University of Tehran press

JOURNAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH
p-ISSN:2588-4123 e-ISSN:2588-7521
https://jflr.ut.ac.ir **Email**:jflr@ut.ac.ir

An Investigation into the Relationship between Assessment Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge of Iranian EFL Teachers with a Focus on Teaching Experience

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ABSTRACT
Since assessment literacy is a newly developed concept in the assessment field, teachers should be informed about how to use their pedagogical knowledge of subject matter and at the same time how to use assessment strategies to assess their knowledge of teaching and students' achievement. Inspired by these concepts, the present study attempted to examine the relationship between Iranian EFL inexperienced teachers' and experienced teachers' assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Participants were 50 Iranian (i.e., 25 inexperienced and 25 experienced) teachers at State and Azad universities in Tabriz and Tehran. They were selected based on convenient sampling from both genders with teaching experience between 3 and 30 years. It should be mentioned that the teachers with teaching experience between 3 and 10 years, were considered as inexperienced teachers. And those with teaching experience of more than 10 years were considered as experienced teachers. Farhady's and Tavassoli's (2018) scenario-based language assessment knowledge test was used to measure teachers' assessment knowledge. A pedagogical knowledge base questionnaire developed and validated by Dadvand (2013) was also used to assess the teachers ' pedagogical knowledge base. The results of data analysis showed that there was a significant difference among the two groups of participants regarding both their assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge scores. In addition, there was a significant positive relationship between inexperienced teachers' and experienced teachers' assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Results have some implications for English teachers concerning updating their pedagogical and assessment knowledge.

ARTICLE INFO
Article history:
Received: 07 December 2021
Received in revised form 26 January 2022
Accepted: 31 January 2022
Available online: Winter2025

Keywords:
Assessment knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, inexperienced teachers, experienced teachers

Khomeijani Farahani, A. A. , Borzabadi Farahani, D. , Jalali, M. and Khalilzad, M. (2024). An Investigation into the Relationship between Assessment Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge of Iranian EFL Teachers with a Focus on Teaching Experience. *Journal of Foreign Language Research*, 14 (3), 597-610. http//doi.org/ 10.22059/jflr.2022.335136.917.

Publisher: The University of Tehran Press.
DOI: http//doi.org/ 10.22059/jflr.2022.335136.917.

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1. Introduction

Generally, it is believed that the assessment in any educational context is primarily linked to learners, but the role of teachers in deciding the results of the assessment and the achievement or failure of learners is undeniable. The debate on the role of teachers in assessment and their expertise in this area has contributed to the development of a relatively common notion of

"assessment literacy". Stiggins (1991), whose work is rooted mainly in conventional education and psychology studies, argues that the assessment literate teachers know "what they are measuring, why they are doing so, how best to evaluate skills, knowledge of interest, how to produce positive examples of student success, what is theoretically wrong with the assessment, and how to deter it from occurring" (p. 240). Viewed from a sociocultural viewpoint of learning, the literacy of teachers' assessment is considered as a dynamic process that puts together the knowledge of assessment, assessment skills, and their assessment concepts with their practicing contexts (DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2016; Xu & Brown, 2016). Provided that classroom assessment takes place with different educational strategies in various educational contexts, the established components of assessment literacy based on assessment standards in English-speaking contexts (e.g., Brookhart, 2011; DeLuca et al ., 2016; Xu & Brown, 2016) may not be appropriate to account for the language assessment requirements of teachers working in other educational contexts. There is evidence in the Iranian EFL context that the language assessment literacy of English teachers is at least partially responsible for the inability of teachers to comply with a mandatory reform requiring teachers to evaluate communicative competence rather than isolated pieces of language knowledge (Razavipour & Rezagah 2018). However, this neglect is primarily attributed to inadequate realistic activities and initiatives in their educational programs. Still, they do not feel the need to be trained in assessment comprehension that exists in low assessment literacy (Karimi & Shafee, 2014; Razavipour, Riazi, & Rashidi, 2011).

Assessing the performance and knowledge of a student is one of the most important aspects of a teacher's practice, and it requires considerable time and mental energy for teachers. At the heart of the classroom assessments are teachers and their assessment instruments, procedures, attitudes, and competencies. How effectively teachers create successful assessment instruments and policies for their classrooms is influenced by their assessment literacy, comprehension, and knowledge of sound assessment principles and practices. The more teachers are assessment literate, then the easier assessment becomes for those involved - for teachers themselves, for programs, for institutions, for the field of language teaching, and, most notably, for learners and their language learning (White, 2019).

