

Original Papers

Polish Psychological Bulletin
 2019, vol. 50(4) 284–292
 DOI - 10.24425/ppb.2019.131001

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The Interplay of Teacher Success, Credibility, and Stroke with Respect to EFL Students' Willingness to Attend Classes

Abstract: Given the significance of teacher characteristics in student motivation for class attendance, the present paper aimed to investigate the roles of teacher success, credibility, and stroke in students' Willingness to Attend Classes (WTAC). To this aim, a total number of 276 undergraduate students majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and English Language and Literature completed four scales: Characteristics of Successful EFL Teachers Questionnaire (Moafian & Pishghadam, 2008), Teacher Credibility Scale (McCroskey & Teven, 1999), Student Stroke Scale (Pishghadam & Khajavi, 2014), and WTAC Scale (Rajabnejad, Pishghadam, & Saboori, 2017). For data analysis, Pearson multiple correlation coefficients and path analysis were employed. The results of correlational analyses revealed a significantly positive correlation, first, between teacher success and students' WTAC, secondly, between teacher credibility and students' WTAC, and thirdly, between teacher stroke and students' WTAC. Furthermore, the results of path analysis indicated that students' WTAC was significantly predicted by teacher success, credibility, and stroke. At the end, the results were discussed in light of previous findings, and potential conclusions were made in the EFL context accordingly.

Keywords: Teacher Success, Teacher Credibility, Teacher Stroke, Willingness to Attend Classes, Path Analysis

Introduction

Many teachers motivate students to attend classes (Credé, Roch, & Kieszczynka, 2010) as they postulate that "students who attend class regularly have a much greater chance of making high grades than do students who skip lots of classes" (Moore et al., 2003, p. 325). In fact, Class Attendance (CA) seems to play a pivotal role to facilitate the process of learning (Gump, 2004), and it is even considered to be of greater significance in foreign language learning environment "where there is only a small chance of using the language outside the class" (Rajabnejad, Pishghadam, & Saboori, 2017, p. 141). Students' CA is associated with a multitude of factors encompassing the prominence students attribute to class attendance (Gump, 2006), student characteristics, course characteristics, students' reasons for attendance (Credé et al., 2010; Friedman, Rodriguez, & McComb, 2001), instruction quality, student motivation and self-financing, prior Grade Point Average (GPA), quality of classroom

presentations (Devadoss & Foltz, 1996; Van Blerkom, 1992), and academic performance and class grades (Thatcher, Fridhon, & Cockcroft, 2007). At the same time, student truancy, being in direct opposition to CA, is correlated with student's need to socialize, perception of the class as boring, outside employment, distaste for the teacher, interpreting the class to be useless for future careers, dislike of school organization, and inclination toward leaving studying till the last minute (Galichon & Friedman, 1985).

However, there are other largely overlooked and few explored factors which could be equally related to CA. Three of such factors are teacher success, teacher credibility, and teacher stroke. According to Galluzzo (2005), teacher success is the strongest determinant of learner success and achievement. Due to the growing interest in teacher success and its influential role in students' academic performance, some studies have specified the characteristics of successful teachers. Effective teachers are those who are able to engage all

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students in class activities (Elizabeth, May, & Chee, 2008), be accessible to students outside of class, be caring and knowledgeable in the subject matter (Demmon-Berger, 1986), and notice all students (Moafian & Pishghadam, 2009). These characteristics of successful teachers are closely associated with the constructs of teacher credibility and stroke. Instructor credibility refers to "the attitude of a receiver which references the degree to which a source is seen to be believable" (McCroskey, 1998, p. 80). Due to the influential role that teacher credibility may have on students, some studies have examined teacher credibility in relation to factors such as student motivation and affective learning (Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Pogue & AhYun, 2006; Zhang, 2009), student learning outcomes (Gray, Anderman, & O'Connell, 2011; Schrodt et al., 2009), and student respect for a teacher (Martinez-Egger & Powers, 2007). However, to date, no study has investigated the association between teacher credibility and students' CA.

