

Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies



Print ISSN: 2008-5494 Online ISSN: 2322-3650

Homepage: https://ijals.usb.ac.ir

Teacher's Perspectives on Null Curriculum in BA Level: 21st Century Skills in TEFL

Sara Kazemi¹, Hamid Ashraf², Khalil Motallebzadeh³, Mitra Zeraatpishe⁴

- ¹Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, Islamic Azad University, Torbat-e Heydarieh Branch, Iran, Email: kazemisara59@gmail.com
- ²Corresponding author, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Torbat-e Heydarieh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Torbat-e Heydarieh Branch, Iran, Email;h.ashraf@iautorbat.ac.ir
- ³Associate Professor, Department of English, Tabaran Institute of Higher Education, Mashhad, Iran, Email: Iran.kmotallebz@tabaran.ac.ir
- ⁴Assistant Professor, Department of English, Mashhad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran, Email: mitra.zeraatpishe@yahoo.com

Abstract

Known as what educational contexts do not teach, null curriculum has been considered one of the most significant types of curricula due to its absence, being left out or overlooked. This non-existent curriculum brings an important theoretical tool to the field of curriculum development for the idea that something which is not offered to students has an educational significance and effect. To follow the purpose of the study which is teachers' perspectives on the null curriculum at the BA level, 300 university instructors were selected to participate in this study. To answer the research questions various statistical methods (one-way ANOVA, independent sample t-test, Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Scheffe's test) have been utilized. Results of this quantitative study revealed that among the subconstructs of the 21st century, critical thinking, collaboration skills, creativity and innovation skills, self-direction skills, technological literacy, global and local connection skills, economic and financial literacy, business and entrepreneurial literacy and media literacy should be considered as aspects of the null curriculum in TEFL curriculum in BA level in Iran, and they should be added to the present curriculum; however, communication skills are not regarded as aspects of null. In addition, Iranian EFL university instructors' ratings on different components of 21st-century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum significantly differed. Finally, a model was proposed to describe the relationship between the ratings of the components of 21st-century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum by Iranian EFL university instructors. The findings of the present study can help to a better understanding of the ELT curriculum, aspects of the null curriculum, and 21st-century skills in the Iranian context.

Keywords: curriculum, null curriculum, 21st century skills, TEFL, teachers' perspectives

Received: June 14, 2022 Revised: October 21, 2022 Accepted: January 13, 2023

Article type: Research Article

DOI: 10.22111/IJALS.2023.41665.2268

Publisher: University of Sistan and Baluchestan

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How to cite: Kazemi, S., Ashraf, H., Motallebzadeh, Kh., & Zeraatpishe, M. (2023). Teacher's perspectives on null curriculum in BA level: 21st century skills in TEFL. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, *15*(2), 157-180. https://doi.org/10.22111/IJALS.2023.41665.2268

1. Introduction

Curriculum development in language teaching started in the 1960s. The foundations for curriculum approaches that are used in language teaching context today emerged in the first part of the twentieth century. Language curriculum development deals with a set of processes that focuses on designing, revising, implementing and evaluating language programs (Richards, 2001). Curriculum development is a comprehensive process which includes the processes that are employed to determine the needs of students, to develop purposes and aims of a program that addresses those needs, to determine an appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods and materials, and to evaluate the language program that results from those processes (Schubert, 2018). Curriculum refers to the "total learning experiences of individuals not only in school but society as well" (Bilbao et al., 2008). According to Eisner's perspective (1985), the null curriculum is that which is not taught in schools. Some people have the power to make conscious decisions about what to include and what to exclude from the written curriculum. But this omission sends a message to students that these are not important enough to study. When subjects such as music, art, games, and social networking are not included in the written curriculum and thus form part of the null curriculum, students may believe these subjects have minimal value or are less important than the other subjects in educational experience or social life (Eisner, 1985).

Regarding curriculum development and different types of curriculum, not many studies and research have been done around the world; specifically in Iran, there is little about curriculum development in the field of EFL. The roles and functions of curriculum types have never been studied in the ELT context in Iran. Specifically, the aspects of null curriculum have never been investigated and studied in Iran. Furthermore, living in the 21st century, requires all people to have some special skills and competencies to be able to survive in communities nowadays. Some specific skills, abilities, and learning dispositions are needed which are known as 21st century skills that are required for leading a more successful life today (Larrivee, 2008). Different from the past, 21st century education is about giving learners the things they need to succeed in this new world and helping them grow the confidence to practice those skills. Some certain competencies such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem solving are necessary for learners to be able to thrive in today's life (Campbell & Kresyman, 2015). Little has been written and studied about these skills in the EFL context in Iran.

