individuals' burnout tendencies through changes in motivational factors. One of the theoretical implications of this study was that teachers' perceptions of autonomy and self-efficacy were directly

correlated to burnout tendencies. The researchers discovered that interventions to reduce the demands placed on teachers and an increase in resources should be provided to assist in modifying and managing teachers' perceptions of their work environment. Since school administrators typically design and define the environment in which teachers evolve, administrators should work to foster self-efficacy in teachers by their nature and through their actions. The teachers surveyed believed that professional development should be provided to support their feelings of classroom competence.

In Mustafa's (2013) quantitative study that examined professional competence among Indonesian high school teachers, Mustafa suggested that professional development should be provided for teachers to improve their feelings of pedagogical competence. Mustafa tested constructs of professional competence in teaching, which were noted as: (a) mastery in the foundations of education, (b) vision, mission, and educational objectives, (c) national (Indonesian) educational standards, (d) curriculum development choices, (e) classroom management, and (f) the ability to use media and educational resources. Mustafa's study was guided by one research question: Is there a difference in professional competence among high school teachers in Indonesia based on gender and teaching experience? The study's sample included 327 randomly selected teachers (132 males and 195 females) from 12 secondary schools in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. An ANOVA and MANOVA were used to test the six aforementioned constructs against the two independent variables of gender and teaching experience. The results indicated that females had a higher level of professional competence than the males. Significant differences were discovered between gender and (a) mastery in foundations of education, (b) mastery of vision, mission, and educational objectives, (c) understanding and mastery of national (Indonesian) educational standards, and (d) mastering and

developing curriculum. No significant difference was found between gender and mastery of classroom management and the ability to use media and educational resources. For the test of differences between work experience (i.e., years of teaching) and teachers' professional competence, the results varied. When compared to teachers with 10 to 15 years of teaching, those with four to nine years of teaching indicated no significant difference in their self-perceptions of their professional competence; however, when teachers with four to nine years of teaching were compared with those who have 16 to 25 years of teaching, a significant difference did surface. Additionally, a significant difference was evidenced in professional competence for teachers with 16 to 25 years of teaching when compared to those with 10 to 15 years of teaching. The researcher suggested that schools should provide professional development for teachers based on clear guidelines and expectations for maintaining and upgrading teachers' professional competence, and Mustafa noted that male specific training may be beneficial, too.

The construct of pedagogical competence has been determined by a teacher's success in carrying out job-related responsibilities. To be considered a pedagogically competent teacher, teachers should be able to manage information, problem solve, and actively communicate with students. Additionally, teachers should be knowledgeable about the curriculum they have been assigned to teach, and they should know and understand difficulties faced by their learners (Edmond & Hayler, 2013). According to Venkatraman (2012), teachers should continuously strive to develop their pedagogical competence.

Effective Teaching

Not only has it been important for students to have a highly qualified teacher, it has been more important for students to have a highly effective teacher whose efforts have yielded high rates of student achievement. A teacher's effectiveness has been known to produce residual

effects in students for many years to come. Highly effective teachers have been characterized by their planning, organizational, instructional, and assessment skills. They have been able to determine students' instructional goals and set goals for each student based upon their experience, knowledge, and training to ensure a student's success (Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

According to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2014), effective teachers have possessed subject matter knowledge and strategies to increase students' achievement, and they have also applied (a) knowledge of child development for student motivation and engagement, (b) knowledge to diagnose students' learning needs, and (c) developmental strategies to develop a positive classroom climate and create a stimulating learning environment.

Bright (2012) stated that the main variable in classroom performance and student achievement has been the teachers' effectiveness of instruction. Effective teachers have known that the purpose of school has been to prepare students to do well in life, not just to perform well academically. They have utilized a variety of instructional delivery methods, continuous movement while teaching, and proximity control to manage classroom behavior. These teachers have internalized accountability and high performance standards for themselves. Effective teachers have known how to motivate students and overcome their classroom lethargy, and they have been able to convince students that what they are requiring them to know has been worthy of their time and efforts. Additionally, effective teachers have been lifelong learners and have wanted to instill that same passion for learning in their students.

Even though a teacher's role has been to transmit knowledge, sustain motivation for learning, and promote student development, successful teachers have been able to (a) foster learning, (b) manage school activities efficiently, (c) limit instructional disturbances, (d) manage

time effectively, (e) provide appropriate pacing for students, and (f) create a supportive social environment (Kunter, Baumert, & Köller, 2007). An effective teacher's classroom has been characterized by little to no conflict or disruptive student behaviors. The teacher has provided smooth transitions from one learning situation to the next. The students have expressed their emotions, communicated and problem solved, and responded to an individual's differences respectfully. The teacher has modeled these behaviors for the students and has also been attuned to the support students needed in the classroom and was respectful of an individual's differences (La Paro & Pianta, 2003).

Watson, Miller, Davis, and Carter (2010) conducted a three-year, mixed-methods study which addressed the constructs of teacher effectiveness by comparing the participants' responses for effective teaching qualities to Stronge's (2002) Teacher Skills Assessment Checklist. Middle school principals from one school district in the southeastern part of the United States were asked to select a sample of teachers for focus group sessions to represent their school's faculty. During each focus group session, nine questions addressing middle school specific experiences were presented to the teachers in a structured interview. One leading question surfaced from the interviews, and ultimately, the teachers were asked to suggest the elements teachers usually incorporated in good instruction. Teachers' responses were recorded with field notes; the interview notes were color coded; and matches were sought to Stronge's Teacher Skills Assessment Checklist. Themes, key words, and patterns were examined for all participants using Stronge's five categories. Ninety-five percent of the responses were categorized into one of Stronge's five domains. The category Teacher as a Person received the majority of total responses, and this category was then interviewed among the focus groups. Themes emerged from these interviews, and the researchers ran a multiple response analysis in SPSS® to

aggregate similar participant responses to avoid duplication. More than 50% of the teachers interviewed agreed that caring, dedicated, interactive, and enthusiastic were credited as effective teacher qualities, as well as content knowledge, which was viewed by Stronge as a prerequisite to effective teaching. Four qualities (happy, likes kids, communication skills, and flexible) were new categories not previously identified by Stronge, and other qualities were recognized that could not be collapsed into categories. The participants overwhelmingly responded that a teacher's affective qualities are essential for an effective classroom teacher. The researchers suggested that teacher training schools might use the results as an opportunity to help craft and nurture candidates' innate abilities since teacher education programs have been designed to ensure prospective teachers were competent in skill knowledge, which—when mastered—has allowed teachers to face challenges in schools (Mustafa, 2013) and in their duties as a professional (Edmond & Hayler, 2013).

Since all school decisions have lasting implications, only the best options should be chosen when instructing students. The participants in Belousa and Uzulina's (2012) Latvian study stated that their initial understanding of a teachers' pedagogical competence was based on their memories gained during their own school experiences. However, through opportunities and experiences, feelings and emotions change, and reflection and self-reflection alter teachers' perspectives. As one interviewee stated, "…life emerges not by academic proficiency, but through understanding of oneself and others' lives" (p. 166).