Today, though some primary and basic knowledge of the notions of instructional and classroom assessment is required, a number of teachers generally arrive at their first teaching experience and assignment. There has also been an improvement in standards with the advancement of new educational devices and improvements in educational curriculum, material, and teaching. In this regard, teachers and educators shall create classroom reviews that match new curricula with agreed criteria as a way of enhancing the abilities, qualities of assessments, and perceptions of test scores of

learners (Dayal & Lingam, 2015; Mertler, 2003). "Grossman's (1990) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) model consists of four elements, which include, "conception of purposes for teaching subject matter"; "knowledge of the comprehension of students"; "curricular knowledge"; and "knowledge of instructional knowledge strategies" (p. 17). The "conceptions and purposes for teaching subject matter" is the most critical of these four aspects and is s significant component of PCK as it represents the teaching purpose. This impacts on knowledge and beliefs about the intent for teaching a subject at various grade levels (Grossman, 1990, p.8).

Studies have shown that teachers hardly ever use shared bases of knowledge to improve their practice and a particular highlight is that they do not necessarily find and translate research-based knowledge into their practice in the classroom (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992; Richardson & Placier, 2001). Regrettably, teachers are only being prepared for their jobs with no mandatory assessment course as a prerequisite, and they may therefore not have sufficient assessment training to assess student success, thoroughly recognize the essential function that assessment may play in their efficacy and, successfully incorporate assessment into teaching. The only training these teachers may have had with educational assessment may have been a minimal number of hours of lessons in educational psychology or a study of technique. In fact, "just several teachers are trained to meet the classroom assessment difficulties since they have not been granted the ability to train to do so" (Davidheiser, 2013, p. 28). Focusing on the crucial role of assessment literacy in the education system, some teachers suffer from poor assessment literacy in classroom assessment despite its vital role (Zing & Zonghui, 2016). It is of importance to pay attention to the voices of teachers as a major element of an educational triangle (Phipps & Borg, 2009). In other words, the reflective nature of the vision of teachers results in the creation of teaching activities (Parsons, Vaughn, Pierczynski, & Malloy, 2017). Thus, in teacher education programs, more focus is required on language assessment literacy. Language teachers who are literate in assessment will increase the standard of their teaching and more efficiently adapt to the educational needs of their students.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to indicate the importance of teachers role in the assessment of themselves and their students and their pedagogical knowledge of using correct and suitable assessment strategies in the assessment of their students. Moreover, since teaching and assessment are complementary and cannot be isolated, teachers should be literate in the assessment field. In addition, teachers should have the belief that they have the required pedagogical knowledge of the subject matter they teach, and of the method that they want to utilize as well as knowing how to develop. They should also practice suitable assessment strategies in their classrooms and teaching.

2. Literature Review

A paradigm shift in the dominant approach to teacher education took place in tandem with the movement to cultivate a professional-pedagogical knowledge base (PKB) for teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2016). Educational researchers concluded that teacher knowledge, in addition to teacher education, is informed by their personal pedagogies (i.e., their teaching point of view; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015) and the understanding they developed as students, generally known as observation learning

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(Westrick & Morris, 2016). As a result, the mission statements of scholars moved towards deciphering the information (Mann, 2005) that educators call upon during their teaching in the classroom. The increased knowledge of teachers about the act of teaching, such as the aims, procedures, and strategies that form the foundation of their teaching processes in the classroom is thus known as the pedagogical knowledge base of teachers (Mullock, 2006). The value of pedagogical content knowledge research lies in the vital role that knowledge plays not just in the performance of teachers but also in the inspiration, comprehension, and learning results of students (Johnston & Ahtee, 2006).

Assessment Literacy

As one of the essential components of the professional knowledge of teachers, assessment knowledge (AK) is alluded to as assessment literacy (AL) at its fundamental level. To represent all its dimensions, the initial attempts to determine AK were not detailed enough.

The term Language Assessment Knowledge (LAK) has also been used in language education, in addition to the use of the term AK in general education. Basic level LAK is also referred to as Language assessment Literacy (LAL). It determines what stakeholders have to know about assessment problems, such as language teachers (Malone, 2008). The literature (Malone, 2013) concerns the crucial role of teachers in the assessment of their assessment process and its meaning. Research also indicates that teachers are not well trained with adequate assessment and assessment knowledge and, as such, they are not prepared for their role as assessors (Mertler, 2003).

