EFL teachers' preparation and beliefs in Niger

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EFL Teachers' Preparation and Beliefs in Niger

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Abstract

Niger is a French-speaking country with a history of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in its middle and high schools. The teachers providing instruction in these programs have been trained in different ways including university-based programs, out of country programs, or no training at all. This study sought to examine the beliefs of Nigerien EFL teachers and analyze the relationship between their beliefs and their training. All EFL teachers in Niger were surveyed to understand their beliefs related to teaching. We found that training was related to teacher beliefs. As Niger determines how best to allocate its limited educational resources this study provides some indication of how training connects to teacher beliefs.

Keywords: modernity seals, professional beliefs, self-efficacy, teacher training

Introduction

The growth of English as an international language has led to the implementation of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs around the globe in countries where English is not the mother tongue. More than 100 non-English speaking nations have adopted EFL programs in schools while more than seventy countries and territories have adopted English as an official language (Crystal, 2003). As nations with limited resources adopt EFL programs there is a *pressing need* for basic research to help governments direct severely limited resources (Nunan, 2001). Niger represents a country with limited resources which has adopted EFL programs in its middle and high schools. However, there is little empirical research which has examined the field of EFL in Niger, especially regarding how EFL teachers in Niger are prepared and how teacher training affects EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching.

As beliefs affect an individual's behaviors and attitudes in general, a teacher's beliefs play a significant role in her or his decision-making regarding different aspects of teaching. Beliefs "are involved in helping individuals make sense of the world, influencing how new information is perceived, and whether it is accepted or rejected" (Borg, 2001, p. 186). While an individual's beliefs about teaching begin to form prior to any teacher training—what has been called the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975)—teacher training programs can impact teacher beliefs (Debreli, 2012; Tatto, 1998; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). Whether or not these teacher training programs impact teacher beliefs in Sub-Saharan Africa has not been the subject of previous research—particularly in the West African context. Examining Nigerien EFL teachers could shed light on how teacher preparation relates to teacher beliefs in West Africa.

Literature Review

Global Trends in Teacher Education

Traditional college and university-based teacher education in Western countries has come under attack. For example, the United States for two decades has seen a push to *deregulate* teacher education, replacing tertiary-institution-based teacher education with new and allegedly innovative non-university providers (Zeichner & Conklin, 2016). Educators and researchers such as Goodlad (1998) and Darling-Hammond (2006) have long argued for the importance of college and university-based teacher education programs to support social goals of equity and democracy. They have also called for substantive changes to strengthen teacher education programs through recruiting a more diverse student population, early fieldwork, professional coursework, and community-based practice.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, efforts to increase access to education for children (Welmond, 2002; Wynd, 1999), a goal of international development efforts (Greany, 2008; Honda & Kato, 2013), combined with a rapidly growing, young population has placed great stress on teacher training policies. Lewin (2002) found that in Ghana, Lesotho, and Malawi, the number of trained teachers required to meet educational needs would need to grow substantially. As Lewin and Stuart (2003) put it,

> The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) relating to education cannot be met unless the supply of teachers is adequate to keep pupil-teacher ratios within reasonable limits, and the quality of their training is sufficient to result in minimum acceptable levels of pupil achievement. (p. IX)

Research in the East African context has shown the need for systematic teacher education programs in order to produce effective teachers (Hardman, Ackers, Abrishamian, & O'Sullivan, 2011). However, countries have taken different approaches to meeting these needs (Lewin & Stuart, 2003). To fill the need for more teachers, Niger brought individuals into the profession who had not received teacher training and were paid substantially less than their more qualified peers (Bourdon, Frolich, & Michaelowa, 2006).

Taking Niger EFL teachers as an example, preparation is inconsistent and there are no firm licensure or examination requirements for teacher candidates prior to entering the classroom as teachers. For example, in Niger, only approximately 12% of EFL teachers, who teach middle and high school students, were trained through a traditional teacher education program (Wiens, Andrei, Anassour, & Smith, 2018). There are five routes to becoming an EFL teacher in Niger: Prospective teachers can enroll in either of two university-based programs, both of which are located in the

capital city, or go through teacher training in a foreign country, enroll in a brief summer training session prior to teaching, or do without training altogether.

