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The Imposter Phenomenon and Anxiety among Pre-Service TESOL Teachers

By:

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An Honors Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Graduation from the
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Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to evaluate anxiety, preparedness and attitudes of pre-service TESOL teachers participating in a Health Literacy Learning program. More specifically the study analyzed the Imposter Phenomenon (IP) and Teacher Anxiety (TchA). Data were gathered using the NSST Imposter Scale, and the Teacher Anxiety Scale. Participants consisted of 15 pre-service TESOL teachers (12 females, 3 males). Results revealed significant differences in examining the influence of IP on confidence about teaching competence $t(13) = 2.91$, $p=.01$, and marginally significant results when examining the influence of IP on anxiety about lesson presentation $t(13) = 1.04$ $p=.05$. No significant results were found in influences of gender on IP or anxiety, or level of experience on anxiety, $p =$ns. Future research should examine IP and anxiety among teachers in general, as well as gender differences. Additionally differences among TESOL instructors and general K-12 teachers.

THE IMPOSTER PHENOMENON AND ANXIETY

Acknowledgements

THE IMPOSTER PHENOMENON AND ANXIETY

        The imposter phenomenon (IP) is a relatively under-researched topic in the fields of psychology and teaching literature, yet the research that has been conducted has revealed that IP is associated with a number of negative outcomes (Bernat, 2008; Want & Kleitman, 2006). More specifically the imposter phenomenon is characterized by feelings of illegitimacy, low self-efficacy, and generalized anxiety due to the fact that some individuals might feel as if they are an imposter in the professional field they are in (Bernat, 2008; Topping & Kimmel, 1985). This topic may have important implications for individuals who are just starting their careers, particularly teachers. With a high turnover rate among novice teachers (Farrell 2006), it is possible that issues associated with the imposter phenomenon may influence retention rates, performance, and feelings associated with self-efficacy.

        A more unique and focused population to examine with regards to IP is novice pre-service Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) teachers. This population is important to examine due to an increasing amount of immigrants entering the United States. Roughly 1.5 million immigrants come to the United States each year, bringing the nation's immigrant population to about 37.9 million in the year 2007 (Camarota, 2007). With more immigrants seeking out assistance so that they may learn English in order to obtain legal documentation to work and live in the United States; it is critical to examine how the people providing this specific assistance, namely teachers address this role. More specifically, it may be important to study IP in terms of novice TESOL teachers so as to increase work efficacy (Brannan & Bleistein, 2012) and decrease high turnover rates (Farrell, 2006) and stress loads. With this in mind, the aim of

the current study was to examine the relationships between imposter phenomenon with

novice TESOL teachers and the influence it has on stress.

Imposter Phenomenon

Starting a new career can be an exciting and stressful time for many people.

Research however has demonstrated that in starting these new careers, some people may

feel like imposters. This could be due to the fact that these individuals fear they will be

unable to perform at their best (Clance, Dingman, Reviere, & Stober, 1995). Even with

adequate training people may feel immense pressure to demonstrate their worth in the

work place and want confirmation from others to know that they are successful (Clance,

1985).

Some of the first researchers to shed light on the imposter phenomenon were

Clance and Imes (1978) through their investigations of females in clinical situations and

college courses. Through these studies, researchers found that the females who reported

having high levels of IP also reported having low levels of perceived intelligence (Clance

& Imes, 1978). Furthermore, the females in their sample believed that sooner or later in

their lives a person of higher regard would expose them for being intellectual imposters

(Clance & Imes, 1978). In sum, researchers put forth that these females did not fall into

any one diagnostic category and tended to suffer from anxiety, lack of self-confidence,

depression and frustration linked to not attaining what they believed was their highest

level of achievement (Clance & Imes, 1978). Clance and Imes (1978) posited that future

research could support the notion that IP may be unique to females due to the idea that

males link their successes with qualities within themselves rather than outside forces,

while high achieving females tend to focus more on external causes. This concept has

been supported by researchers who have suggested that higher levels of IP can be seen in females due to the gender differences in parental messages and expectations (King & Cooley. 1995).

Importantly, Clance (1985) described IP as a cycle. She described this cycle as something that happens when the person suffering from IP is faced with a new project, job, or duty. IP is associated with crucial times in which people are worried about making a good impression and wanting to gain acceptance from their employers and co-workers. The cycle often starts when people feel a need to perform; moreover, this need to perform is associated with feelings of worry, anxiety and fear. The person suffering from IP may begin to overwork, prepare much sooner than their deadline, or procrastinate with a fear of not completing the task as assigned (Clance, 1985). When the task is finally completed and the individual is likely are praised for their hard work, they are often relieved and happy but unfortunately the praise they receive for completing the job and performing well reinforces the negative outcomes. More specifically, people who have gone through this cycle numerous times begin to believe that in order to do well on a task they must have feelings of worry and anxiety. As a result, this cycle may cause stress over an extended period of time and may result in nightmares or insomnia.

Characteristics of IP. Research suggests that people who are suffering from IP tend to make good first impressions (Clance, 1985). This may be due to the fact that in trying to hide their imposter feelings; people are able to deceive others into thinking that their outward personality is more pleasant than it may be in reality. In many cases IP is referred to as a "mask" or alternate personality due to the fact that those who have these feelings are able to hide their imagined weaknesses (Clance, 1985).

Topping (1983) examined personality traits among college professors and found a strong positive correlation within IP and trait anxiety. This research concluded that people who experienced IP were significantly more likely to experience anxiety in many other situations (Langford & Clance, 1993). In relation to feelings of anxiety, IP has also been linked depression as well as low self-esteem (Bernard, Dollinger & Ramaniah, 2002). Based on past research, those in the professional field who suffer from feelings of IP also tend to worry more about their appearance to others intellectually, in an attempt to avoid feelings of unworthiness or shame. Consequently, the idea of confiding in others enough to show weaknesses and risk disapproval is difficult for impostors to tolerate (Langford & Clance, 1993). This may help to explain the anxiety and low self-esteem found in those who consistently experience IP.