In a qualitative study that explored the perceptions of Turkish elementary and secondary teachers and the characteristics they recalled from their schooling with effective and not-so-effective teachers, Karakas (2013) found that teachers tended to teach in a manner like they were taught when in school, the researcher believed that discovering how future elementary teachers

were taught might help them reflect on their own practices and improve through the reflection process. To examine the construct of effective teacher practices, the researcher utilized three research questions to drive the study. (a) What are the characteristics of effective teachers and how do these characteristics impress the prospective elementary teachers? (b) What are the characteristics of not-so-effective teachers and how do these characteristics influence the prospective elementary teachers? and (c) How do prospective elementary teachers describe the type of teacher they want to be? Through convenience sampling, 41 sophomore students who were enrolled as prospective elementary teachers participated. The researcher asked participants to write an essay on their most effective teachers, not-so-effective teachers, and the way they intended to teach after they graduated. They were asked to write the essay as a requirement for two spring courses at the school in which the researcher was their teacher. Each student was allowed one month to ponder the three research questions and write the essay. The results showed that the prospective teachers perceived positive instructional characteristics as loving, caring, funny, and patient. They believed that a teacher who showed special in and out of class interest in students and was fair to everyone was considered good. The good teachers also (a) loved their jobs, (b) were knowledgeable in their content area, (c) cared about their appearance, and (d) used their voice nicely. Not-so-good teachers had (a) a strong temper, (b) imposed fear, (c) verbally abused students, (d) used violence, and (e) were unfair, boring, and discriminative.

Teacher effectiveness has developed when teachers have actively engaged within their environment (Demetriou & Wilson, 2009; Retelsdorf, Butler, Streblow, & Schiefele, 2010) and with their students (Frenzel et al., 2009; Karakas, 2013; Klassen, Perry, & Frenzel, 2012; Kunter et al., 2011). According to Demetriou and Wilson (2009), effective teachers have obtained positive affect from working with colleagues and students, and at the same time had self-efficacy

that they have been capable and believed they could overcome the issues one faced in teaching. Effective teachers have been able to conceptualize teaching and learning as encompassing both affective and cognitive domains in order to have a balanced view of the school, students, learning, and teaching.

Aspects beyond teacher knowledge such as teachers' beliefs, work-related motivation, and the ability for professional self-regulation have been important in determining teacher success since characteristics of teachers' pedagogical competence have been found to directly impact teachers' instructional behaviors. Being a smart student has not necessarily made one a good teacher. It has been the aspects of competence directly related to the profession of teaching that have mattered (Kunter et al., 2013). Pedagogically competent teachers have related teaching content with students' schemas and provided effective learning experiences through high quality exercises, projects, and homework assignments (Loughran, Berry, & Mulhall, 2012).

Teachers who have been found exhibiting characteristics of pedagogical competence (a) developed supportive and encouraging relationships with students, (b) developed lessons that were aligned with their students' strengths and abilities, (c) established and implemented a classroom management system that promoted students' intrinsic motivation, (d) assisted students in times of conflict or distress, (e) encouraged students' cooperation, and (f) acted as the students' role model for respectful communication and appropriate social behaviors (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Summary

Researchers have concluded that years of teaching experience have impacted classroom teaching and learning (Harris & Sass, 2011; Huang & Li, 2012; Liu, Jones, & Sadera, 2010), and they have also concluded that competent teachers have successfully reached their students

(Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Karakas, 2013; Kunter et al., 2011; Moè, Pazzaglia, & Ronconi, 2010; Mustafa, 2013). A gap in the literature was found when no study determined if a relationship exists between years of teaching experience and elementary teachers' self-perceived effective pedagogical competence. Additionally, most of the reviewed studies related to pedagogical competence were conducted outside of the United States (Karakas, 2013; Kunter et al., 2011; Moè, Pazzaglia, & Ronconi, 2010; Mustafa, 2013). A need still existed to fill the research gaps identified by Kunter et al. (2013) and Huang and Li (2012). Kunter et al. determined that more studies were needed that combined different aspects of pedagogical competence over the professional career, and Huang and Li noted that knowing the relationship between teachers' years of experience and their self-perceived pedagogical competence levels could help better identify areas that need fostering at various stages of the teaching career.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Design

Pearson correlations were used in this study with years of teaching experience as the predictor variable and teachers' self-perceived effective pedagogical competence scores as the criterion variable. This correlational design was appropriate for this study since its purpose was "to measure the degree and direction of the relationship between two or more variables and to explore possible causal factors" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 336). Years of teaching experience was self-reported by teachers as the number of years they have taught in a pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade classroom by the time the data were collected. Self-perceived effective teaching pedagogical competence was defined as the extent to which each participant views the various areas related to pedagogical competence, which was defined as the interplay of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and motivational variables—which are not innate but learned and taught—that teachers need to master in order to be successful in the classroom.

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and their self-perceptions of effective pedagogical competence?

Null Hypotheses

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *socio-emotional* factor of their self-perceived effective pedagogical competence.

H_o2: There is no significant relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *communicative-relational* factor of their self-perceived pedagogical teaching competence.

H_o3: There is no significant relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *instructional* factor of their self-perceived effective pedagogical competence.

Participants and Setting

The participants for the study were selected by convenience sampling from three northwest Alabama school districts categorized as rural, rural/suburban, and suburban. All general education elementary teachers (kindergarten through fifth grade) were invited to participate. The total number of questionnaires delivered to schools was 251. The total number of questionnaires returned was 159, which exceeded the required minimum of 153 participants for a medium effect size with a statistical power of .80 at the .05 alpha level (Warner, 2013, p. 300). However, when analyzing the data, 11 data sets were deemed unusable due to missing data and outliers, which resulted in a final count of 148 sets of usable data. The final sample included a total of 142 females (95.9%) and six males (4.1%). One teacher self-identified him/herself as American Indian or Alaska Native (0.7%), one as Asian (0.7%), five as Black or African American (3.4%), one as Hispanic/Latino (0.7%), none as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (0.0%), and 140 as White (94.6%). Forty-nine participants self-reported having a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree (33.1%), 94 reported having a Masters (M) degree (63.5%), five reported having a six-year (6Y) or a Specialist degree (3.4%), zero reported having a Doctorate (DO) (0.0%), and none reported Non-degreed (ND) (0.0%). Of the participants, 37 self-reported their current teaching assignment as kindergarten (25%), 17 reported first grade (11.5%), 20 reported second grade (13.5%), 30 reported third grade (20.3%), 22 reported fourth grade (14.9%), 21 reported fifth grade (14.2%), and one reported other (0.7%). Concerning years of teaching experience, the participants self-reported this information as the number of years they

had taught in a pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade classroom by the time the data were collected.