The context of assessment has derived from sociocultural learning theories, and learning from those theories, such that it has become integrated into the conceptualization of the literacy of teacher assessment, composed of the knowledge of teacher assessment, assessment conception, and teacher reactions to external contexts embedded with real environmental pressures and experiences (Xu & Brown 2016, p.157). To support students, the services and organizations where they work, assessment literacy is an ability required by teachers for their long-term professional development (Cheng & Ma, 2015). In the assessment process, the role of teachers is significant, and several scholars (Stiggins, 1999; Popham, 2009) have noted that language teachers will become more educated decision-makers if they are equipped with the knowledge of language assessment. With such a prominent role in language assessment, teacher's knowledge of assessment has a considerable influence on the quality of education (Malone, 2013). As a result, teachers continue to use assessment strategies to make decisions, focus on the most appropriate instruction for learners, and then develop an idea of success in teaching and learning.

Besides theoretical support, there needs to be an empirical background to support the practicality of the study. Therefore, the researcher has referred to the following related studies in order to establish a practical basis for the variables under consideration. In one study, the assessment literacy of teachers and administrators concerning the criterion-referenced assessments was examined by King (2010). The survey consisted of 380 instructors practicing in Alabama and Mississippi states in the USA (310 female and 70 male educators) Using a stratified sampling method. The investigator used the Criterion-Referenced Assessment Questionnaire as a research guide.

King (2010) showed that years of experience did not have a substantial effect on the success of the criterion-referenced questionnaire of a participant through statistical analyses.

Alkharusi (2011), in another study, explored the self-perceived assessment skills of teachers when considering their gender, subject area, grade level, teaching experience, and in-service assessment training. This study used a sample population of 213 teachers from public schools in Muscat, Oman. The researcher used the 25-item Self-Perceived Assessment Skills Scale as an instrument of the study. Based on the analysis of the data, Alkharusi (2011) noted that there were statistically significant variations in self-perceived evaluation skills related to gender, subject area, grade level, teaching experience, and in-service assessment training. In a similar study, Hailaya (2014) reviewed teacher assessment literacy and its potential impact on learner achievement and aptitude through the intervening variables at the teacher and learner level. It also considered the impact of demographic variables. The research group was composed of 582 teachers and 2,077 learners in Grade Six, Second, and Third Year high school classes in the province of Tawi-Tawi, Philippines. The study was based on a mixed design of methods using quantitative and qualitative methods. Based on the analysis of the data, Hailaya (2014) found that primary and secondary school teachers had moderately low assessment literacy. In addition, Zolfaghari and Ashraf (2015) inspected the assessment literacy, teaching experience, and age association of Iranian EFL teachers. The sample population of this study was 658 teachers of EFL who were nominated to fulfill an inventory of assessment literacy that went through a process of validation and reliability. By conducting statistical analysis, Zolfaghari and Ashraf (2015) found that the assessment literacy and teaching experiences of Iranian EFL teachers were significantly correlated. A positive association has been revealed between the assessment literacy of Iranian EFL teachers and their age. Gatbonton (2008), also examined parallels and disparities between novice and experienced teacher pedagogical thinking patterns utilizing a stimulus recall design to extract the perceptions of the participants. The analysis indicates that both novice and experienced teachers were parallel, both in terms of the number of teaching ideas produced by the teachers and in terms of the types of categories. Some specific areas of pedagogical knowledge for both novice and experienced teachers have been identified as language management, procedure check, progress review, and student knowledge. In a comparable study, Akbari and Dadvand (2011) examined the differences in Iranian EFL teacher knowledge base with varying educational levels. The researchers revealed that these two groups differed in pedagogical thought. It was shown that the level of education of the teachers was the determining factor, as teachers with a Master's degree produced significantly more units of thought compared with those with a Bachelor's degree, with the main difference being their affective thinking.

As this brief literature review shows, there is no empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of teacher assessment literacy and assessment knowledge on the novice teacher’s achievement and for both the novice experienced teacher knowledge development in assessment and pedagogy. To this end, efforts should be made to research not only Iranian EFL novice and

experienced teacher pedagogical knowledge, but also their assessment knowledge or assessment literacy. In addition, the present study tries to investigate whether there is a relationship between Iranian novice and experienced teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge. Having these purposes in mind, the researcher proposed to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in assessment knowledge between EFL Iranian novice teachers and EFL Iranian experienced teachers?