In addition, researchers have discovered specific personality characteristics associated with people suffering from IP; specifically, these individuals tend to be introverts - although they may portray personality traits more characteristic of an extrovert to those they interact with (Clance, 1985). These people often question themselves, and have a difficult time embracing the sense of joy and accomplishment that comes with success (Clance, 1985). Furthermore, these individuals are aware of the idea that failure is a necessity in life; however they cannot fathom the idea of failing themselves, and avoid it as much as they can. Often times, victims of IP feel hopeless and helpless leading them to never feel as if they are able to succeed. Clance (1985) has demonstrated that in many cases this leads to misery, depression, and anxiety.

Other research has demonstrated that one of the most prominent characteristics in those who suffer from IP is the fact that they are unable to accept or believe the

compliments of others (Clance, 1985). These individuals are incapable of believing this

praise, simply because they honestly do not believe it is deserved. Accordingly, any sort

of praise that is received only furthers the idea that others have a false impression of who

they really are (Clance, 1985). For many, there also comes a fear that if they are to agree

with the compliment, they will be expected to keep performing at this level in the future.

However, Clance (1985) argued that because many believe their success is false,

individuals will likely subscribe to the notion that they are unable to succeed at this level

again.

   Consequences of IP. As individuals engage in the cycle of IP, there are many

other consequences that are often difficult to overcome. One of the most known and

researched ideas is that people who suffer from feelings of IP will also experiences

misery, anxiety, and depression (Clance, 1985). This can lead to feelings of hopeless;

thus furthering the idea that they are never going to be good enough (Clance, 1985).

Many people who are living with IP begin to feel physical symptoms brought on by the

stress such as headaches, stomachaches, and eye twitches. Some have even reported

insomnia and nightmares (Clance, 1985). If the feelings of IP are not overcome it is likely

that it will become a constant problem, and Harvey and Katz (1985) suggest that the

victim may have to deal with it the rest of their lives.

   Another serious consequence of having IP in the workplace is that these feelings

may start to carry over into the person's personal life. Research suggests that people have

reported that IP affects their roles as friends, children, parents, spouses, and in many

other aspects (Harvey & Katz, 1985). Victims report feeling symptoms of IP in regards to

love for others, family loyalties, and social standing. For some, these feelings are often

associated with doubt and insecurities about personal roles (Harvey & Katz, 1985).

Researchers have posited that feelings of IP within personal roles often come from the

notion that high IP individuals often do not feel as if they are portraying an accurate

representation of themselves to others in the same way they do to themselves. This can

cause them to be concerned about presenting an authentic self to others (Harvey & Katz,

1985). It is important to note that many people within their lifetime will suffer from

feelings of IP; however it is only in extreme cases in which the most severe consequences

are seen (Clance, 1985).

Gender and IP. Clance and Imes (1978) probed development of IP feelings

within females. They concluded that these feelings often stem from the inability to please

family members within schooling and social situations as a child. Researchers put forth

the notion that a child will likely aim to please family members by excelling in school

and in social situations; however, when the family remains unconvinced, feelings of IP

start to form (Clance & Imes, 1978). In addition to these feelings arising, Clance and

Imes (1978) concluded that certain behaviors lead to IP being maintained. These

behaviors include hard work and meticulousness, not disclosing unique thoughts or

opinions, and trying hard to win the support of superiors (Clance & Imes, 1978). All of

these behaviors are aimed at trying to conceal the idea that these females do not believe

they possess the ability to maintain the level of intellectual talents they demonstrate to

others.

Building on the research of Clance and Imes (1978), psychologists began to

expand upon the idea of the IP, hoping to link the feelings to more than just high

achieving females. King and Cooley (1995) researched IP relating to family achievement

orientation and achievement-related behaviors. They gathered grade point averages from their subjects and time spent on academic endeavors. The subjects then completed the Family Environment Scale (Moos & Moos, 1986) as well as Clance's IP Scale (1985). The researchers found that there were no significant difference between females and males within the Family Environment Scale; however, females reported significantly higher levels of IP. Again, Kumar and Jagacinski (2006) conducted a study in which they examined IP in relation to achievement goals. When analyzing 93 male and 43 female introductory psychology students they discovered that females did indeed report higher imposter fears as well as lower confidence in their intelligence. As more research has been conducted in different populations in regards to the IP, there seems to be a difference in gender regarding feelings and levels of IP.

Some have postulated as to why females may experience IP more than males; this includes the idea that they may have been repeatedly told from family members and peers that they are not intelligent enough (Clance & Imes, 1978). Another hypothesis outlined the idea that the qualities that are generally associated with success and achievement such as power and confidence are more frequently attributed to males (Clance, Dingman, Reviere, Stober, 1995). Consequently, females must maintain a persona of being warm and expressive, while attempting to obtain qualities society deems out of reach in order to be successful.

IP and Therapy. When determining avenues of therapy for those who suffer from IP, it has been suggested that a multi-modal approach may be the most effective in altering the feelings of IP (Clance & Imes 1978). More specifically it is suggested that numerous therapeutic approaches are used simultaneously. Therapeutic techniques tend

to include exercises in which clients are redirected from the negative effects of IP that may have been the source of other issues, such as anxiety and depression, and asked to focus on more positive thoughts (Clance & O'Tool, 1988). Additionally, research has suggested that some therapists should assign homework for the client such as keeping a record of positive feedback her or she receives and possible ways they may have kept themselves from accepting this comment (Clance & Imes, 1978). Results of this multimodal approach in conjunction with a commitment from the client to change, has been associated with lower levels of IP.

Researchers also propose group settings in which clients can encourage others to share their feelings and help them understand that they are not alone, nor are their feelings uncommon (Clance & Imes, 1978). This is proposed due to the fact that individuals with IP commonly feel as if their experiences are unique and fear words of criticism; thus, being in a group setting and hearing others' stories may alleviate this negative perception (Clance, Dingman, Reviere, & Stober, 1995). Research suggests that often the client assumes that others will criticize them; consequently this can be challenged within this group setting. By developing a relationship with the other members of the group, the client then see that they are valued and cared about by other people and can being to accept themselves as thriving (Clance, Dingman, Reviere, & Stober, 1995). Social support such as this has been well documented in previous research (e.g., Dunkel-Schetter, Blasband, Feinstein, & Bennett Herbert, 1992; Sarason, Sarason & Pierce, 1990). Another technique outlines a situation in which the client is to assume the opposite role than that of an imposter (Clance & Imes, 1978). The therapist may have them act out being smart in front of them or a group in order to sense and express what it

would feel like to be this way. Reactions to this technique however tend to vary in terms of effectiveness. In many cases the person will discover a part of them that they had repressed by feelings of self-doubt - a part that allows them to see the successes that they have accomplished. Other times, this technique may uncover more fears and memories of past experiences in which they were treated as lesser by teachers, parents, or other peers (Clance & Imes, 1978). Consequently, therapies are still evolving to address this issue in each unique situation.