The theoretical framework of the present study goes back to Eisner (1985) who first presented the idea of a null curriculum. The null curriculum is what is not taught. Not teaching some particular idea or sets of ideas may be due to various reasons. The concept of the null curriculum initiates a critical analysis of curriculum that explicitly seeks to attend to that which is absent, left out, and overlooked. The null or non-existent curriculum, focusing on what is not present, brings an important theoretical tool to the field of curriculum development for the idea that something which is not offered to students has an educational significance and effect (Eisner,

1985). No study or research has been done to explore the aspects of the null curriculum in Iran to modify or change the current curriculum used in schools or universities. The research questions guiding this inquiry are:

- Q1: What are the components of 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum in ELT courses at BA level?
- **Q2:** Do Iranian EFL university instructors' ratings on different components of 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum significantly differ?
- Q3: What is the best model to describe the relationship between the ratings of the components of 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum by Iranian EFL university instructors?

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Null Curriculum

The null curriculum is what universities do not teach. There are two major dimensions that need to be considered (Eisner, 1991). One is the intellectual processes that universities emphasize and neglect. The other is the content or subject areas that are present and absent in universities' curricula. Considering the first dimension, one of the most important missions of universities is to enhance students' cognitive ability, critical thinking, affective skills and psychomotor activities. Cognitive ability deals with thinking, affective skills deal with feelings and psychomotor activities deal with acting. Therefore, a kind of distinction needs to be made among these three. Universities have a great role in offering students opportunities to develop intellectual processes and a program or system which neglects these intellectual abilities is likely to ill prepare students for social life and prevent students from intellectual discovery. Regarding the second dimension, one important function of universities is to provide a variety of topics and subjects for students (Eisner, 1991). As is clearly seen there are some special subjects which are taught in most universities around the world such as basic reading skills, basic arithmetic skills, and basic skills of writing. All the time, space and energy in universities are given to these subject matters. However, there are lots of areas and subjects which are ignored and neglected such as music, art, economics, law, dance, anthropology, psychology, filmmaking and many others. They are never given the due attention and as a result send this message to students that they are less important or not important at all in social daily life (Chowdhury, 2017).

2.1.1. Practical Uses of Null Curriculum

Null curriculum and paying attention to what our educational settings do not teach have some practical uses (Gholami et al., 2016). First, paying attention to a null curriculum helps ensure a complete and deliberative consideration of relevant alternatives for content selection. It helps us decide what to include and what to exclude from the program. It makes curriculum makers think about views or facts to be excluded. Second, it encourages us to reexamine the goals and objectives

of the content of our curriculum and the criteria for selection. It helps to pay attention to the relation between content and goals. Third, the null curriculum is useful in bringing attention to knowledge of implementation possibilities. It helps us focus on opportunities and limitations of curriculum implementation. This function leads us to classroom structure, the availability of resources, and school or university policy. Therefore, the notion of null curriculum does have a number of precious applications in particular areas of curriculum development (Gholami et al., 2016).

In fact, according to Chowdhury (2017), the power and virtue of null curriculum is in its absence. Therefore the existence of null shows a gap in the attained curriculum since the intended curriculum is formed based on the policy of the county and has some expected outcomes and the presence of null shows the lack of achieving of those. Sometimes it is not possible for educational settings to cover and include each topic included in the intended curriculum. However, incomplete learning experiences can be caused by this omission. The nature and extent of null curriculum differ from one educational setting to another but it has a great impact on students' learning. What is not taught is proposed by null curriculum (Milner, 2017).

2.1.2. Contextual Significance of Null Curriculum

The null or excluded curriculum refers to the amount of teaching material which is not covered, taught or included in the curricula of universities. The contextual significance of a null curriculum lies in the factors that cause the omission of concepts and topics from a curriculum especially when this omission is unintentional or biased (Hilderbrand, 2007). This omission may be intentional or unintentional. Based on arguments, an unintentional omission of certain topics or subjects does not hurt the overall academic preparation of students because learners are taught to employ their own inquiry skills and natural curiosity to explore and discover new things that are not introduced formally (Hilderbrand, 2007). Therefore an unintentional omission does not have a negative impact on education based on the opinion that students are responsible for their own learning. However, if a curricular omission is biased and intentional, it sends the message that these things are not important or less valuable to be included in a formal educational program.