Besides, teacher stroke, as a crucial element of teacher care, refers to the teacher's recognition of the student (Pishghadam, Naji Meidani, & Khajavi, 2015). Despite its prominence, to our knowledge, only one study has been conducted to date investigating the extent to which learner achievement and Willingness to Attend the Classes (WTAC) are affected by teacher stroke (Rajabnejad et al., 2017). Moreover, given the close association that exists among different teacher characteristics, a study was conducted by Pishghadam and Karami (2017) to investigate the roles of teachers' stroking and credibility in their success in class. Their results indicated that teacher credibility and stroke were both significantly associated with teacher effectiveness in a positive way.

All in all, despite the myriads of studies which considered various factors impacting student CA, a review of the related literature indicated that no empirical study has explored the simultaneous effects of teacher success, credibility, and stroke on students' WTAC. Hence, the current study intended to narrow the mentioned gap in the literature through examining the interplay of success, credibility, and stroke of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in relation to EFL students' WTAC.

Literature Review

Teacher Success

Teachers are considered as the most crucial element of any educational system. In other words, the effectiveness of any educational system rests on the success of its teachers (Pishghadam, Baghaei, & Shahriari Ahmadi, 2011). In the same vein, teacher effectiveness is assumed to play a pivotal role in students' academic accomplishments (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Based on this reasoning, a myriad of research has been done to reveal and define characteristics of successful teachers.

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) classified characteristics of effective teachers into two groups: management and instructional characteristics and personal characteristics. Generally, AASA distinguished effective teachers as being good

managers, utilizing systematic, yet diverse, instructional techniques, setting high expectations for students and themselves, having thorough knowledge of the subject matter, attending to students' needs, having high perceptions of their own efficacy, attuning instruction to students' needs, being accessible outside the class, and being inventive, adaptable, and avid (Demmon-Berger, 1986).

Brosh (1996), who considered language teacher effectiveness as facilitating classroom communication, identified characteristics of the effective language teacher as teacher's grasp of the subject matter, capacity to explain, clarify, and arouse motivation in learners, fair behavior toward all students, and accessibility to students. Additionally, Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, and Robinson (2004) distinguished effective teachers as those who are competent at managing the classroom, are knowledgeable in their field, and expose learners to sufficient amounts of instruction and input.

Similarly, Stronge (2007) delineated characteristics of effective teachers which are teacher as person, classroom management and organization, planning and organizing for instruction, implementing instruction, and monitoring student progress and potential. Hiebert, Morris, Berk, and Jansen (2007) referred to successful teachers as those who attempt to ameliorate learning and teaching conditions, reflect on the influence of instruction on students' learning, and set and subsequently assess learning goals for learners.

Teacher success has been associated with various factors including school effectiveness (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003), teachers' career decisions (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003), student learning and achievement (Heck, 2009; Palardy & Rumberger, 2008), and teacher critical thinking (Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010). Furthermore, an emerging literature have shed light on the typically overlooked influence of teacher effectiveness on student CA. For one, utilizing longitudinal data on learners and teachers, Gershenson (2016) examined teacher impacts on primary school learners, revealing that teachers have remarkable influence on student absenteeism. As another example, Liu and Loeb (2017) measured teachers' effects on middle and high school pupils' CA and then linked this measure to learners' long-term outcomes. They found that teachers adding high value to attendance has a stronger influence on students' probability of finishing high school than teachers who consider high significance for achievement. Additionally, they reported considerable variation across teachers in their ability to increase CA. Consequently, in order to enrich this fledgling literature to reach more solid and generalizable findings, we extend this line of research through inspecting the impact of teacher success on EFL students' WTAC in the context of Iran.

Teacher Credibility

Aristotle categorized the means of persuasion into three components of logos (the logic utilized to substantiate a claim), pathos (the motivational or emotional appeals), and ethos (the source's credibility) (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1996). Source credibility or ethos, specifically,

signifies individual's degree of reliability as perceived by others (McCroskey, 1998), which is highly influential in persuasive discourse (McCroskey, 1997). Aristotle divided source credibility into three categories of intelligence, goodwill, and character (McCroskey & Teven, 1999). In the same way, Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) classified source credibility into three elements of trustworthiness, expertness, and intention toward the receiver.