IP and TESOL. Research suggests that a unique type of IP may exist among non-native speaker teachers in TESOL (Bernat, 2008). Researchers have called this type of IP 'NNST Impostorhood', or the phenomenon of the Non-Native Speaker Teacher (Bernat, 2008). Again, this stems from the research of Clance and Imes (1985), suggesting that these teachers may experience IP due to the fact that they are not teaching the language to which they are native (Bernat, 2008). As with general IP, the person with IP may experience feelings of worthlessness and anxiety in relation to the idea that they feel as if they are not qualified for the task they are completing professionally. Due to the fact that IP is relatively under-researched in the TESOL field, more research is needed. With the demand of more TESOL teachers around the globe, people are beginning to step into this role with English being their second or third language (Bernat, 2008). Studies have shown in particular that NNST's tend to feel lesser in their role as teachers of English as a second language and had worries due to their feelings of inability to teach a language to which they were not native (Bernat, 2008). In addition, TESOL teachers often teach in most countries around the world, oftentimes in cultures that are not their own (Brannan & Bleistein, 2012). This may increase IP as well. More specifically,

because they are new and they are in cultures that may have social norms that are not congruent with their native countries, they may feel more insecure and anxious. This will likely increase IP.

Workplace Anxiety

Many workers today agree that the workplace is an environment that fosters a certain level of anxiety (Kahn, 1993). Forty six percent of people polled in workplace survey reported feeling some level of anxiety at work (Kreamer, 2011). Kahn (1993) suggested that some antecedents may either be situation or transitional. Situational anxiety is associated with personal, physical or social issues, while transitional anxiety is associated with developmental shifts or social status shifts within the employee. More specifically, the heavy demands of the workplace such as deadlines, productivity, and relationships, are associated with situational anxiety and contribute a great deal to the overall anxiety levels of employees (Kahn, 1993). Due to the fact that anxious people are at a higher risk of being withdrawn, negative, and uncertain (Kreamer, 2011), this could greatly impact the level and consistency of work the employees complete. Kreamer (2011) claimed the rise in anxiety levels among employees may be due to technology of the work industry; it is outpacing the ability to cope with these changes, thus having to accept the idea that one day a person's job may become obsolete. All of these contributes could offer an explanation as to why workplace anxiety is a growing issue.

Teacher Anxiety (TchA). In examining a specific population, research has shown that teachers are prone to a broader concept known as teacher anxiety (TchA) (Keavney & Sinclair, 1978). TchA encompasses the idea that teacher anxiety is due to specific stressors such as teacher concerns due to length of teaching experience, and

concerns in general such as classroom situations (Allmaras, 1981). Keavney and Sinclair (1978) suggest that paying attention to the concerns that teachers self-report, may help in targeting the main source of anxiety. This may be important due to the fact that research has shown that anxiety is associated with teaching and is heightened with low teaching experience (Keavney & Sinclair, 1978).

Consequences of TchA. High teacher anxiety in the classroom has been associated with a number of negative outcomes that affect both the teacher's performance, as well as the students understanding. Research has shown that TchA is negatively correlated with teacher warmth and positively correlated with student anxiety, meaning that when the teacher is feeling anxious, so are the students (Kracht & Casey, 1968).

Workplace Anxiety and IP. Kreamer (2011) outlines the idea that there is a specific type of professional anxiety that has to do with the employee's internal sense of self-esteem. This is described as the worker feeling fraudulent, having conveyed a false sense that they possess skills beyond reality, causing anxiety and fear that their failures will be exposed to their colleagues. As previously delineated, these symptoms are those that accompany the imposter phenomenon. However, researchers have suggested that it is also important to differentiate between the type of anxiety that leads to IP, and the type of anxiety that motivates people to complete tasks within the workplace (Kreamer, 2011).

The Current Study

The purpose of the current study was to shed light on the Imposter Phenomenon and anxiety among novice pre-service TESOL teachers. Researchers evaluated a Health Literacy Learning program, in which pre-service TESOL teachers offered courses in

basic English, oriented around the skills of speaking, reading, and writing, to immigrants in the United States. The specific purpose of this thesis was to evaluate preparedness, anxiety, and attitudes of those TESOL teachers. Due to the topics introduced above three research questions are presented. Specifically, RQ1) Will novice TESOL teachers with higher levels of imposter phenomenon have higher levels of anxiety compared to those with lower imposter levels? RQ2a) Does gender influence imposter levels among pre-service TESOL teachers? RQ2b) Does gender influence anxiety levels among pre-service TESOL teachers? RQ3) Does the amount of experience a pre-service TESOL teacher has before this program influence their anxiety levels?

Methods

Participants

This study included 15 participants (female = 12) with ages ranging from 21 to 65. Most participants were from the United States, 60%; however, there were some participants from Brazil, Canada, South Korea, China, Japan, and the Philippines. Thirty eight percent of the participants were white, 19% were multi-racial, and the remaining were of other ethnicities. Eleven of the participants had previous teaching experience prior to this program, while 4 did not. Fifty six percent of the participants communicated best in English, while 44% communicated best in another language.

Procedure

Pre-service TESOL teachers who were involved in the Health Literacy Learning program were invited to participate in the study. If willing, participants were asked to sign an online informed consent. Furthermore, participants were informed that they had

the liberty to quit the survey at any time. The participants engaged in an on-line survey

that took approximately 30 minutes.

Measures

  Imposter Scale. IP was measured using the NSST Impostor Scale (Bernat, 2008).

The Imposter Scale was rated on a Likert scale (1-*Not at all true*, 4-*Always true*) and

asked participants to rate their feelings and attitudes based on the scenarios given (e.g. I

am certain that my abilities don't reflect the level of my achievement). Those with higher

scores had higher levels of IP.