Then it is natural to question why some topics are omitted. In fact, according to Chowdhury (2017), the importance of a null curriculum is in its absence. Therefore whether the null exists or not shows a gap in the intended curriculum since this curriculum is made based on the policy of the county and has some expected consequences and the existence of null shows the lack of obtaining of those.

2.1.3. Factors Affecting Null Curriculum

Some important points need to be taken into account before deciding on any kind of curriculum such as learning goals and kinds of knowledge desired. There are various factors that

affect all curriculum development in both educational environments and learning centers. According to Short (1982), some factors influencing curriculum development are government norms, codes, politics, history, administrators, government control, and environmental factors. Based on research done in Iran by Gholami et al. (2016), there are some general factors which may influence the curriculum design in Iranian educational settings. These factors include gender segregation, politics, fundamental developments in humanities, society and demands, technology, and the economy. The belief system of society has a great role in choosing the contents of the educational curriculum at schools and in universities. Societal integration and mono-lingual education rather than multi-cultural and multi-lingual approaches and also gender-biased attitudes have a significant influence on curriculum choice. Technology is an influential parameter as the lack of an educationally suitable environment and technological equipment are determining factors in this regard. Economy is a fundamental concern in every country and can affect the educational system directly and indirectly.

2.2. 21st Century Skills

Due to the emersion of diverse facilities in English education around the world, the need for transformation has increased (Karimi Alavijeh & Marandi, 2019; Salehizadeh et al., 2020). The information age has encouraged a new condition in which educational reform is crucial. A positive educational reform is the one with an innovative system that equip all learners with the necessary skills to be successful in 21st century life. There are some competencies known as needed 21st century skills by different researchers such as Fullan (2014). This list includes four themes: (1) "life and career skills"; (2) "learning and innovation skills"; (3) "information, media and technology skills"; and (4) "core subjects and 21st century themes". According to Heinrichs (2016), some other competencies should be added to the above list including multilingual communication, problem solving in authentic learning environments and finding values in different cultures. Dorn et al. (2018) prepared a list including the four themes of 21st century skills. This list contains (1) life and career skills in order to be able to compete in the information age, (2) learning and innovation skills which are essential to prepare learners for the future life, (3) information, media and technology skills which are needed to be an effective citizen and worker in 21st century and finally (4) core subjects and 21st century themes which are essential for all learners to be mastered in academic core subjects and interdisciplinary themes in addition to 21st century skills. 21st century skills can be regarded as a global framework and one of the basic and essential elements of the education program that calls for development of the students in the fast and quickly changing 21st century world (Farisi, 2016). According to Genzon (2009) as cited in Paalisbo (2017), educational goals should be formed based on these 21st century skills. The purpose of present study is to investigate the perspectives of Iranian EFL instructors about null curriculum in BA level in ELT context with a specific focus on 21st century skills.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants and Settings

A group of 300 EFL instructors teaching at the BA level in universities and colleges in Iran were selected. The sample size was determined by Krejcie and Morgan's Table (1970). These instructors were selected randomly based on diversity in age, teaching experience, gender, academic degree and place of teaching. The researchers contacted all participants to be sure that all would participate in in the quantitative phase of the study which dealt with a questionnaire to be filled out. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants in detail.

Table 1

Demographic Information for Instructors

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender | Male | 145 | 48.5% |
| | Female | 155 | 52.5% |
| | Total | 300 | 100% |
| Age | 25- 30 | 96 | 32% |
| | 31- 35 | 61 | 20.5% |
| | 36- 40 | 72 | 24% |
| | 41- 45 | 22 | 7.0% |
| | 46- 50 | 34 | 11.5% |
| | Over 50 | 15 | 5% |
| | Total | 300 | 100 |
| Teaching Experience | 1-5 | 93 | 31% |
| | 6-10 | 55 | 18.5% |
| | 11-15 | 87 | 29% |
| | 16-20 | 38 | 12.6% |
| | 21-25 | 19 | 6.5% |
| | Over 25 | 8 | 2.6% |
| | Total | 300 | 100 |
| Place of Teaching | State university | 46 | 15.5% |
| | Islamic Azad university | 119 | 39.6% |
| | Non- profit | 135 | 45% |
| | Total | 300 | 100% |
| Accademic Degree | MA | 161 | 53.6% |
| | PhD | 139 | 46.3% |
| | Total | 300 | 100% |