Globalization and Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Increasing globalization has also impacted education in Sub-Saharan Africa, but the ways this occurs still needs exploration. As Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) put it, "To complicate the situation further, global economics and ideology are increasingly intertwined in international institutions that promulgate particular strategies for education change" (p. 2). Tabulawa (2003) observed that education was seen by Western nations as an important part of development programs and a way towards modernization. For example, a recent report from the World Bank (2018) provides guidance on teacher training and recommends individually targeted and repeated training with follow-up coaching. International governments have stepped in and provided training and resources to support teacher preparation and professional development in the region. However, the ability of these efforts to achieve their goals has been largely unsuccessful (Ginsburg, 1991) and often more complex and costly than expected (Moulton, Mundy, Welmond, & Williams, 2001). For example, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development funded a four-year project which promoted student-centered learning. Evaluators determined these training efforts did not make a difference in Ghanaian teachers' instructional practices (Akyeampong, 2018). More research is needed to better understand how global efforts have influenced training and practices in this region.

In Niger, the United States provides training for EFL teachers through its State Department programs. The Department of Public Affairs within the US State Department provides a plethora of instructional resources and services to strengthen both students and instructors in English language ability and teaching capacity. Print and technological resources such as *American English* and *Forum* funded through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs are available for free (United States Department of State, 2018). Funding is also provided for English language professionals such as English Language Fellows (EL Fellows)—who are American-trained teachers—and local English language teaching experts to help develop English language instruction in the form of direct language instruction, teacher training, and cultural programming. These EL Fellows guide and coach Nigerien EFL teachers regarding up-to-date TEFL classroom practices that help foster thoughtful and responsible behavior in students and teachers of English (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2018). The English Language Fellows in Niger teach ESL methods at the national university and conduct professional development programs for practicing teachers and focus on communicative language teaching methods (Herrera & Murry, 2016) including 21st century skills, problem solving, and student speaking in class. They attempt to teach what they consider to be best practice while remaining true to the native culture. Therefore, EFL teachers who complete the university-based traditional teacher training in Niger have been partially trained by American EL Fellows and have therefore been exposed to Western-style instructional methods—particularly learner-centered pedagogy.

The Role of Teacher Education

A growing body of empirical research suggests that the extent and quality of teacher education matters for teachers' effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). That is, fully prepared and certified teachers are more successful with students than those who do not have this preparation. However, there is variation in the ability of specific programs to prepare effective teachers (Ronfeldt & Campbell, 2016). Sanders and Rivers (1996) found students taught by

consecutive ineffective teachers have significantly lower achievement gains than those students taught by highly effective teachers in succession. Research has also repeatedly demonstrated teacher education coursework and teaching practices are important in development of preservice teachers' beliefs (Busch, 2010; MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2001; Tatto, 1998). Although research indicates beliefs are difficult to change because preservice teachers bring in their prior learning experiences and use them to filter the content they learn from teacher education programs, many researchers document evidence that teacher education programs have extensive impact on teacher beliefs.

There is considerably less research connecting Sub-Saharan teacher education programs to teachers' beliefs and none that we could find in Niger. There is some evidence of the difficulties of teacher training programs to impact teaching practices in the region (Mtika & Gates, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2004). Policy makers in the region have emphasized infrastructure and supplying the required numbers of teachers over promoting teacher training which leads to student learning (Moon, 2007). In a review of six Sub-Saharan countries, Pryor et al. (2012) found an inconsistent picture of practices and resources available in teacher preparation. Clearly there is a need for additional research on teacher education and teacher beliefs in the region.

Teacher Training and Teacher Beliefs

Research on the impact of teacher education programs on teacher beliefs tend to demonstrate teacher education programs matter and preservice teachers go through a gradual process of developing and modifying their beliefs in an extensive period of time in their teacher education programs before reaching significant changes. Richardson (2003) argued it is important for teacher education programs to focus on the development and refinement of preservice teachers' beliefs. Mattheoudakis (2007) conducted a longitudinal study aimed to investigate the impact of a 3-year full-time teacher education program on preservice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in Greece. The results indicate that the majority of the preservice EFL teachers' beliefs develop gradually from year one to the end of the three-year program such as beliefs about the importance of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in language learning and the importance of correcting beginners. Busch (2010) conducted a large mixed methods study to investigate the impact of a second language acquisition course on the beliefs of preservice teachers in California, the United States. Results demonstrated significant changes in preservice teachers' beliefs in several areas including the length of time for acquisition, difficulty of language acquisition, the role of culture, the role of error correction, the importance of grammar, and the efficacy of audiolingual learning strategies. Similarly, Soldat (2009) investigated the impact of a teacher education program on teachers' beliefs about science teaching and learning and the results demonstrate that teacher beliefs about teaching and learning shift towards being more student-centered during their preservice education and that their student-centered beliefs persisted after graduation from the program.