Instrumentation

For the predictor variable, *years of teaching experience*, teachers' self-reported their years of experience on a demographic form included with the instrument. The criterion variable, *teachers' self-perceived pedagogical competence*, was measured using the Elementary Teachers Instructional Auto-perceived Competence Evaluation Scale (ET-IACES). Valdivieso, Carbonero, and Martín-Antón, (2013) constructed the ET-IACES to quantitatively examine teachers' personal, psychoinstructional, and psychopedagogical behaviors. Typical and complex teachers' actions were used to create the instrument. The personal and psychoinstructional areas were measured across several domains: (a) cognitive, (b) affective, (c) social, (d) interactive, and (e) conversational. The psychopedagogical area was defined by an examination of teaching styles. The researchers desired to fill a gap in educational measurement and create an analytical instrument based on the constructivist approach to teaching and learning, which was teacher-focused and quantitatively defined the profile of an effective teaching style in elementary education. It was the intent of Valdivieso, Carbonero, and Martín-Antón to configure an instrument that was valid and reliable to assess elementary educators' teaching patterns and profiles and thus provide a holistic measure of teaching competence.

During the first phase of instrument construction, Valdivieso, Carbonero, and Martín-Antón (2013) conducted an extensive review of literature and assessment instruments on elementary educators' teaching styles. The researchers drafted 137 items and enlisted a group of experts for analysis. The experts' judgment, quantitative analyses, and a pilot administration were conducted with elementary education teachers in Spain. The possible items were classified

into three categories: (a) teacher intentions, (b) teaching actions, or (c) teacher attitudes or preferences.

During the second phase of construction, more teaching competence dimensions were added based on the experts' observations and comments and a more recent review of literature. A second judgment was made by the experts to calculate construct and content validity and to verify the structure and meaning of the possible items. Those items having a conjoint frequency of 70% in construct and content validity were kept (Valdivieso, Carbonero, & Martín-Antón, 2013).

Items were then readjusted and refined based on the experts' judgment and to better balance the structure of the instrument. Next, items were analyzed for reliability with a second pilot administration with elementary education teachers to verify test-retest reliability. To eliminate possible bias and expectancies of the interviewees, the items were randomly distributed to avoid grouping by dimensions. Cronbach's alpha and Guttmann's split-half coefficient were used to calculate the internal consistency of all items for test-retest reliability. The final determinations for the instrument were made based on three factor analyses, which established the dimensional structure and organization. The factor analysis data was collected from a third, and final, pilot administration, which included a broad, random sample of elementary education teachers from Spain. Items were selected from a loading index of $\geq .445$ on a single factor (Valdivieso, Carbonero, & Martín-Antón, 2013).

The final instrument had 58 items based on a five-point Likert-scale design that ranged from Almost Never True to Almost Always True. Responses were as follows: Almost Always True = 5, Usually True = 4, Occasionally True = 3, Usually Not True = 2, and Almost Never True = 1. The items were loaded around three factors: (a) Socio-Emotional (S-E), contained 34

items about variables related to teachers' balance of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills; (b) Communicative-Relational (C-R), assessed 15 items about variables related to teachers' interactive classroom management and communicative dynamics; (c) Instructional (I), included nine items about variables related to the advancement and improvement of foundational skills and teaching actions. These three factors had a good reliability calculated with Cronbach's alpha: (a) Socio-Emotional, Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$; (b) Communicative-Relational, Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$; and (c) Instructional, Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$.

The combined overall competence score for each participant was obtained by adding the items from the ET-IACES to receive a possible score of 58 to 290. A score of 58 was the lowest possible score for each participant (indicating a low level of self-perceived competence), and a score of 290 was the highest possible score (indicating a high level of self-perceived instructional competence). Scores for the Socio-Emotional (S-E) factor ranged from 34 to 170. Scores for the Communicative-Relational (C-R) factor ranged from 15 to 75. Scores for the Instructional (I) factor ranged from nine to 45 (Valdivieso, Carbonero, & Martín-Antón, 2013).

The ET-IACES has been used in 13 other research projects to date: Aldavero-Soria, 2013; Arribas-Serrano, 2013; Carbonero et al., 2014; DiLoreto and Carbonero, 2014; Escalier-Lazarte, 2013; Hernández-Herrero, 2013; Martín, Valdivieso, Caggiano and Martín, 2013; Martín, Burón, Caggiano, and Antón, 2013; Martín-Pardo, 2013; Navares-Sanz, 2013; Nieto-Barrios, 2013; Olalla-Chueca, 2013; Villán-Gómez, 2013. The instrument was originally written in Spanish. For this study a translated version of the instrument was used. The translated instrument was found in the *Revista de Psicodidactica*. The translation was checked by four Spanish teachers with an average of nine years of teaching experience to ensure accurate wording. Permission was granted by one of the authors to utilize the translated instrument for

this study (see Appendix A). The approximate time to complete this instrument was 10 to 15 minutes.

Procedures

The researcher initiated the study by obtaining permission from superintendents of school districts located in northwest Alabama (see Appendix B). Superintendents granted written permission to contact principals supervising elementary (kindergarten through fifth grade) teachers in their districts. IRB approval was then sought and obtained (see Appendix C). Principals were contacted seeking permission for their elementary (kindergarten through fifth grade) teachers' participation in the study. Two weeks before the study was scheduled to begin, the researcher emailed principals to remind them about the study and provide instructions for teacher participation and security of the collected data.

When data collection was scheduled to begin, the researcher visited each site and placed a packet in each elementary teacher's (kindergarten through fifth grade) school mailbox. The packet included a cover letter with instructions for the participants (see Appendix D), consent page (see Appendix E), copy of the instrument, and a white, letter-sized envelope. The researcher also met with the secretary at each school and reviewed the data collection instructions one-on-one, emphasizing the importance of securing the data in the school safe or other locked location overnight. A data collection box and a raffle ticket box were given to the secretary at each school, along with a set of raffle tickets (see Appendix F). Teachers participating in the study had the option of entering their name for a chance to win a $200 Target® gift card. When each participant anonymously completed the questionnaire, they sealed it in the unmarked white envelope and placed in into a box on the secretary's desk. At that time the secretary gave them a

raffle ticket. The participant had the choice of filling out the raffle ticket and entering in the drawing by placing it in the raffle ticket box.

Exactly one week after delivering the packets to each school, the researcher returned to gather the data collection box and raffle ticket box. Once all questionnaires were collected from each site, the information was entered into SPSS® for analysis. Within one week of collecting the raffle ticket boxes, the raffle tickets that were collected from each research site were combined for the $200 Target® gift card drawing. The drawing occurred at the researcher's workplace, and two neutral parties (neither person was eligible to participate in the study) were present at the time of the drawing. The winner was contacted by the researcher via the provided contact information on the raffle ticket.