Extending the concept of source credibility to education, teacher credibility is defined as the teacher's degree of trustworthiness perceived by the student (McCroskey, 1998, p. 80). McCroskey, Holdridge, and Toomb (1974) specified teacher credibility with five dimensions of character, sociability, composure, extroversion, and competence. Later, McCroskey and Young (1981) redefined teacher credibility construct including character and competence components only. Ultimately, McCroskey and Teven (1999) finalized the construct with the three components of trustworthiness, goodwill, and competence. Following this view, trustworthiness pertains to the degree of teacher honesty as perceived by the student. Competence involves the perception of the student regarding the teacher's understanding of a topic. (McCroskey, 1998). And, goodwill represents the students' perceptions of the teacher's tendency to be caring of students' best interests by (McCroskey & Teven, 1999).

Teacher credibility correlates with students' information gain implying that students reject information coming from sources lacking trustworthiness (McCroskey et al., 1974). Besides, teacher credibility is related to student language achievement (Pishghadam, Seyednozadi, & Zabetipour, 2017), teacher burnout (Zhang & Sapp, 2009), students' respect for their teachers (Martinez-Egger & Powers, 2007), technology utilization (Finn & Ledbetter, 2013), student communication (Myers, 2004), motivation and affective learning (Pogue & AhYun, 2006; Zhang, 2009), teacher classroom justice (Chory, 2007), and teacher immediacy (Santilli, Miller, & Katt, 2011).

Teacher Stroke

In the context of education, positive student-teacher relationships can lead to students' learning, higher levels of motivation, reduction of stress, and improved interpersonal skills among other things (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Pierson, 2003). Berne's (1988) Transactional Analysis (TA), which refers to "a theory of personality and systematic psychotherapy for personal growth and personal change" (Stewart & Joines, 1987, p. 3), is one of the chief methods of examining interpersonal relationships among the teacher and students. In the context of education, specifically, the application of TA results in clearer and more productive teacher-student communications (Stewart & Joines, 1987). TA theory includes elements of stroke, time structures, life positions, ego states, life scenario, and transactions (Berne, 1988). The stroke component represents a unit of recognition, which refers to any action indicating awareness of others' presence. Particularly, in the educational context, stroke means caring about and paying attention to students by teachers (Rajabnejad et al., 2017).

Strokes can be positive/negative, verbal/non-verbal, and conditional/unconditional. In this regard, while positive strokes generate the strokee's satisfaction and delight, negative strokes make the strokee feel dissatisfied. Verbal strokes encompass exchange of speech, which can range from uttering a single word to sustaining a long conversation. On the other hand, non-verbal strokes involve activities such as nodding, stroking, and smiling among other things. In contrast to conditional strokes which relate to people's actions, unconditional strokes concern what people are.

Stroke plays a pivotal role in the classroom since it is capable of prompting students toward good performance and strengthening the probability of reoccurrence of the stroked behavior (Stewart & Joines, 1987). A review of the related literature indicates that the stroke concept has been scarcely noticed by researchers and few studies have examined its association with other variables. Accordingly, teacher stroke has been associated with student motivation (Pishghadam & Khajavi, 2014), teacher burnout (Yazdanpour, 2015), teachers' inappropriate stroking behavior (Hosseini, 2016), and differential types of stroking of teachers of language majors (Irajzad, Pishghadam, & Shahriari, 2017).

Willingness to Attend Classes

Classroom interaction opens up opportunities for language learning (Allwright, 1984), the importance of which is even accentuated in the EFL context where there is scant chance of being exposed to target language input outside the confines of the classroom. Consequently, CA is considered to be essential for the actualization of student-student and teacher-student interactions in EFL classrooms. Despite the prominence of CA in language learning, truancy is regarded as a crucial issue in EFL contexts (Fay, Aguirre, & Gash, 2013).