Theoretical Framework: Teacher Beliefs

Research on teacher beliefs has been an important and growing field since the early 1980s (Skott, 2015). A vast array of beliefs have been examined in relation to teacher behaviors in different teaching fields. Buehl and Beck (2015) conducted a literature review and found 782 articles published addressing teacher beliefs and practices just in the years 2008 to 2012. Buehl and Beck (2015) propose a complex structure of internal and external supports and hindrances which come together to shape teacher beliefs. This model indicates specific beliefs interact with other teacher-

held beliefs within a teacher to inform practice. Therefore, it may be helpful to examine a constellation of beliefs which inform teacher practice. Three specific teacher beliefs which have been studied extensively in the Western world are teacher self-efficacy, teacher career satisfaction, and teacher authoritarian beliefs. We conceptualize these three beliefs as three legs of a stool supporting teaching practice where teachers' beliefs about themselves (self-efficacy), beliefs about their students, and beliefs about their profession shape their instructional choices and professional behaviors. This three-legged stool might be at least partially constructed—or at least shaped—during a preservice training program.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy has been a heavily studied construct (Zee & Koomen, 2016) beginning with Bandura's (1986) work on social cognitive theory. In his conceptualization of self-efficacy, teachers' own self-concept interacts with cues they receive from others to contribute to one's own sense of efficacy. Research on self-efficacy has demonstrated a relationship between it and instructional quality (Holzberger, Philipp, & Kunter, 2013). There is also a developing line of research on EFL teachers' self-efficacy in relation to their English proficiency (Yilmaz, 2011), burnout (Ghaslani, 2015; Motallebzadeh, Ashraf, & Yazdi, 2014), and their motivational teaching behaviors (Huangfu, 2012). Research also supports a connection between teacher preparation and self-efficacy (Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009). In Niger, self-efficacy research has shown it to be interpreted differently between Nigerien EFL teachers and teachers in the United States (Jang, Cho, & Wiens, 2017). Using the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), Jang et al. (2017) found Nigerien EFL teachers had a higher self-efficacy in classroom management than a comparison group of U.S.-based teachers. Therefore, additional examination of the nature of Nigerien EFL teachers is required to better understand this construct in a novel research environment.

Teacher Attitudes Toward Children

There has been a large amount of research on the spread of learner-centered pedagogy from the developed nations of the West to other contexts. Schweisfurth (2011) conducted a review and found 72 articles on the subject published in the *International Journal of Educational Development*. Schweisfurth found the articles detailed the failures of these efforts based on four implementation barriers: the nature of education reform and change, resources, the question of culture, and power and agency. However, on balance these efforts have largely been unsuccessful (Akyeampong, 2018; Mtika & Gates, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2004). Similar to other Sub-Saharan nations, Niger also has been exposed to the Western notion of learner-centered pedagogies. Specifically, these pedagogies were taught through the U.S. State Department's support of EFL teacher training.

Research in the West has indicated the best learning environment is one where students feel comfortable and have the freedom to express themselves and take intellectual risks (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Teachers who display a high degree of sensitivity to learner needs and support their students can have a profound impact on learning (La Paro, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2004), providing acceptance and safety, student choice, opportunities to connect the new to the known, and high expectations with appropriate challenges (Estes, Mintz, & Gunter, 2011). However, many scholars have pointed out these ideas, based in Western cultural ideals, are mismatched with African socio-cultural notions of teachers' classroom roles (Akyeampong, 2018). Tabulawa (2003) indicates aid agencies promoted learner-centered instruction as a process of Westernization

disguised as quality and effective teaching, while Schweisfurth's (2011) survey indicates resistance to, or incomplete acquiescence with, foreign trainers has been noted across the globe. Therefore, exploration of the adoption of or resistance to Western learner-centered pedagogy beliefs by Nigerien teachers is an important component of our research.