  Teacher Anxiety Scale. Teacher anxiety was measured using the Teacher

Anxiety Scale (Parson, 1973). The Teacher Anxiety Scale was also rated on a Likert scale

(1-*Never*, 5-*Always)* and asked participants to rate situations based on this scale. This

scale included 8 different factors, each concerning a different area of anxiety (e.g. anxiety

about content mastery). For the purposes of this analysis only domains 1 (confidence

about teaching competence), 3 (anxiety about content mastery), and 8 (anxiety about

lesson presentation) were used. Domains 2, and 4 through 7 evaluated situations that

were not relevant to the current study such as concern about teaching as a career choice

and supervision anxiety. Within domain 1, question 3 was reverse coded, within domain

3 questions 7 and 8 were reverse coded, and within domain 8 questions 19, 20, and 21

were reverse coded.

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Results

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Descriptive Statistics

  For Research Question 1, factor 1 the mean level of anxiety for high IP was 2.48

($SD =$.18) while the mean for low levels of IP was 2.06 ($SD =$.39). For factor 3 the mean

level for high IP was 3.30 (SD =.42) while the mean for low levels of IP was 3.17 (SD

=.35). For factor 8 the mean level for high IP was 2.78 (SD =.55) while the mean level

for low IP was 3.39 (SD =.35).

In addition for Research Question 2a the overall mean levels of IP for males was

2.13 (SD =.86) and for females it was 2.10 (SD =.53). Interestingly, the mean level of

anxiety for factor 1 was 2.33 (SD =.33) for males and for females the mean was 2.31 (SD

=.36). For factor 3 the mean level was 3.33 (SD =.33) for males and for females the mean

was 3.22 (SD =.41). For factor 8 the mean anxiety level was 3.22 (SD =.69) for males and

for females the mean was 2.97 (SD =.59).

Lastly, for Research Question 3 the mean level of anxiety for those with no

previous teaching experience for factor 1 was 2.42 (SD =.32) and for those with previous

teaching experience it was 2.27 (SD =.36). For factor 3 the mean level for those with no

previous experience was 3.42 (SD =.17) and for those with previous experience it was

3.18 (SD =.43). Finally for factor 8 the mean level for those with no previous experience

was 2.67 (SD =. 38) and for those with previous experience the mean level was 3.15 (SD

=.62).

Research Question 1

To examine the high and low levels of IP on anxiety the data were split.

Specifically, the median for overall imposter phenomenon levels was a 2.1; consequently

anyone scoring above this number was considered to be in the high imposter level group,

while those below were considered to be in the low imposter level group. T tests revealed

that there were significant findings when comparing those with high levels of IP to those

with low levels of IP in factor 1 $t(13)$ =2.91, p=.01. There were no significant findings in

comparing those with high levels of IP to those with low levels of IP in factor 3 $t(13)$

$=1.44$, $p=.54$. However, there were marginally significant results for factor 8 $t(13) =1.04$

$p=.05$. It may be necessary to examine the trend in differences between the two groups

(*see graph 1*).

Research Question 2A.

There were no significant findings when examining the influence of gender on

imposter phenomenon levels $t(13) =1.21$, $p=.91$.

Research Question 2B.

There were also no significant findings when examining the influence of gender

on anxiety levels for factor 1 $t(13) = 1.21$, $p=.91$, factor 3 $t(13) =.43$, $p=.67$, or factor 8

$t(13) =.64$, $p=..54$. While there were no statistically significant results, it is important to

note the trend in differences displayed between the two groups (*see graph 3*).

Research Question 3.

There were no significant results when determining whether or not previous levels

of experience influenced anxiety levels in factor 1 $t(13) =.70$, $p=.49$, factor 3 $t(13) =1.44$,

$p=.17$, or factor 8 $t(13) =1.04$, $p=.32$. Again, it is important to note that there was a clear

trend in differences between the two groups (*see graph 4*).

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Discussion

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The purpose of the current study was to evaluate anxiety and IP among pre-

service TESOL teachers participating in a Health Literacy Learning program. More

specifically this study examined three different research questions that focused on teacher

anxiety, gender differences, and IP. While in most cases results did not yield statistically

significant results, it is still important to note trends, and even minor differences between groups.

Research Question 1

Within RQ1, significant results were displayed within factor 1 - confidence about teaching competence. This is consistent with previous literature as Kreamer (2011) suggested that in some cases workers have displayed a false sense of competence to their colleagues and consequently will experience anxiety as they fear being exposed for their fraudulent displays. As feelings of IP are closely related to this type of anxiety, it is reasonable to suggest that there is an association between IP and teacher anxiety. In addition, it is possible that if pre-service teachers are experiencing IP, they may have feelings of anxiety in general, as they attempt to cope with these feelings, in addition to dealing with their daily responsibilities.

Marginally significant results were also found in factor 8 - anxiety about lesson preparation. In explaining IP as a cycle, Clance (1985) puts forth that when presented with a new task, those suffering with IP will begin to overwork, prepare much sooner than the deadline, or procrastinate. If the teachers in this study engaged in these behaviors, it may have caused a great deal of anxiety as well. Furthermore, 44% of the participants indicated that they communicated best in a language other than English. This could also exacerbate anxiety surrounding lesson presentation, as they may not feel qualified to be teaching English. This is congruent with research literature from Bernat (2008) that suggested there may be a unique form of imposter phenomenon and anxiety related feelings among non-native TESOL teachers.

There were no significant results in examining the influences of IP on factor 3 - anxiety about content mastery. This could simply be due to the fact that as these teachers were pre-service, they may feel as if perfecting the content is something that they still have time to do and do not need to prove this aspect of their work ethic to their colleagues yet.

Research Question 2A

There were no significant results when examining the influence of gender on IP. However, in examining the mean levels, there was a trend in terms of males displaying slightly more imposter feelings than females. This is inconsistent with previous research that suggests that females tend to experience higher levels of IP than males (Clance & Imes, 1978; Kumar & Jagacinski, 2006). The findings of the current study could be due to low sample size, or the lack of balance between male and female participants.