Data Analysis

Pearson correlations were utilized to test the three null hypotheses to describe the strength and direction of the relationship between two quantitative variables: years of teaching experience and elementary teachers' self-perceived pedagogical competence scores for each factor. Data screening was conducted to check for missing data. Preliminary analyses were run to check for violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution. Due to a large sample size, $N = 148$, the researcher used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to check for normality at the .05 alpha level along with histograms for each data set. Box plots and scatter plots were used to check the assumptions of bivariate outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution. Due to a Bonferroni correction and the testing of three null hypotheses, the researcher used an alpha level of .0167 (two-tailed) (Warner, 2013).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and their self-perceptions of effective pedagogical competence?

Null Hypotheses

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *socio-emotional* factor of their self-perceived effective pedagogical competence.

H_o2: There is no significant relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *communicative-relational* factor of their self-perceived pedagogical teaching competence.

H_o3: There is no significant relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *instructional* factor of their self-perceived effective pedagogical competence.

Descriptive Statistics

Mean and standard deviation obtained for the predictor variable (years of teaching experience) can be found in Table 1. Means and standard deviations for the criterion variables (teachers' socio-emotional competence, communicative-relational competence, and instructional competence) can be found in Table 2.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Predictor Variable

Variable	*N*	Mean	*S.D.*
Years of Teaching Experience	148	16.42	8.20

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Criterion Variables

Variables	*N*	Mean	*S.D.*
Socio-Emotional Competence	148	157.21	8.88
Communicative-Relational Competence	148	65.16	4.95
Instructional Competence	148	40.37	2.79

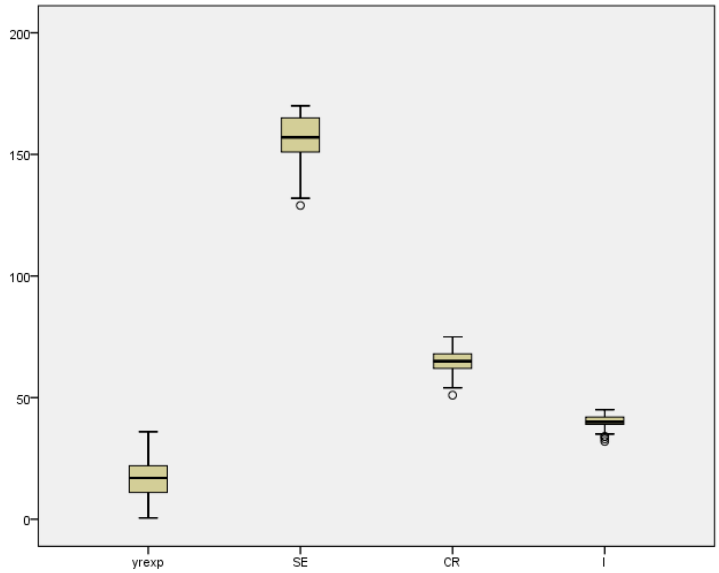
Results

Data Screening

Screening was conducted to check for missing data, outliers, and inconsistencies among the predictor and criterion variables. Data errors, inconsistencies, and outliers were identified in accordance with the procedure recommended by Warner (2013, pp. 132-137, 270-271). One participant (code 114) completed the demographic information but did not complete any of the items on the questionnaire, which resulted in a large number of missing scores for the participant. The information for the participant was deleted. Also, five participants (codes 42, 70, 85, 93, and 105) only completed the demographic information and 27 of the 58 questionnaire items. This also resulted in a large number of missing scores for the five participants. These participants' data were also deleted resulting in six participants' data being removed from the data set (Warner, 2013, p. 134). Box plots were used to detect outliers for the predictor variable and each criterion variable (Warner, 2013, p. 153-157) (see Figure 1 for box plots). Five additional participants' data were removed from the data set (codes 8, 56, 110, 115, and 124) due to outliers. Normality was then examined for each variable using Kolmogorov-Smirnov's normality test (Warner, 2013, p. 153). The assumption for normality was not found tenable at the

.05 alpha level for each criterion variable: Socio-Emotional factor of competence (p = .006), Communicative-Relational factor of competence (p = .002), and Instructional factor of competence (p = .000). Thus, the researcher ran a series of histograms, and after a graphical inspection, determined to continue with the analysis using the Pearson r. However, the assumption of normality was found tenable at the .05 alpha level for the predictor variable: years of teaching experience (p = .2).

Figure 1. Box Plots



Assumption Tests

Pearson's r was used to test the three null hypotheses. Pearson's r required that five assumptions were met: independence, normality, linearity, bivariate normal distribution, and bivariate outliers (Warner, 2013, p. 267-270). For the assumption of independence, the scores for the criterion variables were independent for each case (Warner, 2013, p. 25, 267). For the assumption of normality, see the above section. For the assumption of linearity, the linear relationship between the predictor variable and each of the criterion variables was examined using scatter plots, and no curvilinear plots were identified making the assumption of linearity

acceptable (Warner, 2013, p. 267-269). The assumptions of bivariate normal distribution and bivariate outliers were found tenable after a visual examination.

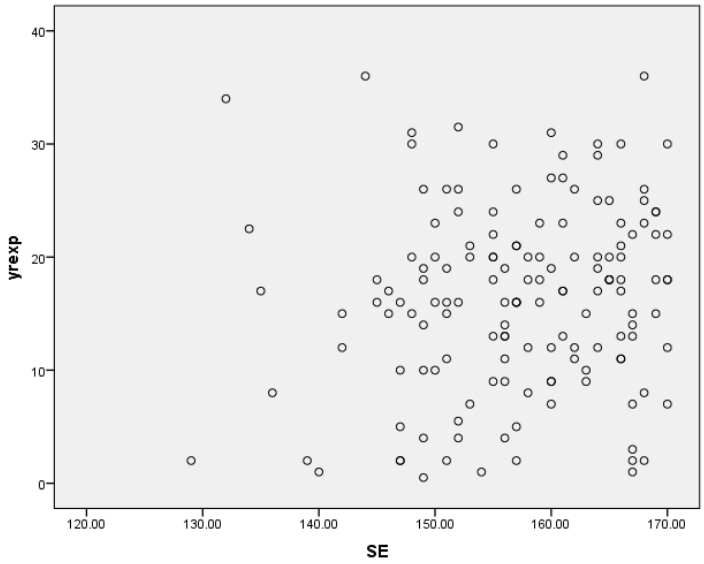
Statistical Analysis

Pearson correlations were used to test the three null hypotheses at the .05 alpha level. However, to help protect against a Type I error across the three correlations, a Bonferroni correction was used (PCalpha = EWalpha/k or PCalpha = .05/3 = .0167), and the alpha level was adjusted to .0167 (Warner, 2013, p. 98-99).

Null Hypothesis One

For hypothesis one, the researcher examined if there was relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *socio-emotional* factor of the teachers' self-perceived teaching competence. The researcher did not find a statistically significant relationship between years of experience and the *socio-emotional* factor of the teachers' self-perceived teaching competence. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null $r(146) = .13$, $p = .115$. Even though there was no significant difference, the effect size, where $r = .13$, was medium based on Cohen's effect-size index (Warner, 2013, p. 208). See Figure 2 for scatter plot for *years of teaching experience* and *socio-emotional* factor of pedagogical competence.