2. Is there a statistically significant difference in pedagogical knowledge between EFL Iranian novice teachers and EFL Iranian experienced teachers?

3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of EFL novice teachers and EFL Iranian experienced teachers?

3. Method

3.1 Participants

50 Iranian teachers (composed of 25 novice and 25 experienced) at State and Azad universities in Tabriz and Tehran, participated in the present study. Selection was made using a convenient sampling method from various universities in Tabriz and Tehran. The age span of the teachers was between 26 and 60 years and they were drawn from both genders with teaching experience between 3 and 30 years. It should be noted that the teachers with teaching experience between 3 and 10 years, were considered as novice teachers whereas those with teaching experience of more than 10 years were considered as experienced teachers. 28 of the participant teachers were male and 22 female. All participants freely volunteered to take part in this research. Teacher participants were either Ph.D. or M.A holders. There were no requirements to engage in the study. Participants could withdraw from the study at any point during the data collection.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Assessment Knowledge Questionnaire

Farhady and Tavassoli's (2018) scenario-based language assessment knowledge test was used to approximate teacher assessment knowledge. The knowledge of the classroom assessment questionnaire consisted of 27 multi-choice items associated with the information base for teacher assessment. It should also be remembered that the classroom assessment knowledge test was comprised of six sections, each of which focused on a major area of language assessment, including closed-item matching, ordering, and multiple-choice formats. The reliability of the questionnaire was also measured using Cronbach's alpha and the result was 0.85 indicating a high internal consistency for the questionnaires. The content validity of the test was verified by five university professors.

3.2.2 Pedagogical Knowledge Questionnaire

A pedagogical knowledge base questionnaire developed and validated by Dadvand (2013) was used in the present study to assess the teacher pedagogical knowledge base. The questionnaire consisted of 50 items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 ‘nothing’, 2 ‘very little’, 3 ‘ some influence’, 4 ‘quite a bit’, and 5 ‘ a great deal’. The pedagogical knowledge base questionnaire has 9 components: (a) knowledge of subject matter, (b) knowledge of learners, (c) knowledge of second language teaching, (d) knowledge of second language learning, (e) knowledge of assessment/testing, (f) knowledge of classroom

management assessed, (g) knowledge of educational context, (h) knowledge of equity and diversity, and finally (i) knowledge of (professional) self. The reliability of the questionnaire also measured using Cronbach's alpha, with a result of 0.92 indicating a high internal consistency of the questionnaires. The content validity of the test was verified by five university professors.

3.3. Design

The study necessitated using a correlational quantitative design. The variables under study were assessment literacy, pedagogical knowledge. Additionally, teaching experience was considered as the moderator variable.

3.4. Procedure

Since the present study's design was correlational descriptive and quantitative, the researcher took the following steps. Data was compiled during Winter 2021. 50 Iranian (i.e., 25 novice teachers and 25 experienced) teachers teaching at Tabriz and Tehran State and Azad Universities participated in the study. The teacher participants were chosen among novice teachers and experienced teachers from various universities in Tabriz and Tehran using a convenient sampling method. It is noted that that due to the spreading of the Corona virus, the classes were held online. Thus, in order to obtain the data, the researcher created the questionnaires using a Google document and forwarded the URL to the teachers via email, asking the participants to fill out the questionnaires within one day. The age span for teachers varied between 23 to 60 and the teacher participants were drawn from both genders with teaching experience from 3-30 years. 28 participants were male and 22 were female. For this study, all participants were volunteers. The teacher participants were holders of Ph.D. or M.A. There were no requirements to take part in the research. At every point in the data collection, the participants could withdraw from the study. To analyze the classroom assessment knowledge of the teachers, the scenario-based language assessment knowledge test of Farhady and Tavassoli (2018) was utilized to approximate the classroom assessment knowledge of the teachers. This assessment consists of 27 multiple-choice items that are associated with the information base of assessment by the teachers. In the study, a pedagogical knowledge base questionnaire, developed and validated by Dadvand (2013), was used to evaluate the pedagogical knowledge base of teachers. It should also be remembered that the precision of the questionnaires was determined by Cronbach's alpha, and the quality of their content was checked by 5 university professors.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results of Scores' Normality Distribution