Research Question 2B

There were no significant findings within the influences of gender on anxiety in the three factors. However, in examining the data trends, males displayed a higher level of anxiety than females. Due to the fact that little research has been conducted in the area of gender and teacher anxiety, comparisons are limited.

Research Question 3

Finally, there were no significant results when examining the influence of amount of teaching experience on anxiety levels in any of the three factors. Data trends, however, showed a connection between teaching experience and anxiety in factors 1 and 3. These factors encompassed the areas of anxiety in relation to confidence about teaching competence, and anxiety about content mastery. This is consistent with the literature that

shows teachers experience a different type of anxiety in relation to level of experience

(Allmaras, 1981). For some of the teachers in this program, this was their first time in

front of a classroom. As the teachers had no previous teaching experience, they may have

felt more anxiety in relation to aspects that their colleagues with more experience have

mastered, such as teaching confidence and content.

Anxiety levels were shown to be higher in relation to anxiety about lesson

presentation for teachers who had previous experience compared to those who did not

have previous experience. Of note, the majority (73%) of the participants had previous

teaching experience. Being that they were pre-service, they may still be experiencing

general anxiety in relation to their job and not possessing all the skills necessary present

their curriculum effectively.

Limitations

One major limitation of this study was sample size. Had there been a larger

population of pre-service teachers taking the survey, this study may have yielded more

significant results. The low sample size may have also caused type 2 errors specifically

within RQ1. In other words, due to the small sample size, it is likely that significant

differences between the groups were not detected (i.e., male/female; high IP/low IP)

when there might actually be differences if the sample was larger. Future research may

want to sample pre-service teachers from a variety of different programs to ensure

adequate sample size.

Another limitation of this study was the lack of balance between males and

females. As one of the research questions closely examined the impacts of gender on

certain outcomes, the lack of equal numbers of males and females may have contributed

to a lack of findings. The participants in this study also only completed a survey at the end of the study. Had they completed a pre-test, as well as a post-test, results could have captured changes in attitudes and feelings, resulting in a better display of outcomes. Finally, it is important to note that this was an exploratory study. Findings should be further examined taking into account the limitations discussed.

Future Research. Future research should examine the interaction between IP and anxiety. More specifically, these variables should be examined with populations such as pre-service teachers. Results from these studies could help in lowering the turn-over rate in this profession, as it is quite high. Future studies should also examine the effects of IP and anxiety on TESOL teachers in relation to general teachers, in order to gain a better understanding of the factors that impact each population individually. Furthermore, it is important to begin examining the influences of gender on IP and anxiety as relatively few studies have been conducted in this area as well. This could also further the understanding of the aspects of each that influence both males and females, in hopes of reducing them in all professions.

In sum, this study furthered understanding of IP and teacher anxiety related to pre-service TESOL teachers. English as a second language classes are becoming more in demand. Consequently, it is essential that there are teachers not only qualified to instruct these courses, but that they feel confident in their teaching skills. Results such as those shown in this study are imperative to consider when assessing the issues pre-service TESOL teachers face, in order to minimize turnover rates and to keep teachers in the profession.

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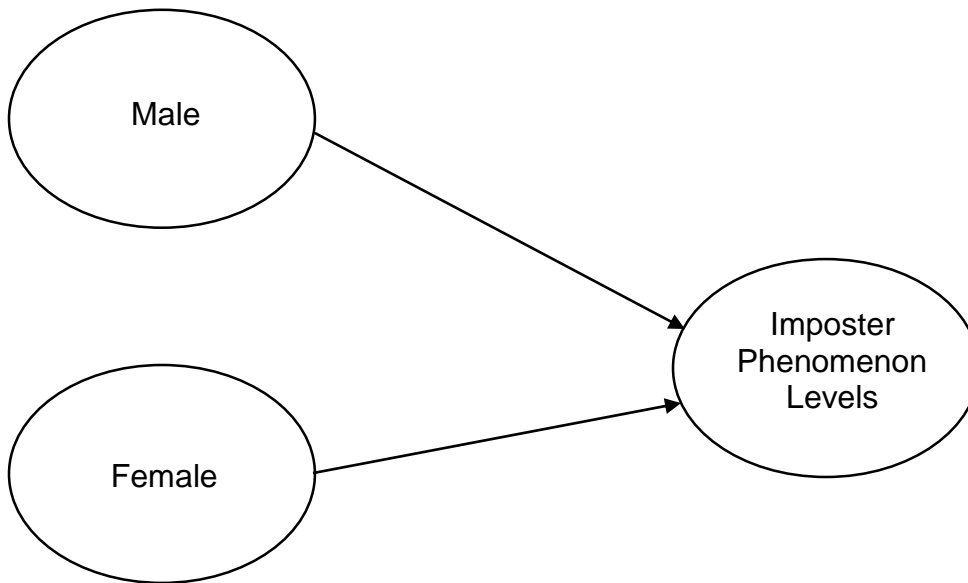**Chart 1.** Graphic description of Research Question 1.