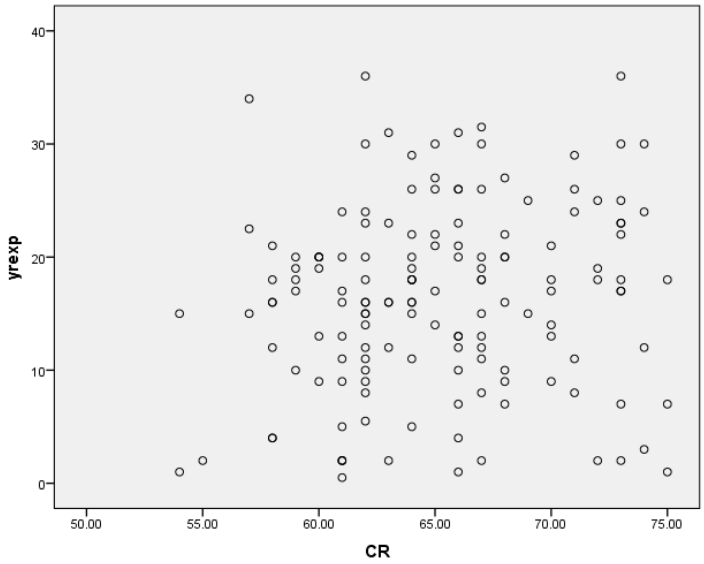
Figure 2. Scatter Plot between Years of Teaching Experience and Teachers' Self-Perceived Socio-Emotional Competence



Null Hypothesis Two

For hypothesis two, the researcher examined if there was relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *communicative-relational* factor of the teachers' self-perceived teaching competence. The researcher did not find a statistically significant relationship between years of experience and the *communicative-relational* factor of the teachers' self-perceived teaching competence. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null $r(146) = .129$, $p = .119$. Even though there was no significant difference, the effect size, where $r = .13$, was medium based on Cohen's effect-size index (Warner, 2013, p. 208). See Figure 3 for scatter plot for *years of teaching experience* and *communicative-relational* factor of pedagogical competence.

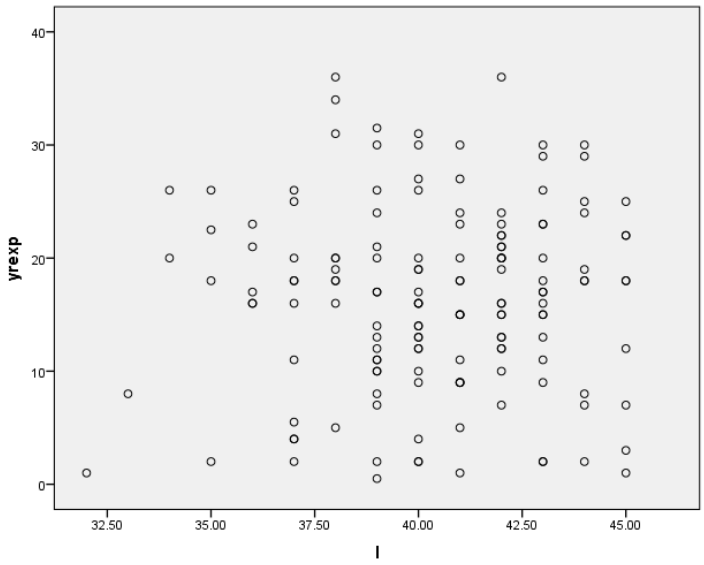
Figure 3. Scatter Plot between Years of Teaching Experience and Teachers' Self-Perceived Communicative-Relational Competence



Null Hypothesis Three

For hypothesis three, the researcher examined if there was relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *instructional* factor of the teachers' self-perceived teaching competence. The researcher did not find a statistically significant relationship between years of experience and the *instructional* factor of the teachers' self-perceived teaching competence. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null $r(146) = .029$, $p = .73$. The effect size, where $r = .029$, was small based on Cohen's effect-size index (Warner, 2013, p. 208). See Figure 4 for scatter plot for *years of teaching experience* and *instructional* factor of pedagogical competence.

Figure 4. Scatter Plot between Years of Teaching Experience and Teachers' Self-Perceived Instructional Competence



Additional Analysis

The reliability of the translated instrument was checked with Cronbach's alpha to measure the inter-correlation of test items (Warner, 2013). This additional analysis was conducted since the instrument was originally written in Spanish, and a translated version of the instrument was used. SPSS® reliability analysis was used to calculate Cronbach's alphas for the translated instrument: Socio-Emotional (S-E), α = .90; Communicative-Relational (C-R), α = .79; and Instructional (I), α = .70. The overall instrument's reliability was α = .93. These findings were similar to those calculated by Valdivieso, Carbonero, and Martín-Antón (2013) when the Spanish version of the instrument was originally created: (a) Socio-Emotional (S-E) Cronbach's α = .85; (b) Communicative-Relational (C-R) Cronbach's α = .79; and (c) Instructional (I) Cronbach's α = .72. The translation seemed to hold on the domains.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The literature was unclear on whether or not years of teaching experience has had an effect on teachers' self-perceptions of their effective pedagogical competence (Huang & Li, 2012; Kunter et al., 2013). The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between the predictor variable, *years of teaching experience*, and the criterion variables, elementary teachers' *self-perceived socio-emotional, communicative-relational, and instructional factors of pedagogical competence*.

This study utilized the Elementary Teachers Instructional Auto-perceived Competence Evaluation Scale (ET-IACES) constructed by Valdivieso, Carbonero, and Martín-Antón, (2013) to quantitatively examine teachers' personal, psychoinstructional, and psychopedagogical behaviors. It was Valdivieso, Carbonero, and Martín-Antón's intent to configure an instrument that was valid and reliable to assess elementary educators' teaching patterns and profiles and thus provide a holistic measure of teaching competence. The data gathering instrument was used to answer the following research question: Is there a relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and their self-perceptions of effective pedagogical competence?

Pearson correlations were used in this study with years of teaching experience as the predictor variable and teachers' self-perceived effective pedagogical competence scores as the criterion variable. This correlational design was appropriate for this study since its purpose is "to measure the degree and direction of the relationship between two or more variables and to explore possible causal factors" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 336).

Null Hypothesis One

For null hypothesis one, there was not a significant relationship found between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *socio-emotional* factor of their self-perceived effective pedagogical competence. Belousa and Uzulina (2012) explored elementary teachers' perceptions and attempted to describe their interpretations of the importance of the social and emotional aspects of pedagogical competence in the classroom. Over time, the participants in the study noted a difference in the way they understood their students. With more years of teaching experience, Belousa and Uzulina noted that the teachers were able to accept students by exercising tolerance and empathy. In addition, Ünal and Ünal (2012) sought to answer if there were any differences between beginning and experienced teachers in their classroom management approaches. Their statistical analysis revealed that the teachers showed significantly different perceptions and beliefs about classroom management based on their years of teaching experience. The teachers with more years of experience were more controlling over their classes' behavioral and instructional management. Ünal and Ünal's results indicated that teachers tended to change their perceptions and beliefs as they gained teaching experience. Beginning teachers, more than experienced teachers, tended to share responsibilities for classroom control, focus on not only behaviors but students' feelings, and paid specific attention to how the classroom environment shaped the individual students. In the present study, a significant relationship was not found for years of teaching experience and the socio-emotional factor of competence; however, a medium relationship was calculated where Pearson's $r = .13$. Based on the aforementioned studies of Belousa and Uzulina and Ünal and Ünal the medium effect of the present study was deemed reasonable, but the confidence level may have increased with a larger sample (i.e., multiple teachers with a variety of experience levels).