Having collected the data, the data was analyzed using SPSS. To ensure the normality of the distribution of both the student and experienced teachers assessment and pedagogical knowledge, the One-Sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used. The results of this test are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. ***Tests of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)***

Teacher Groups	Assessment Knowledge Scores	Pedagogical Knowledge Scores

Novice Teachers	N		25	25
	Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	62.20	154.56
		Std. Deviation	6.47	10.81
	Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.133	.123
		Positive	.133	.091
		Negative	-.098	-.123
	Test Statistic		.133	.123
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200[c,d]	.200[c,d]
Experienced Teachers	N		25	25
	Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	65.36	165.80
		Std. Deviation	3.67	9.07
	Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.140	.179
		Positive	.140	.179
		Negative	-.085	-.097
	Test Statistic		.140	.179
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200[c,d]	.089[c]

As Table 4.1 shows, the p-values for novice and experienced teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge were higher than 0.05. Thus, it was demonstrated that assessment and pedagogical knowledge of Iranian novice and experienced teachers participating in the study had a normal distribution. Therefore, the normality assumption was met.

4.2. Results of the First Research Question

The first research question dealt with the statistically significant difference in assessment knowledge between EFL Iranian novice teachers and EFL Iranian experienced teachers.

To compare the assessment knowledge between the two groups (novice and experienced), the researcher administered the teacher assessment knowledge questionnaire to 50 teachers. The descriptive statistics of the teacher assessment knowledge scores are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. ***Descriptive Statistics of the Student and Experienced Teachers' Assessment Knowledge Scores***

	Groups of Teachers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Assessment Knowledge	Novice Teachers	25	62.20	6.47
	Experienced Teachers	25	65.36	3.67

As can be seen from Table 4.2, the mean score and standard deviation of the novice teacher assessment knowledge were 62.20, and 6.47(M= 62.20, SD= 6.47) respectively, while the mean score and standard deviation of the experienced teacher assessment knowledge scores were 65.36 and 3.67(M= 65.36, SD= 3.67). It was revealed that the mean score of the experienced teachers was higher than the mean score of the novice teachers in assessment knowledge.

However, independent sample t-tests were run to see whether there was a significant difference between the mean scores of novice and experienced teacher assessment knowledge or not. Table 3 displays the results of the independent sample t-tests.

Table 3. ***Independent Samples t-test for the Novice and Experienced Teachers' Assessment Knowledge Scores***

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Assessment Knowledge Scores	Equal variances assumed	3.556	.065	-2.124	48	.039	-3.16	1.49	-6.15	-.17
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.124	38.021	.040	-3.16	1.49	-6.17	-.15

As Table 4. 3 demonstrates, the p-value in Levene's test for equality of variances was 0.065. It means that equal variances were assumed and the results of the first row should be read. Since $t(48) = -2.124$, $p = .039 < .05$, it was revealed that there was a significant difference in the assessment knowledge scores between the novice and experienced teacher groups. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was rejected and the answer to the first research question was affirmative.

The second research question dealt with the statistically significant difference in pedagogical knowledge between EFL Iranian novice teachers and EFL Iranian experienced teachers.

Again, comparing the teacher pedagogical knowledge between the two groups (novice and experienced teacher), the researcher administered the teacher pedagogical knowledge questionnaire to 50 teachers. The descriptive statistics of the teacher assessment knowledge scores are shown in Table 4.

4.3. Results of the Second Research Question

Table4. ***Descriptive Statistics of Novice and Experienced Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge Scores***

	Groups of Teachers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pedagogical Knowledge	Novice Teachers	25	154.56	10.81
	Experienced Teachers	25	165.80	9.07

The results in Table 4.3 indicate that the mean score of the novice teachers, 154.56 with the standard deviation of 10.81, were different from the mean score of the experienced teachers, 165.80 with the standard deviation of 9.07. However, an independent sample t-test was run to see whether there was a significant difference between the novice and experienced teacher pedagogical knowledge scores or not. Table 5 notes the results of the independent samples t-test.

Table 5. ***Independent Samples T-test for the Student and Experienced Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge Scores***

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pedagogical Knowledge Scores	Equal variances assumed	.546	.464	-3.981	48	.000	-11.24	2.82	-16.92	-5.56
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.981	46.596	.000	-11.24	2.82	-16.92	-5.56

As Table 4.4 illustrates, the significant value in Levene's test for equality of variances, 0.464, was higher than the alpha level. It means that the equal variances were assumed and the statistics of the first row should be read. It was revealed that there was a significant difference between Iranian novice and experienced teacher pedagogical knowledge scores since t(48)= - 3.981,p= .000<.05. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was rejected and the answer to the second research question was affirmative.