Teacher Career Satisfaction and Commitment

A third component of teachers' belief structure is their ideas about their profession. Teachers' beliefs include their satisfaction with their teaching career and their commitment to remain in the profession. In Niger, historically it has been difficult to staff EFL teaching positions—particularly with trained teacher candidates. Teacher retention research then takes an important position in our study. In situations where it is difficult to find new, qualified teachers focusing on keeping qualified teachers in place can help to reduce the severity of staffing shortages. While different, teacher satisfaction and commitment to teaching are closely related (Chapman, 1984). Certain dissatisfactions with teaching such as lack of belonging and emotional exhaustion make teachers more interested in leaving the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Teachers' self-efficacy was also linked to their commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992).

Teacher commitment at the start of the profession is an important predictor of teacher retention in the profession (Chapman & Green, 1986). In a study of Flemish preservice teachers at the end of their program, teaching commitment was strongly related to entry into the teaching profession (Rots, Aelterman, Vlerick, & Vermeulen, 2007). Additionally, Nigerian teacher satisfaction has been linked to teacher absenteeism (Ejere, 2010). However, there is no strong empirical evidence teacher education programs contribute to teacher commitment. Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) examined teacher career satisfaction in eight Sub-Saharan nations and found "very sizeable portions of primary school teachers, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have low levels of job satisfaction and are poorly motivated" (p. vi). However, Bennell and Akyeampong also point out there is no robust evidence to evaluate teacher satisfaction across the region.

Current Study

We reviewed the literature related to teacher beliefs, teacher training, and the relationship between the two. However, there is limited research which has been conducted in the country of Niger. Our study sought to extend research on teacher beliefs into a new context through the examination of two research questions below. Answering these research questions will help to fill a gap in the educational research literature and potentially provide guidance to policy makers in similar contexts.

1. Do teacher beliefs (self-efficacy, ideas about children, and commitment/satisfaction) vary according to the teacher training of EFL teachers in Niger?
2. Do teacher beliefs vary according to the teacher training of EFL teachers in Niger after controlling for teaching experience and English language ability?

Methods

Context and Sample

Niger is considered one of the poorest countries in the world with much of its land area located in the Sahara Desert. Like many West African countries, Niger has substantial challenges in its educational system with a literacy rate of 19% and a school life expectancy of five years (Central

Intelligence Agency, 2016). Five different ethnic groups make up nearly 98% of the Nigerien population—each with its own language. However, French is the official language and the language of instruction in schools. It should be noted that many Nigerien EFL students do not consider French their mother language and primarily began learning French when they began attending school (Hovens, 2002). English, therefore, constitutes at least the third language for students in Niger.

According to Halilou (1993), the teaching of EFL in Niger began as early as the 1940s when the country was still a French colony. Today more than 95% of EFL teachers in Niger are Nigerien nationals. There are five routes to becoming an EFL teacher in Niger. Prospective teachers can enroll in one of two university-based programs in Niger, have gone through some training in a foreign country, enroll in a brief summer training session prior to beginning teaching, or have no training at all. The two university-based training programs in Niger are the Faculte des Lettres et Sciences Humaines (FLSH: School of Arts and Humanities) and the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS: Traditional teacher training program). Both of these programs are located at Abdou Moumouni University in the capital city of Niamey (for more information see Wiens et al., 2018). As mentioned previously, the ENS teachers are supported by EL Fellows during their teacher training. Participants identified their preservice teacher training as follows: no training (20.7%), ENS 12.4%, FLSH (48.3%), summer training prior to teaching (6.4%), trained in another country (15.3%), and other (14.4%) as reported in Wiens and colleagues (2018).

Data Collection

Data for this study were taken from a larger data-gathering effort supported by a grant from the United States Department of State. The population for this study was all of the middle school and high school EFL teachers in Niger ($N = 1960$). We received 609 surveys from teachers for a response rate of 31.1%. The sample had an average of 7.43 years of experience teaching English. Teachers reported that 89% taught in public schools while 68% of teachers indicated that they taught in rural schools. Participants were asked to identify their teacher training as either ENS, FLSH, trained in other country, summer training, no teacher training, or other. Participants were able to mark more than one answer; however, for this study we selected participants who selected only one of those options ($N = 515$ usable). We also did not use participants who selected *other*.