Null Hypothesis Two

For null hypothesis two, there was not a significant relationship found between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *communicative-relational* factor of their self-perceived pedagogical teaching competence. Krull, Oras, and Sisask (2007) noted that experienced teachers have characteristically been more reflective, talkative, and more concerned with the classroom atmosphere and general teacher strategy. It has been assumed that years of teaching experience increased a teacher's effectiveness; however, the actual effects of experience have depended on multiple factors. Experience has made some difference in a teacher's effectiveness, but more years of experience has not always equated with improvement or effectiveness (Rice, 2010). In the present study, a significant relationship was not found for years of teaching experience and the communicative-relational factor of competence; however, a medium relationship was calculated with a Pearson correlation where $r = .129$. Based on the aforementioned studies of Krull, Oras, and Sisask and Rice the medium effect of the present study was deemed reasonable, but the confidence level may have increased with a larger sample (i.e., multiple teachers with a variety of experience levels).

Null Hypothesis Three

For null hypothesis three, there was not a significant relationship found between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and the *instructional* factor of their self-perceived effective pedagogical competence. Huang and Li (2012) found similar results in their study that measured secondary mathematics teachers' levels of noticing during episodes of mathematics instruction. Ten experienced teachers (ten or more years of teaching experience) and ten beginners (three or less years of teaching experience) participated. From their study, Huang and Li surmised that both the experienced teachers and beginning teachers had some

overarching similarities. Both sets of participants noticed effective classroom instructional practices such as instructional objectives, instructional design, instructional process, and teachers' quality and personality. Instructionally, teachers with more years of experience have been assumed to more likely (a) have an elaborate mental plan for lessons, (b) utilize students' questions and responses for classroom discussion and learning, (c) employ flexibility and improvisation during lessons, and (d) be concerned about students' understanding of taught material (Cleary & Groer, 1994). However, a significant relationship was not found for years of teaching experience and the instructional factor of competence in the present study, and the relationship was extremely small with Pearson's $r = .029$. Huang and Li's results noted above were similar to the results of the present study, which show no relationship between years of teaching experience and the instructional factor of competence.

Conclusions

At the onset of this study, the researcher predicted that there would be a significant relationship between years of teaching experience and the teachers' pedagogical competence levels. After analyzing the data using a conservative approach in an effort to control the risk of a Type I error, it was discovered that no significant relationship was found between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and any of the three criterion variables. As Warner (2013) noted, "Correlation does not imply causation" (p. 265). So, a lack of correlation also does not necessarily imply a lack of causation. Considering the medium effect noted for null hypotheses one and two, a significant relationship may be possible with a larger sample of teachers with a variety of experience levels. In regard to years of teaching experience, several factors may have impacted the effects in this research study. It has been difficult to know whether the results of studies that include the measured effects of teaching experience actually reflect improvement

with years of teaching experience or high attrition levels of less effective teachers (Rice, 2010), which may have biased a study's results (Winters, 2011). The effective pedagogical traits measured with the ET-IACES were founded on research-based effective teaching practices (Valdivieso, Carbonero, & Martín-Antón, 2013). Whether or not a statistical relationship was found between years of teaching experience and teachers' self-perceived pedagogical competence in the current study, it still stands to reason that teachers need opportunities to maintain and upgrade their competence based on clear guidelines and expectations, and they should be provided professional development to grow throughout their teaching career (Mustafa, 2013).

Since teacher's salaries and other career decisions have traditionally been based on years of teaching experience, it has been no surprise to the researcher that many studies have found teaching experience to be valuable, and in many instances it has been significant to teaching and learning (Harris & Sass, 2011; Liu, Jones, & Sadera, 2010). However, considering the variable of pedagogical competence, which gets right to the heart of effective teaching and the traits effective teachers possess, years of teaching experience may not have been a significant predictor. Beginning teacher participants who have recently completed teacher training programs and earned teaching positions may have perceived themselves as ready to enter the classroom setting and eager to implement the instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and behaviorist ideals and theories they have been instructed to employ. In other points on the career spectrum, teachers may have sensed themselves unprepared for all of the educational changes that have occurred in the recent past. When teachers have not been well-prepared to handle issues that may surface in the classroom, they experience emotional stress, and high

levels of this stress may lead to poor job performance and eventually lead to burnout (Frenzel et al., 2009), and, in turn, low self-perceptions of competence.

Implications

According to Huang and Li (2012), more knowledge was needed to identify the relationship between years of teaching experience and teachers' self-perceived pedagogical competence levels, which could help better identify areas that need fostering at various stages of the teaching career. Since the present study did not find a statistically significant relationship between years of teaching experience and any of the three factors of pedagogical competence, it may be implied that professional development in all three competence areas is needed throughout the teaching career for all teachers, regardless of the number of years of teaching experience one possesses. This implication was in agreement with Fernet, Guay, Senécal, and Austin (2012) who stated that professional development should be provided to support practicing teachers' feelings and perceptions of their effective pedagogical competence, no matter their teaching experience level. It has been found that teachers with a high level of competence have been able to help students achieve academically, as well as develop them into well-rounded students (Garner, 2010; Mustafa, 2013). Students have needed teachers who have not only understood what they needed to learn (i.e., curriculum), but they have needed teachers who knew how to help them learn. These skills have been developed through a teacher's preparation, professional development, and a teacher's individual school experiences (New & Cochran, 2007).

To be considered a competent teacher, educators should be able to manage information, problem solve situations with students, and actively communicate with students. Teachers should

be knowledgeable about the curriculum they were assigned to teach and should know and understand difficulties faced by their learners (Edmond & Hayler, 2013).

Ensuring teacher growth in the area of pedagogical competence has been found essential to a teacher's work. Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) model of a prosocial, stimulating learning environment has suggested: (a) Teachers' competence was important in the development of supportive teacher-student classroom relationships. (b) Teachers with a high level of competence demonstrated more proactive and effective classroom management strategies by utilizing their expressions and verbal support to guide student learning and management of students' classroom behaviors. (c) Teachers with high levels of competence instilled values in their students by modeling a social and emotional curriculum as outstanding role models in the classroom.

Teachers' pedagogies have been rooted in self-awareness and self-understanding, empathy, tolerance, and flexibility in teaching and managing classroom relationships (Belousa & Uzulina, 2012). After teachers have experienced mastery over the challenges of the classroom, high levels of competence have developed, and teachers have enjoyed teaching more and felt they were more effective (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004).