4.4. Results of the Third Research Question

The third research question dealt with the statistically significant relationship between assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of EFL novice teachers and EFL Iranian experienced teachers.

Employing the Pearson product-moment correlation requires two main assumptions: The data should enjoy normality distribution and should meet linearity. To ascertain whether the relationship between the Iranian novice teacher assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge was linear or not, the researcher used a Scatter plot. Figure 1 shows the results of this analysis.

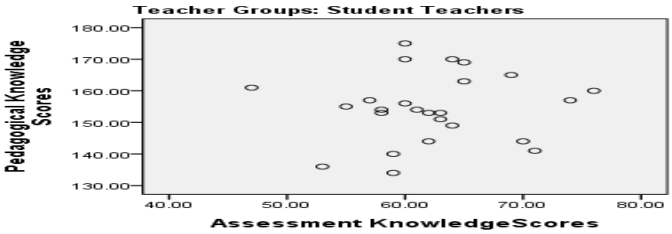

Figure 1 **Linearity assumption for Iranian novice Teachers' assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge**

According to Figure 1, it was shown that there was no straight line between the Iranian novice teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge scores. Therefore, the linearity assumption was not met.

Also, in order to determine whether the relationship between the Iranian experienced teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge was linear or not, the researcher used a scatter plot. The results are shown in Figure 2.

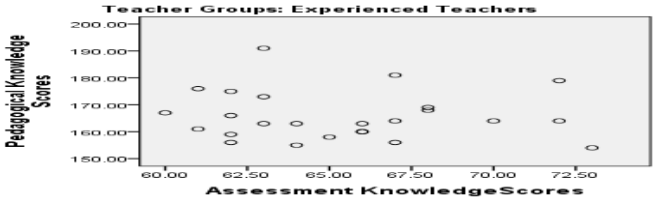

Figure 2 **Linearity assumptions for the experienced teacher assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge scores**

The scatter plot in Figure 2 shows a straight line between Iranian experienced teacher assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Therefore, the linearity assumption was violated. However, to make sure that there is no significant relationship between the Iranian novice and experienced teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge scores, the researcher employed the non-parametric test of Spearman rank-order correlation (Rho) instead of a parametric test of Pearson Product Moment correlation since the assumption of linearity was violated. Table 4.5 shows the results of the Spearman Rho.

Table 6. ***Spearman-Rank Order Correlation (Rho) for Iranian Novice and Experienced Teachers' Assessment Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge Scores***

	Teacher Groups			Assessment Knowledge Scores	Pedagogical Knowledge Scores
Spearman's rho	Novice Teachers	Assessment Knowledge Scores	Correlation Coefficient	1	.143
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
			N	25	25
		Pedagogical Knowledge Scores	Correlation Coefficient	.143	1
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
			N	25	25
	Experienced Teachers	Assessment Knowledge Scores	Correlation Coefficient	1	.345
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.030
			N	25	25
		Pedagogical Knowledge Scores	Correlation Coefficient	.345	1
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.030	.
			N	25	25

Regarding the results of Table 6, it was revealed that there was a significant small and positive correlation (r=.143, p=.004) between the Iranian novice teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge scores according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines. Moreover, there was a significant moderate and positive correlation (r= .345, p= .030) between the Iranian experienced teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge scores consistent with Cohen's (1988) guidelines. Thus, the third null hypothesis was rejected and the answer to the third research question was affirmative.

The overarching aim of the research study was to investigate the relationship between assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of Iranian EFL teachers across teaching experience. To address the purpose of the study, a correlational quantitative design was specified. The results of independent sample t-tests revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between Iranian EFL novice and experienced teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, the results of the Spearman rank-order correlation (Rho) revealed that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between the Iranian EFL

student teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge. Similarly, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between experienced teacher assessment and pedagogical knowledge.

Regarding the difference between the Iranian EFL student and experienced teacher assessment knowledge, the results of this study supported the findings of the studies undertaken by King(2010), Alkharusi (2011), Hailaya (2014), and Zolfaghari and Ashraf (2015), all of whom found that there was a significant difference between student and experienced teachers assessment knowledge.