Instruments

As Niger is a French-speaking country, all the items used in this survey were translated into French by two experienced Nigerien translators who were also former EFL teachers. The two different French versions were compared for consistency and the translators created a final French version. To ensure the quality of French translation, survey questions were reviewed by three bilingual EFL teachers to test if there is any item which may be misunderstood by the target population due to potential errors or cultural factors. A paper survey containing both the original English and the French translation was provided to the EFL teachers.

Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSE). Based on Rotter's (1966) social learning theory and Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) defined teacher efficacy as "judgment of [a teacher's] capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (p. 783). Using this conceptual definition, they developed the TSE scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) which consists of 24 items, comprising three composite subscales. The efficacy for instructional

strategies composite (15 items, α = .781) assesses a teacher's judgement of his or her capability to use multiple instructional strategies to promote students' learning and thinking. The efficacy for classroom management subscale (9 items, α = .729) evaluates teachers' confidence in "using positive strategies for classroom management, that is, strategies aimed at increasing or encouraging desirable student responses through praise, encouragement, attention, and rewards" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 790). Finally, the efficacy for student engagement subscale (12 items α = .704) is designed to assess a teacher's perceived capability of promoting student engagement in different learning tasks. It is notable that the concept of engagement in this subscale includes both cognitive (e.g., engaged in critical thinking) and affective engagements (e.g., motivated to do the schoolwork). Due to an error in the survey one of the questions in the student engagement domain on the original instrument was omitted. Responses are based on a 9-point Likert scale with the following anchors: 1 Nothing, 3 Very little, 5 Some influence, 7 Quite a bit, 9 A great deal.

Ideas About Children (IAC). How students conceptualize learning and instruction may be connected to the way their teachers perceive the students. The teachers' attitudes about children were measured using what Schaefer and Edgerton (1985) call the Modernity Scale, which differentiates between more traditional adult-centered, or authoritarian, views and more child-centered views. The scale was originally developed to assess adult's attitudes in the U.S. The scale consists of 16 items which ask participants to indicate their preference on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. All items in the Modernity Scale are composited into one factor (α = .543) where larger numbers indicate more child-centered views.

Career Satisfaction/Commitment. The Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-CHOICE) Scale measures factors influencing the choice to teach for preservice teachers and the feelings about the decision to become a teacher (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Our study used five questions designed to measure feelings about the choice of teaching career. The five items begin with the prompt, *Your thoughts regarding teaching*. Participants rate their responses to the statements on a 7-point scale from 1 Not at all to 7 Extremely. Each of the items selected for use in our survey were assessing different factors and, therefore, they are analyzed individually. Preliminary evaluation of our data showed the strongest differences between groups were for the first two questions of the FIT-Choice scale. Therefore, we focused only on these two statements, *1. How satisfied are you with your choice of a teaching career?* (FIT 1) and, *2. How sure are you that you will persist in teaching?* (FIT 2)

Teaching Experience/English Ability. Two questions were included on the survey to assess teaching experience. Teachers were asked to write in the number of years they have been teaching including the current year. Additionally, teachers were asked to indicate their comfort in English on a Likert scale.

Empirical Model

Preliminary statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software (Ver. 24). Twenty-two cases where there were no responses at all to any question in one of the three instruments used in this study were excluded from the following analyses. Other missing values were less than 2% of the entire data and were identified as missing at random. We used the Expectation-Maximization method to deal with the missing values. In addition, three univariate outliers were identified and deleted from the data. The linearity assumption was examined by reviewing the scatterplot, which suggested a positive linear relationship. The assumption of normality was tested using the Shapiro-

Wilk test. Except four cells (IAC for the None group, *SW* = .99, *p* = .464; IAC for the ENS group, *SW* = .99, *p* = .623; IAC for the Other Country Only group, *SW* = .974, *p* = .275; TSE Management for the Other Country Only group, *SW* = .977, *p* = .355), all the other cells showed non-normal distribution.