Discussion of Additional Analysis

Additional analysis was conducted to examine the reliability of the Elementary Teachers Instructional Auto-perceived Competence Evaluation Scale (ET-IACES). The instrument, ET-IACES, utilized in the present study was originally penned in Spanish and an English translation was provided in the journal *Revista de Psicodidactica*. When assessed, the translated instrument showed good internal reliability: Socio-Emotional (S-E), Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$; Communicative-Relational (C-R), Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$; and Instructional (I), Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$. The overall instrument's reliability was Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$. These findings were similar to those calculated

by Valdivieso, Carbonero, and Martín-Antón (2013) when the Spanish version of the instrument was originally created: (a) Socio-Emotional (S-E) Cronbach's α = .85; (b) Communicative-Relational (C-R) Cronbach's α = .79; and (c) Instructional (I) Cronbach's α = .72. It was determined that the translation seemed to hold on the domains.

Due to potential translation-related issues, literature associated with translations and cross-cultural adaptation of assessment instruments was reviewed. Cross-cultural research has been flourishing due to increased international contact and communication among researchers, and the data gained has been considered important to help better understand human behavior and psychological processes (van Widenfelt et al., 2005). Internationally, more organizations and individuals have been seeking information that crosses national and cultural borders. Many times, they have been obtaining instruments that have been created for one language and culture and using them in others. When this has occurred, it has been important to remember that words with a direct lexical equivalence may still have emotional connotations associated with them. Phillips (1960) stated, "…almost any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings, and values that the speaker may or may not be aware of but that the field worker, as an outsider, usually is not" (p. 291). Phillips regarded this as an unsolvable problem.

Consequently, several linguists and researchers suggested that when two languages have not offered direct lexical equivalence, a translator's efforts should have been to obtain conceptual equivalence, not lexical equivalence (Broadfoot & Osborn, 1993; Temple, 1997). To have obtained conceptual equivalence, when lexical equivalence could not have been obtained, researchers and/or translators should have had an intimate knowledge of the culture under study (Frey, 1970) and have had a proficient understanding of the language (Sechrest, Fay, & Zaidi, 1972). Only after these two aforementioned factors have been met may the researcher make

certain that words, phrases, and statements have been made explicit for the readers of the instrument or report (Birbili, 2000).

According to Ercikan (1998), grammatical and syntactical structures that do not exist in English have created another type of translation issue. One of the most difficult features to carry over from one language to another has been syntactical style. When sentences are difficult to translate due to structure issues, Bassnett-McGuire (1980) suggested that the rules of grammar must be applied for sentences to have been translated accurately. Ervin and Bower (1952) have warned researchers and translators that issues with syntax may have eventually led to misinformation or the loss of information.

The words the researcher or translator chooses to use should be understandable for the participants. The researcher or translator should decide on a literal or free translation of the material. A literal translation may reduce the readability of the text, and, consequently, test the participants' patience and overall understanding. A free translation, on the other hand, may misinterpret the original meaning, and the risk of losing information may be greater (Birbili, 2000).

Temple (1997) pointed out that the selection of a translator has not merely been a technicality, but it has been critical to the outcomes of a study. Researchers may have sought the assistance of professional translators or bilingual persons, who may or may not have had knowledge of the theory or concept being studied.

Translation-related decisions have had a direct impact on the validity of the research and its outcomes. Research studies involving translated instruments or reports have needed a thorough description of the translation-related issues and how those issues have been handled by the researcher and translator. Additionally, the researcher should have detailed the circumstances

and techniques throughout the translation process. If translators were used, readers have needed information about who the translators were and their role at each stage of the translation process (Birbili, 2000).

Limitations

There were several known limitations to this study. First, the study's sample and size (*N* = 148) were limitations. Elementary teachers from three public school districts in a small region in northwest Alabama were invited to participate. The sample was not very diverse; most were female (95.9%) and white (94.6%). Also, this study only invited public school elementary general education teachers (kindergarten through fifth grade) to participate. Special education teachers, middle and secondary school general education teachers, and teachers from other types of schools (such as private schools) were not included. Lastly, the translated instrument may have been a limitation. According to Phillips (1960), it has been problematic to employ an instrument that has been created for one language and culture and use it in another. When instruments have been translated from one language or culture to another, it has been important to consider words or phrases that have a direct lexical equivalence may still have emotional connotations associated with them in one language that was not present in the other.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following are recommendations for further research.

(a) Conduct a follow-up study with a different sample. For example, select a larger population and recruit a larger sample within a more diverse setting with more male participants.

(b) It is recommended that further research be conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the self-perceived pedagogical competence of pre-service teachers and practicing teachers. Equipping pre-service teachers with the needed knowledge and skills required to work

well with students has been essential for competency development, as well as, providing professional development for current classroom teachers to enhance their pedagogical competence (Pillay, Goddard, & Wilss, 2005). Huang and Li (2012) noted that knowing the relationship between years of experience and teachers' self-perceived pedagogical competence levels could help better identify areas that need fostering at various stages of the teaching career.

(c) Teachers' perceptions and reality may not be the same. It is recommended that a study be conducted with classroom observations for those teachers who rate themselves highly in the area of effective pedagogical competence to determine whether the teachers' self-perceptions were aligned with the reality of the classroom environment.

(d) Since professional development is the next logical step in the process of building teachers' pedagogical competence, it would be helpful to conduct a study that seeks to determine the types of professional development opportunities teachers want and need.

(e) As in Mustafa's (2013) study, it would be helpful – when utilizing years of teaching experience as the predictor variable – to group the participants by years of service (i.e., 0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, 26+ years) to determine relationships among and within groups.

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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION TO USE INSTRUMENT

Hi Mr. Carbonero,

May I obtain your permission to use the questionnaire entitled Elementary Teachers'-Instructional Self-Perceived Competence Evaluation Scale (ET-IACES)? As a doctoral student at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, I wish to conduct a correlational research study to determine if there is a significant relationship between elementary teachers' amount of teaching experience and their self-perceived pedagogical competence in the public schools of Alabama. I appreciate your attention to this request.

Thank you,

Amy G. Jones

Hola, Sr. Jones, es un placer que usted utilice nuestro cuestionario para sus investigaciones, desearíamos nos enviase si puede ser el cuestionario traducido así como los resultados de sus investigaciones.

Un saludo

Dr. Miguel Ángel Carbonero

Departamento de Psicología

Universidad de Valladolid

España

APPENDIX B

SUPERINTENDENT PERMISSION LETTERS

[redacted]

Dear Mrs. Jones,

You have my permission to conduct your research study in the [redacted] System. Please feel free to contact the administration at the appropriate schools.

I wish you success as you pursue your advanced degree.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]

Together...Committed to Excellence Through Education

[redacted]

"Providing opportunities for all students to obtain wisdom and achieve their greatest potential!"