3.2. Instruments

The quantitative method was followed in the study. To collect the required data the "Null Curriculum Questionnaire" (Kazemi et al., 2020) was employed. A 48-item questionnaire consisting of various items for investigating different aspects of null curriculum focusing on 21st century skills in the BA level was used in the present study. Items were classified into ten different constructs namely critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration skills, communication skills, creativity and innovation skills, self-direction skills, technological literacy, global and local connection skills, economic and financial literacy, business and entrepreneurial skills and media literacy. Each item of the questionnaire was rated on a five-point Likert scale (1. Not really, 2. To a minor extent, 3. To

a moderate extent, 4. To a great extent, and 5. To a very great extent). The Cronbach Alpha Coefficients (α) reliability of the questionnaire was reported to be .98. The questionnaire was in English (see the Appendix).

4. Results

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the teachers' perspectives on the null curriculum at BA level with a special focus on 21st century skills in TEFL. This section discusses the data analysis and findings of the study.

4.1. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

To check the normality of data distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed. This test is used to check whether the distribution deviates from a comparable normal distribution. If the p-value is non-significant (p>.05), we can say that the distribution of a sample is not significantly different from a normal distribution, therefore it is normal. If the p-value is significant (p<.05) it implies that the distribution is not normal. Table 1 presents the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the questionnaire.

Table 2
The Results of K-S Test

| | | Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a | |
|------------|-----------|---------------------------------|------|
| | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| 21st CSANC | .612 | 300 | .08 |

As it can be seen, the obtained sig. value for the questionnaire is higher than .05. Therefore, it can safely be concluded that the data is normally distributed across the variables.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics of sub-scales of 21st CSANC from teachers' perspectives, including the mean, standard deviation, maximum and minimum scores. The comparison of these scores appears in the following section.

Descriptive Statistics of Sub-scales of 21st CSANC from Teachers' Perspectives

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------|-----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| F1 | 300 | 3.00 | 14.00 | 7.81 | 2.66 |
| F2 | 300 | 7.00 | 25.00 | 14.94 | 4.52 |
| F3 | 300 | 5.00 | 24.00 | 15.14 | 4.92 |
| F4 | 300 | 4.00 | 18.00 | 9.65 | 4.19 |
| F5 | 300 | 5.00 | 22.00 | 11.60 | 4.76 |
| F6 | 300 | 5.00 | 22.00 | 13.51 | 4.95 |
| F7 | 300 | 5.00 | 25.00 | 12.32 | 5.37 |
| F8 | 300 | 4.00 | 20.00 | 7.91 | 3.88 |
| F9 | 300 | 4.00 | 20.00 | 8.57 | 3.74 |
| F10 | 300 | 4.00 | 20.00 | 10.62 | 4.48 |
| Overall Scale | 300 | 50.00 | 191.00 | 112.09 | 37.56 |

Generally, results of descriptive statistics for the sub-scales of 21st CSANC from teacher' perspectives indicated a mean score of 112.09 with a standard deviation of 37.56.

4.3. Results of Research Questions

4.3.1. Results of Research Question One

To answer the first research question, frequencies and percentages of items were utilized for each of the ten sub-constructs of the scale. The findings of each item that relate to a particular sub-construct are presented in Table 4 and explanations are described accordingly.