Until now, various studies have been conducted to identify factors influencing CA. For instance, Clay and Breslow (2006) identified instructor's ability to engage learners and utilize pertinent examples, and lectures' intelligibility and quality as major predictors of CA. Besides, Westrick, Helms, McDonough, and Breelan (2009) reported teacher note-taking strategy and highlighting of important points as the two most influential determinants of CA. Similarly, Adebisi and Lawal (2016) mentioned various factors including simplifying the course content, getting important information not present in notes, and knowing the test content as impacting CA. Furthermore, CA has been found to be related to teacher behavior, testing patterns, classroom schedules (Fjortoft, 2005), the prominence students attribute to CA (Gump, 2006), academic outcomes (Credé et al., 2010), class size, subject matter (Friedman et al., 2001), and academic performance and class grades (Thatcher et al., 2007). Rajabnejad et al. (2017) developed and validated a scale to measure EFL learners' WTAC, including the subscales of "Teacher Knowledge, Teacher Methodology, Teacher Care, Teacher Characteristics, and Teacher Environment, respectively" (p. 148). First, they examined whether teacher stroke can

predict WTAC. Their results indicated that valuing and non-verbal subscales of stroke could significantly predict WTAC. Secondly, they investigated whether WTAC components could predict foreign language achievement. Their findings manifested that teacher characteristics subscale of WTAC could predict learners' achievement, implying that teachers' respect for students and their sense of humor resulted in higher levels of achievement in ELT classes.

Purpose of the Study

On the whole, based on the aforesaid importance of teacher characteristics in determining both academic and non-academic behaviors of students in the educational context and due to the paucity of empirical research examining teacher impacts on students' inclination toward attending classes, the current study was conducted with an eye toward predicting EFL students' WTAC in terms of three such characteristics, including teacher success, stroke, and credibility. Therefore, the present study attempted to find answers to the following research questions:

1. Are there any statistically significant relationships between teacher credibility, stroke, and success subscales and EFL students' WTAC?
2. Do teacher success, credibility, and stroke significantly predict EFL students' WTAC?

Methodology

Participants

A total number of 276 undergraduate students of TEFL and English Language and Literature at different universities located in Iran, participated in this study. The participants rated their English language instructors with regard to their success, credibility, and stroke. Subsequently, the participants determined the extent to which they are willing to attend classes themselves. The sample, obtained through applying the convenience sampling procedure, included both male ($N = 102$) and female ($N = 174$) students whose age ranged between 18 to 34 years old. All the participants agreed to fill out the questionnaires and the relevant consent forms. Moreover, they were convinced of the confidentiality of the data they had provided and of the use of these data for research purposes only.

Instruments

Characteristics of Successful EFL Teachers Questionnaire. In order to measure teachers' degree of success in the educational context, Characteristics of Successful EFL Teachers questionnaire, developed and validated by Moafian and Pishghadam (2008), was employed. The scale includes 47 items, the answers to which can range from 5 "strongly agree" to 1 "strongly disagree". Additionally, this scale encompasses 12 subscale of: teaching accountability, interpersonal relationships, attention to all, examination, commitment, learning boosters, creating a sense of competence, teaching boosters,

physical and emotional acceptance, empathy, CA, and dynamism. The Cronbach's alpha reliability estimate reported for the scale by Moafian and Pishghadam (2008) was .94. In the present study, reliability of the scale was .96.

Teacher Credibility Scale. The second scale employed in this study was the Teacher Credibility Scale designed and validated by McCroskey and Teven (1999). The questionnaire includes 18 items measured by a seven-point bipolar scale. This scale contains three subscales of trustworthiness (TR), competence (CO), and goodwill (GO). The Cronbach's alpha reliability reported for the Persian version of the scale was .86 (Pishghadam et al., 2017), and the reliability estimation reported for the current study was .94.

Student Stroke Scale. The scale was developed and validated (Pishghadam & Khajavi, 2014) to measure the stroke the teacher gives to the students in the classroom. The scale encompasses 18 items assessing positive, negative, verbal, and non-verbal strokes. The respondents' answers to the items can vary from 1 "never" to 5 "always". The original Cronbach's alpha reliability of the scale reported by Pishghadam and Khajavi (2014) was .88. The calculated reliability reported for the present study was .92.

WTAC Scale. WTAC Questionnaire, designed and validated by Rajabnejad et al. (2017), measures students' reasons for CA. The scale includes 25 items, the answers to which can vary from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". The questionnaire is comprised of five subscales of Teacher knowledge, Teacher methodology, Teacher care, Teacher characteristics, and Teacher environment. While the reported Cronbach's alpha reliability for the scale has been .83, the computed reliability for the current study was .88.