[redacted]

[redacted]

November 10, 2014

Amy G. Jones
Doctoral Candidate
[redacted]

Dear Mrs. Jones,

I am granting your request to contact (K-6) principals and conduct your research in the [redacted] I wish you the best of luck on your research and obtaining your doctorate.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Dear Ms. Amy Jones:

Thank you for your consideration and request to conduct a research project within the [redacted] in partial fulfillment of the requirements of your doctoral studies (dissertation). Yes, you have my permission to conduct the study which you have outlined in your request letter. If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

{Superintendent}

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
3/19/15 to --
Protocol # 2145.031915

CONSENT FORM

The Relationship between Elementary Teachers' Years of Experience and Their Perceived Pedagogical Competence in Alabama Elementary Schools

Amy G. Jones

Liberty University

School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study looking at **the relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and their perceived pedagogical competence in Alabama elementary schools.** You were selected as a possible participant because you are a K-5 general educator in one of the participating school districts**.** Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to determine if a relationship exists between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience (self-reported as the number of years you have taught in a PreK-12th grade classroom) and teachers' self-perceived effective pedagogical competence (the interplay of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and motivational variables, which are not innate but learnable and teachable, that teachers need to attain success and mastery in teaching and learning situations) measured with the Elementary Teachers Instructional Auto-perceived Competence Evaluation Scale (ET-IACES).

Procedures:

Due to the nature of this study, only kindergarten through fifth-grade, general education teachers are invited to participate. For those who wish to participate, you will complete a survey. The survey is a pencil and paper instrument, which will take about 10 minutes to fill out. The survey will be completely anonymous. You may elect not to participate at any time. Upon completion of the survey, you are asked to place the survey into a sealed envelope and place it in the collection box in the secretary's office.

Risks and Benefits:

This study poses minimal risk, which is no more than encountered when completing everyday activities. Asking individuals to evaluate attitudes and beliefs can sometimes invoke happy or unhappy feelings. Taking the survey during a planning period or classroom instructional time could diminish the amount of time teachers have to plan and teach important classroom instruction.

There is no direct (tangible) benefit to participation.

Compensation:

Upon completion of the survey, you may choose to enter your name into a raffle for a chance to win a $200 Target® gift card.

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
3/19/15 to --
Protocol # 2145.031915

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of published report, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

A breach in confidentiality could occur from raffle ticket submissions. The completed raffle tickets will be kept separate from the survey forms. The survey will be completely anonymous. The completed raffle tickets and surveys will be kept in a locked file cabinet and maintained in the researcher's home.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Amy Jones. If you have questions, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ajones17@liberty.edu or call [redacted]. You may also contact Dr. Kurt Michael, Dissertation Chair, at kmichael9@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher; **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You may keep this copy of this information for your records.

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT LETTER

Dear Fellow Elementary Educator,

You are invited to anonymously participate in a research study entitled *The Relationship Between Elementary Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience and Their Perceived Pedagogical Competence in Alabama Elementary Schools.* The survey that you will complete should take no longer than ten minutes, and everyone who completes the attached survey has the opportunity to enter his or her name in a raffle for a chance to win a $200 Target® gift card. The questions pertain to your perceptions of your classroom climate and instructional style. You can expect to find the study's results useful to elementary educators, teacher preparation institutions, school principals, and professional development coordinators for use in promoting highly qualified teachers as an essential element to improving elementary education.

Directions for completion:

- Detach the two colored sheets and envelope from this packet.
- Complete the demographic information page and survey (front and back) using your best on-the-spot response for each statement. Please **do not** write your name on either sheet.
- Place both sheets in the provided envelope and seal it, and **do not** write your name on the envelope.
- Deliver the envelope with your completed survey to your school secretary, and place it in the box labeled "Completed Survey".
- Obtain a raffle ticket from the secretary and fill out the required information. The winner of the raffle will be contacted by the researcher via the provided contact information on the raffle ticket, so please provide the best contact number.
- Place your completed raffle ticket in the box labeled "Raffle Ticket".

A consent form that provides additional information about the study is included in this packet. Your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated! The researcher will establish a mutually agreeable time with the winner for delivery of the $200 Target® gift card.

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT CONSENT PAGE

CONSENT FORM

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND THEIR PERCEIVED PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE IN ALABAMA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Amy G. Jones

Liberty University

School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study looking at **the relationship between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience and their perceived pedagogical competence in Alabama elementary schools.** You were selected as a possible participant because you are a K-5 general educator in one of the participating school districts**.** Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to determine if a relationship exists between elementary teachers' years of teaching experience (self-reported as the number of years you have taught in a pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade classroom) and teachers' self-perceived effective pedagogical competence (the interplay of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and motivational variables—which are not innate but learned and taught—that teachers need to master in order to be successful in the classroom) measured with the Elementary Teachers Instructional Auto-perceived Competence Evaluation Scale (ET-IACES).

Procedures:

Due to the nature of this study, only kindergarten through fifth grade, general education teachers are invited to participate. For those who wish to participate, you will complete a survey. The survey is a pencil and paper instrument, which will take about 10 minutes to fill out. The survey will be completely anonymous. You may elect not to participate at any time. Upon completion of the survey, you are asked to place the survey into a sealed envelope and place it in the collection box in the secretary's office.

This study poses minimal risk, which is no more than encountered when completing everyday activities. Asking individuals to evaluate attitudes and beliefs can sometime invoke happy or unhappy feelings. Taking the survey during a planning period or classroom instructional time could diminish the amount of time teachers have to plan and teach important classroom instruction.

There is no direct (tangible) benefit to participation.

Compensation:

Upon completion of the survey, you may choose to enter your name into a raffle for a chance to win a $200 Target® gift card.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of published report, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

A breach in confidentiality could occur from raffle ticket submissions. The completed raffle tickets will be kept separate from the survey forms. The survey will be completely anonymous.

The completed raffle tickets and surveys will be kept in a locked file cabinet and maintained in the researcher's home.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Amy Jones. If you have questions, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ajones17@liberty.edu or call [redacted]. You may also contact Dr. Kurt Michael, Dissertation Chair, at kmichael9@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You may keep this copy of this information for your records.

APPENDIX F

RAFFLE TICKET TEMPLATE SAMPLE

WIN $200

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Please complete the information below

for a chance to win a $200 Target gift card!

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email: _____

The drawing will take place April 30, 2015.

You will be contacted if your name is drawn.

Thank you, again!

WIN $200

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Please complete the information below

for a chance to win a $200 Target gift card!

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email: _____

The drawing will take place April 30, 2015.

You will be contacted if your name is drawn.

Thank you, again!

WIN $200

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Please complete the information below

for a chance to win a $200 Target gift card!

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email: _____

The drawing will take place April 30, 2015.

You will be contacted if your name is drawn.

Thank you, again!

WIN $200

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Please complete the information below

for a chance to win a $200 Target gift card!

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email: _____

The drawing will take place April 30, 2015.

You will be contacted if your name is drawn.

Thank you, again!