Based on these issues, it can be argued that, in the present study, there was a significant difference between Iranian novice and experienced teachers assessment knowledge due to the fact that the more the teachers are experienced, the more they are literate in the assessment of themselves and their students. Also, teachers with considerable teaching experience can use different assessment strategies in assessing their student's achievement. In other words, the more literate teachers are then the more central and significant role in their student's achievement, the teaching methods, and instructions to enhance the teaching and learning.

Regarding the difference between the Iranian novice and experienced teachers pedagogical knowledge, the results of this study were compatible with the findings of the studies carried out by Gatbonton (2008), and Akbari and Dadvand (2011). All found that there was a significant difference between novice and experienced teachers pedagogical knowledge. Also, the results showed that both novice and experienced teachers had parallel teaching ideas and the types of categories. Areas of pedagogical knowledge for both novice and experienced teachers have been identified as language management, procedure check, progress review, and student knowledge.

It can be argued that in the present study, there was a significant difference between the Iranian EFL novice and experienced teachers pedagogical knowledge owing to the fact that their teaching experience influenced their pedagogical knowledge. In other words, the more the teachers are pedagogically knowledgeable, the more they have authority in the subject matter they teach, and the teaching methods and instructions they use can modify the learner's achievements.

Finally, regarding the relationship between novice and experienced teachers assessment and pedagogical knowledge, the findings of the present study were in line with the findings of Hakim (2015) who found that there was a significant relationship between novice and experienced teachers assessment and pedagogical knowledge.

Hakim (2015) argued the principle of the assessment of EFL teachers, noting that the explanation of assessment concepts by teacher applicants in their assessment practices followed their teaching experiences. The more experience a language teacher achieves; the more notions for assessment are used in their assessment practices.

It can be argued that in the present study, there were significant relationships between novice and experienced teachers assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge due to the fact that teaching and assessment complement each other and they cannot be separated from each other. The teachers with high teaching experience of assessment knowledge or assessment literacy

provide the required information about the efficacy of their pedagogy, subject matter, teaching methods, assessment strategies, and curriculum materials.

5. Conclusion

The present study set out to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL novice and experienced teachers assessment and pedagogical knowledge. The results of the study revealed that there were significant differences between the two groups in both knowledge types. Furthermore, there was a significant positive relationship between the Iranian EFL novice and experienced teachers assessment and pedagogical knowledge. The results indicated that novice teachers can recognize what experienced or expert teachers think and know about the teaching, the classroom environment, the subject matter they want to teach, the assessment strategies they use to evaluate their student's achievements as well as themselves. Therefore, the results can be helpful for novice teachers to promote their own knowledge of teaching, assessment knowledge in their classes, and also their experiences can help teacher educators or trainers to make relevant decisions in the teacher training classes about teaching and assessment knowledge. It was also revealed that highly experienced teachers are always ahead of their novice teacher colleagues in every aspect related to the teaching process such as subject knowledge, methodology, classroom management, above and beyond the different assessment strategies they apply in their classes and for the assessment of their students. It is therefore suggested that teachers should promote their awareness of the importance of the pedagogical knowledge that they use to improve their teaching in the educational context and be more professionally and pedagogically developed in teaching methods, purposes of teaching, and the knowledge of the subject matter they teach, before, during and after each session of each course. Related to this, assessment literacy means the knowledge about the assessment processes and methods or strategies that teachers use to assess their students and themselves, as well. Assessment literacy should be the center of teaching; that is to say, teaching is the basis for the assessment and evaluation. A good assessor should be literate and knowledgeable in teaching first and then know the methods and processes of assessing in order to also be literate in the assessment of their students.

It is worth noting that the results of this study might be helpful for teachers, syllabus designers, and teacher trainers to update their pedagogical knowledge in teaching and assessment and try to be literate in the assessment and evaluation of students. It can also be of interest and assistance to material developers to create course books that integrate assessment and pedagogical knowledge as an effective and new element in the teaching syllabus.

Therefore, reducing the restrictions imposed upon the present study, such as the limited number of university experienced teachers and novice teachers, time constraints, and small sample size, more research is needed to authenticate the findings of this study, specifically in relation to many key issues, such as carrying out the study with an equal number of male and female university teachers. In addition, more research is needed to examine different issues which might be linked to the teachers' assessment and pedagogical knowledge, such as reflective teaching, teacher identity, teacher autonomy, which can have a mediating role in the

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teachers' assessment knowledge and pedagogical knowledge.

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