Therefore, nonparametric statistical methods were applied to all the following analyses. Regarding our first research question, we used the Kruskal-Wallis Test, a non-parametric test equivalent with a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), to see if there were any significant differences in teacher beliefs across the four training groups (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012). Further pair-wise comparisons were conducted, using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. A rank analysis of covariance (ANCOVA; Quade, 1967) was conducted for the second research question to examine if the teachers' beliefs vary across the different training groups after controlling for teaching experience and English language ability. All the procedures were guided by Field (2013).

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and standard errors were computed and provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Training Group	*n*	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error	Min.	Max.
IAC	None	127	3.45	.34	.03	2.31	4.19
	ENS	71	3.30	.38	.05	2.19	4.09
	FLSH	260	3.45	.39	.02	1.88	4.38
	Other Country Only	56	3.51	.32	.04	2.81	4.33
	Total	514	3.44	.37	.02	1.88	4.38
TSE Engagement	None	127	7.16	1.16	.10	4.60	9.00
	ENS	71	7.37	1.26	.15	3.86	9.00
	FLSH	261	7.54	1.18	.07	3.50	9.00
	Other Country Only	56	7.06	1.54	.21	3.00	9.00
	Total	515	7.37	1.24	.05	3.00	9.00
TSE Instruction	None	127	7.15	1.30	.12	4.00	9.00
	ENS	71	7.39	1.27	.15	3.25	9.00
	FLSH	261	7.57	1.19	.07	3.86	9.00
	Other Country Only	56	6.96	1.46	.20	2.14	9.00
	Total	515	7.37	1.28	.06	2.14	9.00
TSE Management	None	127	6.75	1.30	.12	3.86	9.00
	ENS	71	6.96	1.26	.15	4.25	9.00
	FLSH	261	7.09	1.14	.07	4.00	9.00
	Other Country Only	56	6.59	1.39	.19	3.50	9.00
	Total	515	6.94	1.24	.05	3.50	9.00
FIT1	None	127	5.15	2.36	.21	1.00	7.00
	ENS	71	5.97	1.81	.21	1.00	7.00
	FLSH	261	5.93	1.76	.11	1.00	7.00
	Other Country Only	56	4.93	2.42	.32	1.00	7.00
	Total	515	5.64	2.05	.09	1.00	7.00
FIT2	None	127	4.94	2.44	.22	1.00	7.00
	ENS	71	5.85	1.98	.24	1.00	7.00
	FLSH	261	5.84	1.90	.12	1.00	7.00
	Other Country Only	56	5.43	2.24	.30	1.00	7.00
	Total	515	5.57	2.12	.09	1.00	7.00

Note. IAC = Ideas About Children, ENS = Traditional teacher training program, FLSH: School of Arts and Humanities, TSE = Teacher Self-Efficacy, FIT1 = Satisfaction with teaching career, FIT2 = Commitment to persist in teaching, *N* = 515

Correlation coefficients among the variables included in our analyses are shown in Table 2. The highest correlation was found between TSE Engagement and TSE Instruction (*r* = .68). Moderate

correlations were found between TSE Engagement and FIT1 (satisfaction) (r = .26). Both the TSE Engagement (coefficients ranged from .10 to .68) and the TSE Instruction subscales (coefficients ranged from .12 to .68) are significantly correlated with all other variables.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients for Teacher Beliefs

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. IAC		.10*	.12**	.03	.06	.07
2. TSE Engagement			.68**	.61**	.26**	.18**
3. TSE Instruction				.64**	.19**	.14**
4. TSE Management					.10**	.11*
5. FIT1						.54**
6. FIT2						

Note. IAC = Ideas About Children, ENS = Traditional teacher training program, FLSH: School of Arts and Humanities, TSE = Teacher Self-Efficacy, FIT1 = Satisfaction with teaching career, FIT2 = Commitment to persist in teaching, N =515
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Kruskal-Wallis Test

We tested the null hypothesis that the four types of training experiences have the same effect on the six factors related to teacher beliefs (ideas about children, self-efficacies, and satisfaction/commitment). Detailed rank information was included in Table 3. Chi-square values from the Kruskal-Wallis tests revealed we have to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the four training experiences are not equally related to the six factors in teacher beliefs (see Table 4).