Procedure

Before filling out the questionnaires, the participants filled out a consent form, and they were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation in the study. To collect the required data, all the above-mentioned scales were administered to the participants. The participants needed at most 40 minutes to answer the questionnaires.

In this study, the dependent variable is WTAC, and the independent variables are teacher success, teacher credibility, and teacher stroke. Measurement of reliability of the scales was done through employing the Cronbach's alpha procedure. Additionally, to examine the potential relationships among the variables, Pearson multiple correlation coefficients were run using SPSS (Version 22). Subsequently, path analysis utilizing Amos (Version 24) was employed to estimate the possible predictability of WTAC through each of the independent variables.

Results

In this study, the first research question was examined through employing Pearson product-moment correlation. The descriptive statistics for and correlations among teacher success subscales and students' WTAC are indicated in Table 1. As Table 1 shows, there were positively significant relationships among students' WTAC and teacher success

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among WTAC and Teacher Success Subscales

	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	WTAC
1. Teaching Accountability	32.07 (3.32)	1.00												
2. Interpersonal Relationships	30.54 (4.29)	.69**	1.00											
3. Attention to All	21.80 (3.32)	.71**	.62**	1.00										
4. Examination	13.09 (1.99)	.65**	.54**	.64**	1.00									
5. Commitment	14.04 (1.30)	.64**	.36**	.49**	.51**	1.00								
6. Learning Boosters	26.44 (3.31)	.80**	.65**	.79**	.66**	.57**	1.00							
7. Creating a Sense of Competence	16.48 (2.73)	.72**	.63**	.71**	.64**	.45**	.80**	1.00						
8. Teaching Boosters	18.29 (1.83)	.67**	.50**	.56**	.61**	.59**	.65**	.57**	1.00					
9. Physical and Emotional Acceptance	9.55 (.887)	.66**	.32**	.53**	.49**	.54**	.60**	.45**	.51**	1.00				
10. Empathy	8.78 (1.50)	.56**	.62**	.59**	.54**	.40**	.61**	.60**	.46**	.33**	1.00			
11. Class Attendance	9.09 (1.38)	.61**	.35**	.51**	.52**	.54**	.57**	.48**	.51**	.64**	.40**	1.00		
12. Dynamism	9.08 (1.15)	.68**	.54**	.63**	.51**	.49**	.61**	.58**	.50**	.58**	.42**	.49**	1.00	
WTAC	209.12 (21.89)	.65**	.58**	.57**	.54**	.46**	.70**	.60**	.49**	.49**	.70**	.39**	.57**	1.00

* p < .05; ** p < .01.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Teacher Credibility Subscales and WTAC

	Mean (SD)	Competence	Goodwill	Trustworthiness	WTAC
Competence	23.61 (9.50)	1.00			
Goodwill	29.50 (7.17)	.75**	1.00		
Trustworthiness	27.68 (7.23)	.86**	.84**	1.00	
WTAC	209.12 (21.89)	.14*	.23**	.15*	1.00

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among WTAC and Teacher Stroke Subscales

	Mean (SD)	Verbal	Non-verbal	Valuing	Class Activities	WTAC
Verbal	17.60 (5.29)	1.00				
Non-verbal	11.86 (3.08)	.74**	1.00			
Valuing	11.32 (4.32)	.77**	.68**	1.00		
Class Activities	13.73 (3.69)	.64**	.52**	.68**	1.00	
WTAC	209.12 (21.89)	.39**	.33**	.43**	.46**	1.00

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

subscales (ranging from .39 to .70). Learning boosters ($r = .70, p < .01$) and empathy ($r = .70, p < .01$) subscales had the highest correlations with WTAC, and CA ($r = .39, p < .01$) subscale had the lowest correlation with WTAC.

Table 2 indicates the descriptive statistics pertaining to and correlations among teacher credibility subscales and WTAC. As represented in Table 2, there were positively significant relationships among students' WTAC and teacher credibility subscales (ranging from .14 to .23). Goodwill subscale had the highest correlation with WTAC ($r = .23, p < .01$), while competence subscale had the lowest correlation with WTAC ($r = .14, p < .05$).