Research Question 1-Will novice TESOL teachers with higher levels of imposter phenomenon have higher levels of anxiety compared to those with lower imposter levels?
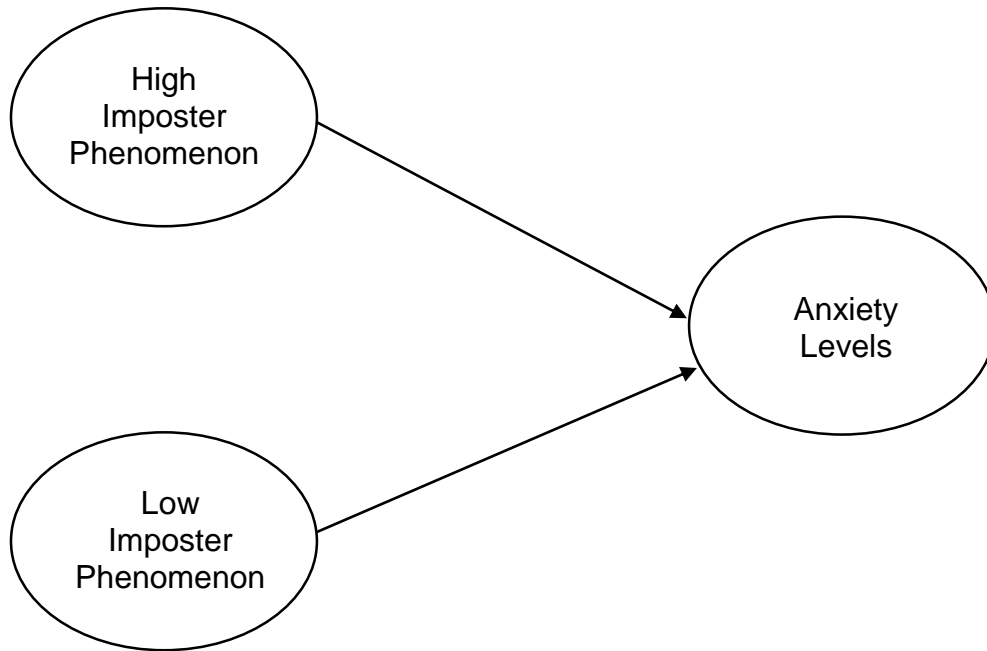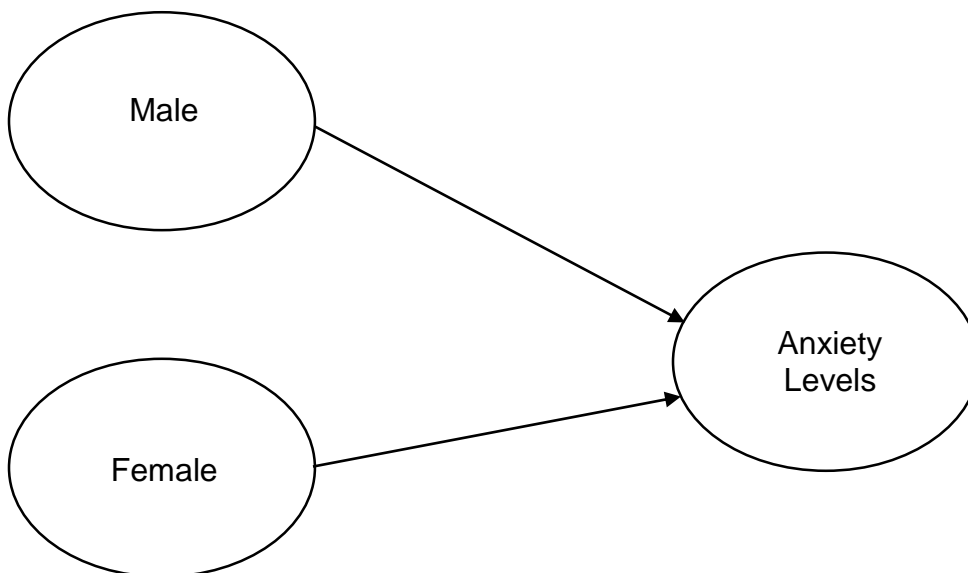
Chart 2. Graphic description of Research Question 2A and 2B.

*Research Question 2A-Does gender influence imposter phenomenon levels among pre-service TESOL teachers?*

Research Question 2B-Does gender influence anxiety levels among pre-service TESOL teachers?
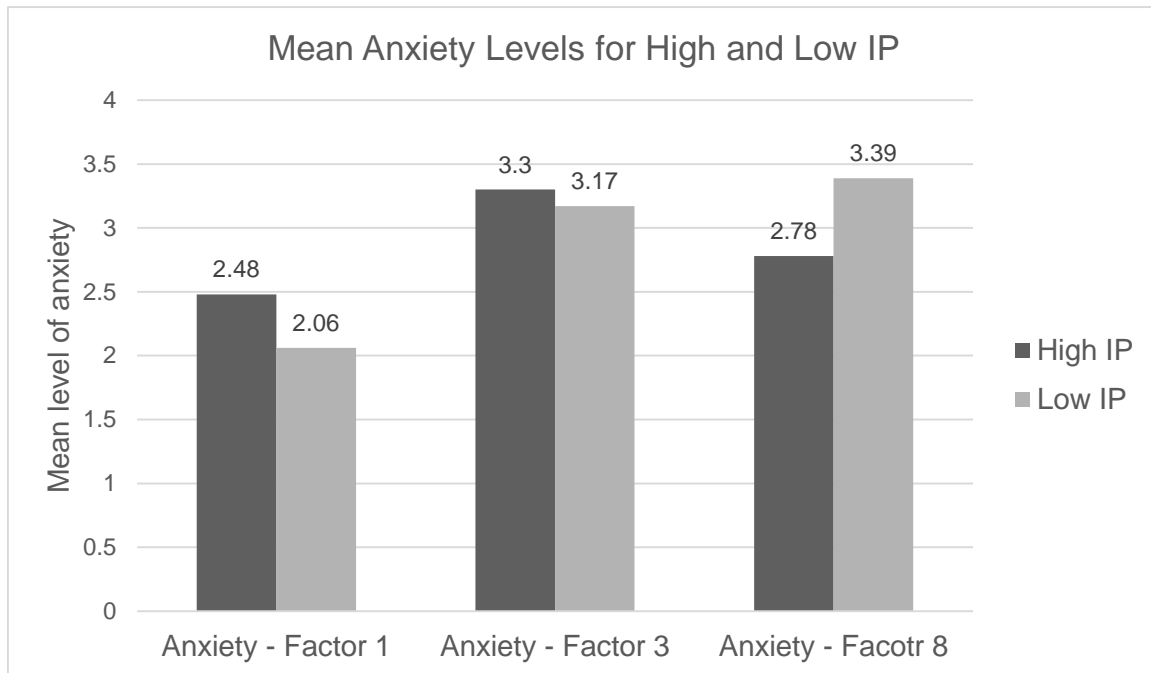
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Chart 3. Graphic description of Research Question 3.