Table 3. Rank Mean of Each Variable in the Four Training Groups

Variable	Teacher Training	n	Mean Rank
IAC	none	127	260.56
	ENS	71	206.61
	FLSH	260	265.55
	other country only	56	277.72
	Total	514	
TSE_Engagement	none	127	228.22
	ENS	71	258.71
	FLSH	261	277.64
	other country only	56	233.07
	Total	515	
TSE_Instruction	none	127	230.89
	ENS	71	259.46
	FLSH	261	280.13
	other country only	56	214.47
	Total	515	
TSE_Management	none	127	235.85
	ENS	71	260.70
	FLSH	261	276.00
	other country only	56	220.92
	Total	515	
FIT1	none	127	233.49
	ENS	71	279.83
	FLSH	261	271.71
	other country only	56	221.99
	Total	515	
FIT2	none	127	222.97
	ENS	71	274.94
	FLSH	261	272.19
	other country only	56	249.82
	Total	515	

Note. IAC = Ideas About Children, ENS = Traditional teacher training program, FLSH: School of Arts and Humanities, TSE = Teacher Self-Efficacy, FIT1 = Satisfaction with teaching career, FIT2 = Commitment to persist in teaching, N= 515

Table 4. Kruskal-Wallis Test of the Six Factors Among the Four Training Groups

Test Statistic	IAC	TSE_Engagement	TSE_Instruction	TSE_Management	FIT1	FIT2
Chi-Square	10.21	11.24	14.83	10.15	13.16	13.07
df	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Asymptotic Significance	.02	.01	.00	.02	.00	.00

Pair-wise comparisons were conducted between ranks of six different groups. Significant differences were found in the IAC scores between two pairs: 1) ENS-FLSH groups (adjusted p = .018), and 2) ENS-Other Country Only groups (adjusted p = .044). For TSE Engagement, a significant difference was found between the ENS and the Other Country Only groups (adjusted p = .013). For TSE Instruction, differences were identified significant between two pairs: 1) ENS-Other Country Only groups (adjusted p = .016), and 2) None- Other Country Only groups (adjusted p = .013). No significant difference was found between any groups for TSE Management (adjusted p > .05). Both the FIT1 (adjusted p = .047) and FIT2 scores (adjusted p = .004) were significantly different between the None and FLSH groups.

Rank ANCOVA Test

Quade's (1967) rank ANCOVA was conducted (see Table 5) to examine statistically significant differences among the four training groups on the six factors related to teacher belief controlling for both teaching experience and English language ability. Significant differences were found for the IAC, $F(3,499) = 3.35$, $p < .05$; FIT1, $F(3, 500) = 4.17$, $p < .01$; and FIT2 ranks, $F(3, 500) = 2.99$, $p < .05$. The TSE Engagement ranks, $F(3, 500) = 2.58$, $p = .05$, also a significant difference among the four training groups. However, no significant difference was observed for both the TSE Engagement and TSE Management subscales.

Table 5. Rank ANCOVA Results

Variable	Group	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	p
IAC	Between Groups	1.38	3	.46	3.35	.02
	Within Groups	68.63	499	.14		
	Total	70.01	502			
TSE_Engagement	Between Groups	8.10	3	2.70	1.79	.15
	Within Groups	753.42	500	1.51		
	Total	761.52	503			
TSE_Instruction	Between Groups	12.13	3	4.04	2.58	.05
	Within Groups	784.47	500	1.57		
	Total	796.61	503			
TSE_Management	Between Groups	7.34	3	2.45	1.68	.17
	Within Groups	730.15	500	1.46		
	Total	737.49	503			
FIT1	Between Groups	50.21	3	16.74	4.17	.01
	Within Groups	2005.14	500	4.01		
	Total	2055.36	503			
FIT2	Between Groups	39.69	3	13.23	2.99	.03
	Within Groups	2214.96	500	4.43		
	Total	2254.65	503			

Discussion

The study described in this paper is a first attempt to examine three constructs of teacher professional beliefs (self-efficacy, ideas about children, and commitment/satisfaction) of EFL teachers in Niger in relation to their teacher training. We sought to understand if teacher beliefs vary according to the teacher training of EFL teachers in Niger. We further examined if teacher beliefs vary according to the teacher training of EFL teachers in Niger even after controlling for

teaching experience and English language ability. This study provides evidence of an important relationship between teacher training and teacher beliefs in Niger among EFL teachers.