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics related to and correlations among teacher stroke subscales and overall WTAC. As demonstrated in Table 3, there were positively significant relationships among students' WTAC and teacher stroke subscales (ranging from .33 to .46). Class activities subscale had the highest correlation with WTAC ($r = .46, p < .05$), while non-verbal subscale had lowest correlation with WTAC ($r = .33, p < .05$).

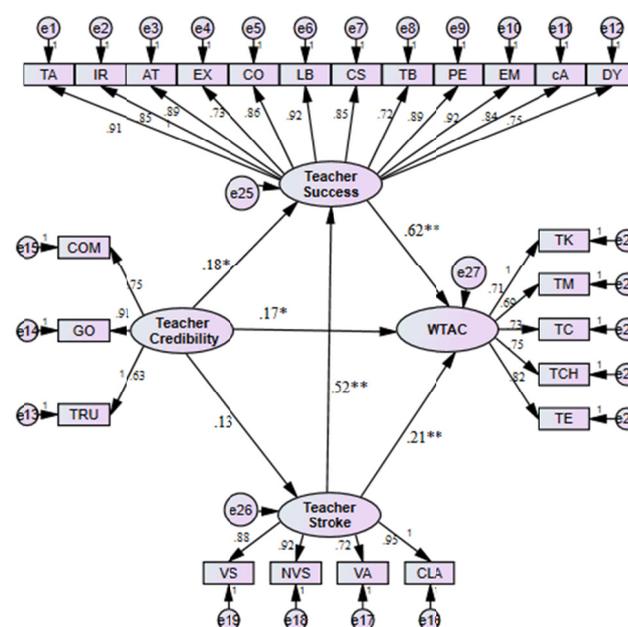
Moreover, path analysis was utilized to examine the second research question of the study. A model was proposed here which was assessed through the Amos 24.00 statistical package. Figure 1 represents the finalized model. Several fit indices were investigated in order to check whether the suggested model fitted the data of the study. For the model to be acceptable, the chi-square magnitude should be non-significant, Chi-square/df ratio should not be higher than 2 or 3, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Good Fit Index (GFI) cut values should be greater than .90, and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be around .06 or .07 (Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006). As the findings revealed, the model fitted perfectly with the data of the study (i.e., the

chi-square/df ratio (2.19), RMSEA (.065), CFI (.94), and GFI (.93)).

The results of path analysis among teacher success, credibility, stroke, and students' WTAC are demonstrated in Figure 1.

As Figure 1 indicates, all the three independent variables positively and significantly predicted the dependent variable (WTAC): teacher success ($\beta = .62, p < .05$), credibility ($\beta = .17, p < .05$), and stroke ($\beta = .21, p < .05$). The model also showed that teacher success was

Figure 1. Path Analysis among Teacher Success, Credibility, Stroke, and Students' WTAC



positively and significantly predicted by teacher credibility ($\beta = .18, p < .05$) and stroke ($\beta = .52, p < .05$). However, teacher stroke was not significantly predicted by teacher credibility ($\beta = .13, p > .05$).

Discussion and Conclusion

The aims of the current study were first, to examine the potential associations among EFL students' WTAC and teachers' success, credibility, and stroke, and secondly, to determine the predictive powers of teacher success, credibility, and stroke in students' WTAC. Regarding the first research question of this study, the results of correlational analyses revealed a significantly positive correlation, first, between teacher success and students' WTAC, secondly, between teacher credibility and students' WTAC, and thirdly, between teacher stroke and students' WTAC.

As to the positive association existing between teacher success and students' WTAC, it can be stated that this finding was aligned with the outcomes of Gershenson's (2016) study underscoring the notable role of teacher effectiveness in CA and findings of Liu and Loeb (2017) highlighting the significance of teacher effectiveness in reducing students' truancy at the middle and high school levels. Furthermore, inasmuch as teacher success is considered as one of the strongest determinant of learner academic success (Galluzzo, 2005), there is no surprise that students are more prone to attend classes of more successful teachers. Concerning the positive relationship existing between teacher credibility and students' WTAC, it can be mentioned that this result lends support to those of other studies portraying the significance of teacher credibility in students' language achievement (Pishghadam et al., 2017), motivation and affective learning (Pogue & AhYun, 2006; Zhang, 2009), communication (Myers, 2004), and respect for their teachers (Martinez-Egger & Powers, 2007). The findings of all these studies reveal the degree to which students' academic decisions, including their CA, can be affected by their perceptions of their teachers' credibility level. Regarding the positive correlation between teacher stroke and students' WTAC, it can be acknowledged that this finding is in congruence with those of another study conducted by Rajabnejad et al. (2017), demonstrating teacher stroke as an influential factor in students' academic achievement and WTAC.