Research Question 3-Does the amount of teaching experience a pre-service TESOL teacher has before this program influence their anxiety levels?
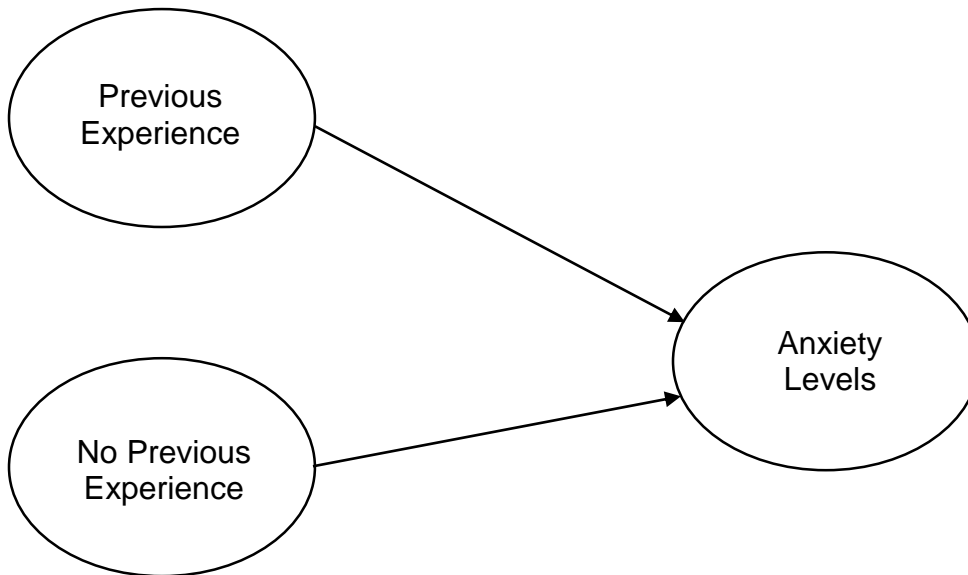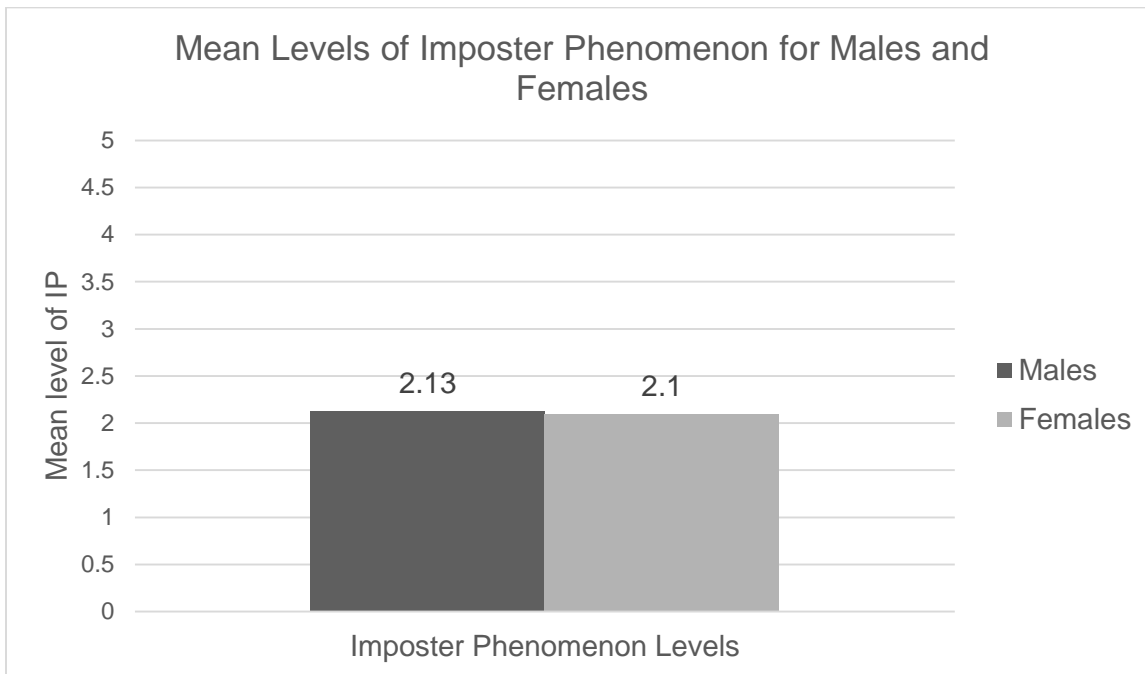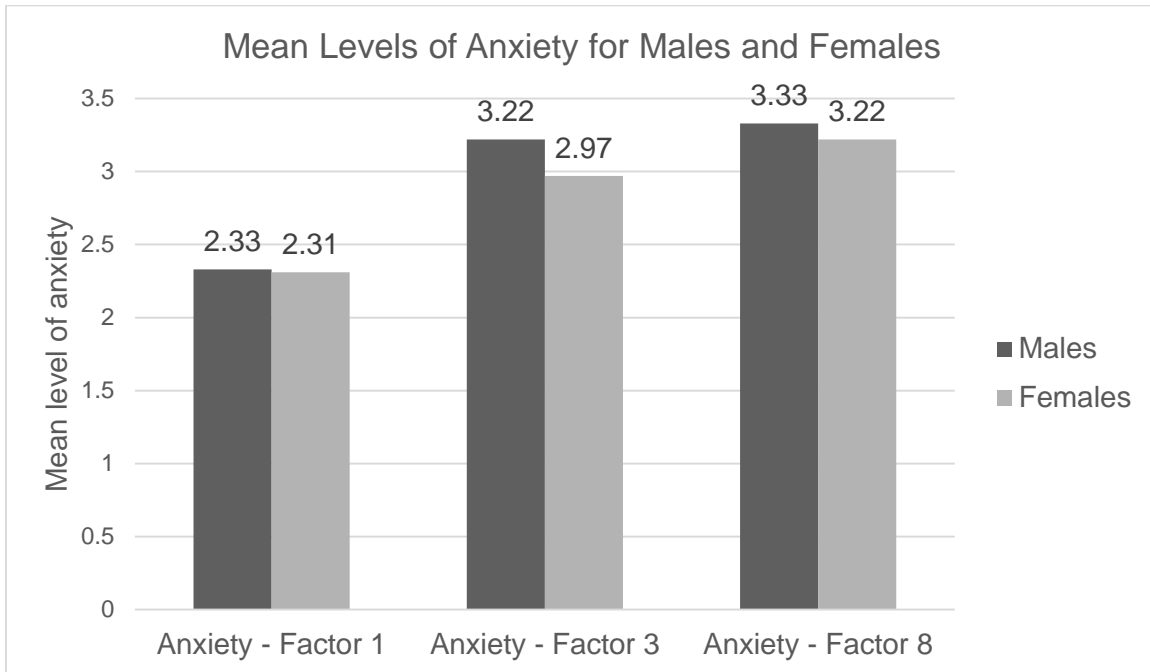
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Graph 1. Mean levels of anxiety for each factor based upon high or low imposter phenomenon levels.