Analysis in this study indicated teacher training may make a difference in the way Nigerien EFL teachers perceive their relationship with their students. The Nigerien EFL teachers that had participated in a teacher training program (ENS) were generally more child-centered in their views than other EFL teachers. This relationship was statistically significant compared to all the other groups. This finding is particularly interesting because other researchers have found learner-centered pedagogies were not adopted in other Sub-Saharan countries (Akyeampong, 2018; Mtika & Gates, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2004). Of course, our research result does not indicate that Nigerien EFL teachers from ENS are implementing these strategies, but there is strong evidence teachers in other countries were reluctant to adopt the Western notion of child-centered teaching philosophy. It would be important to follow-up this finding with an examination of their teacher training or background and find out what led them to be open to adopting child-centered views. Also, it would be equally important to observe some of these teachers' classroom teaching practices to further explore whether or not they actually implement or resist these pedagogies in their teaching.

While ENS-trained teachers were the most child-centered in their views, it was the English majors (FLSH) who displayed the most self-efficacy; however, the FLSH teachers did not have a statistically significant difference with any other group. On the other hand, the group with no training had the lowest self-efficacy in one domain (engagement) while teachers trained in other countries had the lowest self-efficacy in the other two domains (instruction and management). The recurring significant relationship was the ENS group had higher self-efficacy in each domain than the group trained outside of Niger. This may indicate teachers trained in Niger have specific training or personal experiences which allow them to feel more self-confident in working with Nigerien students. These findings appear to support early research linking training and teacher self-efficacy (Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009).

Lack of training is also related to teacher beliefs according to our survey data. Teachers who indicated they had no teacher training were the least satisfied with their choice of a teaching career. This group also responded they had the least intention of staying in the teaching profession. It is not at all surprising the group of teachers with the least training and the least invested in the profession would have the lowest levels of career satisfaction and intention of continuing in the profession. Given the connection between levels of satisfaction and staying in teaching (Chapman & Green, 1986) combined with the increasing need for teachers, this finding supports the benefits of teacher training to alleviating issues of teacher shortages.

Limitations

Conducting research in Niger presents significant challenges which pose constraints on projects. We encountered two significant obstacles to disseminating and receiving our surveys. Due to limited technology in the country, we choose to send out paper surveys. The lack of infrastructure in the country (lack of a well-functioning postal service) combined with the very rural location of some of the schools made it difficult to reach all of the teachers. Additionally, the survey was quite long consisting of multiple measures and there was no compensation for completing the survey. Our 31% response rate is positive given the location; however, this presents a limitation in generalizing our findings to the entire EFL teacher population in the country. Second, we found many of our participants were totally unfamiliar with completing surveys. Participants were provided with a telephone number to call with questions and many participants did. Some of these

participants indicated it was the first time they were completing a survey of this nature. We were able to field questions from participants about how to complete the surveys, but there is the possibility some respondents did not know how to complete the survey correctly.

Conclusion

Niger is a country with major challenges to educating its children, typical of many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. A rapidly growing population combined with an extremely weak economy make it a Herculean task to provide high quality education to students. In a country with such limited resources, it is important to establish priorities for distributing those resources which do exist. Much depends on the values of the officials in the Ministry of Education. This study has shown teacher training does make a difference in the beliefs of Nigerien EFL teachers. While this study focused on three teacher beliefs, stakeholders would need to determine the target teacher beliefs that they value.

Although our findings indicate EFL teachers trained through the ENS program were generally more child-centered based on the Modernity Scale, we do not know enough about how the ENS program training made a difference and how their ideas about children based on their culture in Niger interact with the ideas expressed in the Modernity Scale. If the Nigerien government desires to have teachers with more child-centered views, it might make sense to mobilize the knowledge of local teachers to develop child-centered pedagogies which are situated in the Nigerien culture while working with international training personnel. Our findings also reveal teachers trained through the ENS program had higher levels of career satisfaction. These teachers may also be more likely to remain in the profession thereby reducing the resources necessary to replace departing teachers. Therefore, it makes sense for the Nigerien government to encourage and support more teacher candidates to participate in ENS programs. With the departure of expatriate EFL teachers from the country, Niger will need to continue to turn to its own national citizenry and ensure they have the proper training to provide an effective education for the country's youth.

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