With regard to the second question of the study, teacher success was found to be a significant predictor of students' WTAC, as represented by the results of path analysis. According to Tamblyn (2000), teachers are perceived by students as more successful when they attend to students' ideas, provide a friendly class atmosphere, and are flexible, humorous, and knowledgeable. Hence, it is justified that students will be more inclined to attend classes when their teachers possess such features. In other words, students are highly attentive to notice which teachers can contribute more to their learning and thus, worthy of attending their classes. This claim is consonant with Afe's (2001) statement that teacher success can definitely

affect learners' academic achievement. All in all, it can be concluded that students' CA rate can change depending on how much their teachers are caring, attentive, competent, and understanding (Pishghadam & Karami, 2017).

Moreover, as indicated by the results of path analysis, teacher credibility was found to be a significant predictor of students' WTAC. This finding is consistent with those of another study revealing that learners show more tendency toward taking courses with those teachers perceived as more credible (Nadler & Nadler, 2001). Furthermore, when a teacher proves to be more believable, his/her perceived credibility can affect students' respect for the teacher (Martinez-Egger & Powers, 2007), students' motivation and affective learning (Pogue & AhYun, 2006), or students' desire to attend classes, as the results of the present study showed. As put forward by Aristotle, credibility is one means of persuasion, and more specifically, teacher credibility plays a central role in persuasive discourse in the educational context (McCroskey, 1997). Thus, teachers regarded as credible can more effectively persuade their students about the importance of the subject matter and students' presence in the classroom, which may subsequently increase students' CA rate.

Furthermore, the results of path analysis exhibited that students' WTAC is significantly predicted by teacher stroke. What this finding implies is that strokees (i.e. those students attended to by the strokers) who receive more stroke from the strokers (i.e. those teachers who give strokes) are more inclined to believe that their presence in the classroom is worthwhile in comparison to those students given less stroke. This finding is justifiable when we consider individuals' hunger for recognition (Pishghadam & Karami, 2017). Actually, when teachers can satisfy this students' need through giving various kinds of stroke, they imply to students that they are caring about and paying attention to students. Consequently, in order to receive more stroke from their teachers, students are more willing to attend classes.

All in all, as student's CA is a fundamental element of educational programs, more comprehensive investigations of the variables affecting WTAC can play a significant role in improving CA rate among learners. Accordingly, the results of this study contribute to this effort as it investigated three such largely unnoticed factors, namely teacher success, stroke, and credibility. Furthermore, as Gourneau (2005) mentioned that "effective attitudes and actions employed by teachers can ultimately make positive differences on the lives of their students" (p. 1), the implications of this study is to improve teachers' actions which yield higher rate of CA in their students. In sum, given the indispensable impact of teacher characteristics on learner WTAC, this study recommends language teachers to attend to their own qualities and characteristics, specifically teacher success, stroke, and credibility. As already mentioned in this study, the higher the levels of teacher credibility, stroke, and success are, the more willing the students become to attend classes. Besides, the concepts of teacher credibility, success, and stroke can be addressed in teacher education programs in order

to help teachers increase their effectiveness in educational settings. As maintained by Koc (2013), teacher training programs have the potential to solidify or modify teachers' beliefs.

The limitations of the current study need to be acknowledged here, however. It was conducted in the context of universities. So, future studies can be done to probe these variables in other contexts such as private language institutes or public schools. Additionally, generalizations based on the findings of the current research should be done with some caution, as the sample consisted of 276 participants. Another caveat of the study is that, for data analysis, only Pearson correlation and path analysis were used. Further studies can be conducted in future studies utilizing qualitative methods such as interview or case study in order to examine these relations.

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