Mean Anxiety Levels for High and Low IP

**Graph 2.** Mean levels of imposter phenomenon for males and females.

Mean Levels of Imposter Phenomenon for Males and Females

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Graph 3. Mean levels anxiety for males and females for each factor.

Mean Levels of Anxiety for Males and Females

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Graph 4. Mean levels anxiety for those with previous teaching experience and those without previous teaching experience for each factor.

Mean Anxiety Levels for Those With Previous Teaching Experience and Those Without
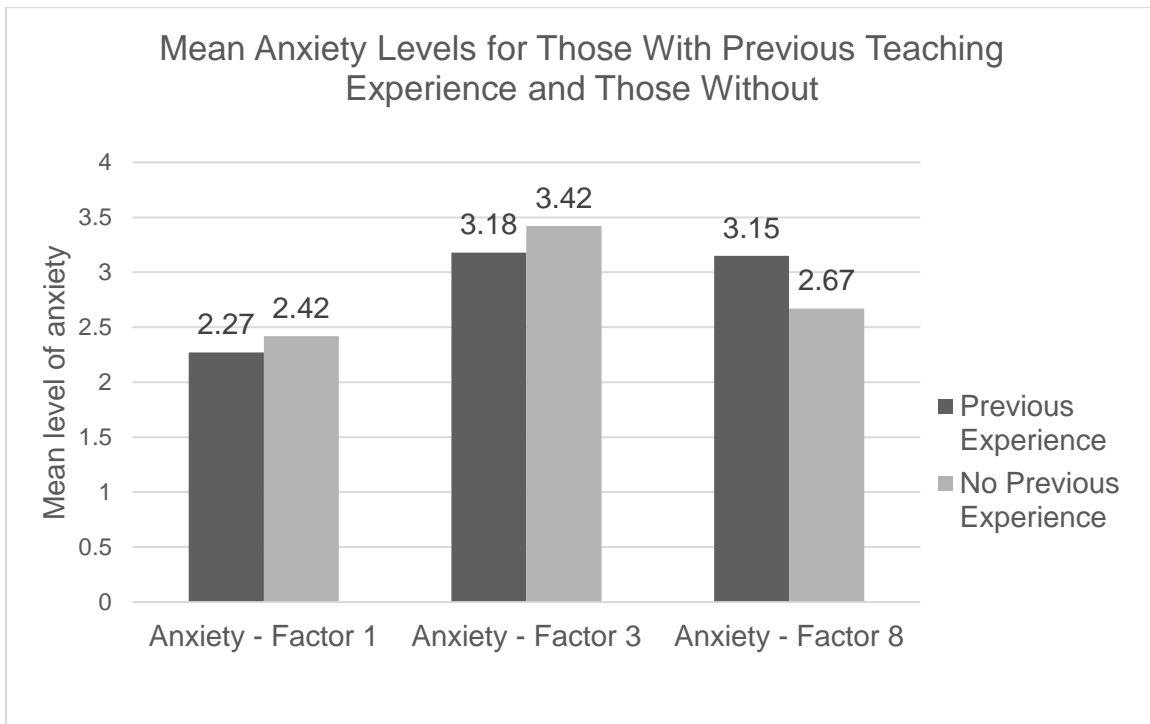
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Appendix A

NSST Imposter Scale, Bernat (2008)

Each statement below indicates your possible feelings and attitudes about yourself and your abilities. Please indicate how true you feel each of the statements is *as it applies to you*, using the scale below. Circle the right answer:
1 = not true at all 2 = rarely true 3 = sometimes true 4 = always true

1. I feel that other people tend to believe that I am more competent than I am. 1 2 3 4
2. I am certain that my abilities don't reflect the level of my achievement. 1 2 3 4
3. Sometimes I am afraid I will be discovered for who or what I really am. 1 2 3 4
4. I find it hard to accept compliments about my teaching ability because they are mainly not true. 1 2 3 4
5. I feel I don't deserve the awards, recognition, and praise I regularly receive. 1 2 3 4
6. I feel inferior compared to Native Speaker Teachers. 1 2 3 4
7. I often wonder if my accent makes it hard for people to understand me. 1 2 3 4
8. So far, my accomplishments for my stage in life are perfectly adequate. 1 2 3 4
9. I am not sure if I am able to teach English well, since I am non-native speaker teacher. 1 2 3 4
10. I often achieve success on a project when I think I may have failed. 1 2 3 4
11. I often feel I am concealing secrets about myself from others. 1 2 3 4
12. My public and private self are not the same. 1 2 3 4
13. Very few people really know how average I am. 1 2 3 4
14. Most of my successful teaching experiences are due to luck. 1 2 3 4
15. When I stand in front of a classroom I feel like I don't belong there. 1 2 3 4

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Appendix B

Teacher Anxiety Scale (TchAS), Parson (1973)

Five-point Liker scale
1= Never
2 = Almost never
3 = Sometimes
4 = Almost Always
5 = Always

Factor 1: Confidence about teaching competence
I feel I am as competent in the classroom as other student teachers in my TESOL program 1 2 3 4 5
I feel other teachers think I am competent 1 2 3 4 5
I feel inferior to other student teachers in my teacher education program 1 2 3 4 5

Factor 3: Anxiety about content Mastery
I feel panicky when a student asks a question I can't answer 1 2 3 4 5
If I have trouble answering a student's question I find it difficult to concentrate on questions that follow 1 2 3 4 5
I find it easy to admit to the class that I do not know the answer to a question a student asks 1 2 3 4 5

Factor 8: Anxiety about lesson presentation
I worry about being able to keep the students interested in what I teach them 1 2 3 4 5
I spend an excessive amount of time preparing lessons because I am anxious about how they will go 1 2 3 4 5
I worry that my understanding of the subject matter of lessons is not adequate 1 2 3 4 5