Table 4
Frequencies and Percentages of the Items of the Ten Sub-constructs

| Item | Not really | | To a minor | extent | To a mode | rate extent | To a grea | at extent | To a very great extent | | |
|------|------------|------|------------|--------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|-------|--|
| | f | p | f | р | f | P | f | p | f | p | |
| Q2 | 55 | 18.3 | 106 | 35.3 | 77 | 25.7 | 58 | 19.3 | 4 | 1.3 | |
| Q4 | 20 | 6.7 | 119 | 39.7 | 73 | 24.3 | 84 | 28.0 | 4 | 1.3 | |
| Q5 | 50 | 16.7 | 87 | 29 | 116 | 38.7 | 47 | 15.7 | 0 | 0 | |
| Q6 | 20 | 6.7 | 75 | 25 | 91 | 30.3 | 85 | 28.3 | 29 | 9.7 | |
| Q7 | 12 | 4 | 101 | 33.7 | 74 | 24.7 | 88 | 29.3 | 25 | 8.3 | |
| Q8 | 12 | 4 | 109 | 36.3 | 80 | 26.7 | 74 | 24.7 | 25 | 8.3 | |
| Q9 | 12 | 4 | 91 | 30.3 | 115 | 38.3 | 64 | 21.3 | 18 | 6 | |
| Q10 | 12 | 4 | 116 | 38.7 | 86 | 28.7 | 67 | 22.3 | 19 | 6.3 | |
| Q11 | 28 | 9.3 | 74 | 24.7 | 95 | 31.7 | 77 | 25.7 | 26 | 8.7 | |
| Q12 | 15 | 5 | 89 | 29.7 | 75 | 25 | 81 | 27 | 40 | 13.3 | |
| Q13 | 23 | 7.7 | 56 | 18.7 | 107 | 35.7 | 89 | 29.7 | 25 | 8.3 | |
| Q14 | 31 | 10.3 | 63 | 21 | 119 | 39.7 | 62 | 20.7 | 25 | 8.3 | |
| Q15 | 31 | 10.3 | 73 | 24.3 | 104 | 34.7 | 71 | 23.7 | 21 | 7 | |
| Q17 | 81 | 27 | 72 | 24 | 89 | 29.7 | 43 | 14.3 | 15 | 5 | |
| Q18 | 75 | 25 | 89 | 29.7 | 73 | 24.3 | 59 | 19.7 | 4 | 1.3 | |
| Q19 | 96 | 32 | 49 | 16.3 | 96 | 32 | 55 | 18.3 | 4 | 1.3 | |
| Q20 | 89 | 29.7 | 80 | 26.7 | 69 | 23 | 58 | 19.3 | 4 | 1.3 | |
| Q21 | 80 | 26.7 | 121 | 40.3 | 57 | 19 | 35 | 11.7 | 7 | 2.3 | |
| Q22 | 88 | 29.3 | 98 | 32.7 | 74 | 24.7 | 33 | 11 | 7 | 2.3 | |
| Q23 | 82 | 27.3 | 103 | 34.3 | 61 | 20.3 | 47 | 15.7 | 7 | 2.3 | |
| Q24 | 83 | 27.7 | 62 | 20.7 | 2/3/111 | 37 | 37 | 12.3 | 7 | 2.3 | |
| Q25 | 83 | 27.7 | 62 | 20.7 | 110 | 36.7 | 38 | 12.7 | 7 | 2.3 | |
| Q26 | 60 | 20 | 88 | 29.3 | 81 | 27 | 49 | 16.3 | 22 | 7.3 | |
| Q27 | 44 | 14.7 | 127 | 42.3 | 55 | 18.3 | 70 | 23.3 | 4 | 1.3 | |
| Q28 | 48 | 16 | 82 | 27.3 | 81 | 27 | 78 | 26 | 11 | 3.7 | |
| Q29 | 52 | 17.3 | 64 | 21.3 | 92 | 30.7 | 74 | 24.7 | 18 | 6 | |
| Q30 | 52 | 17.3 | 64 | 21.3 | 92 | 30.7 | 74 | 24.7 | 18 | 6 | |
| Q31 | 75 | 25 | 100 | 33.3 | 54 | 18 | 44 | 14.7 | 27 | 9 | |
| Q32 | 75 | 25 | 101 | 33.7 | 55 | 18.3 | 43 | 14.3 | 26 | 8.7 | |
| Q33 | 90 | 30 | 74 | 24.7 | 90 | 30 | 26 | 8.7 | 20 | 6.7 | |
| Q34 | 79 | 26.3 | 74 | 24.7 | 91 | 30.3 | 48 | 16 | 8 | 2.7 | |
| Q35 | 86 | 28.7 | 43 | 14.3 | 97 | 32.3 | 73 | 24.3 | 1 | 0.3 | |
| Q37 | 132 | 44 | 66 | 22 | 76 | 25.3 | 25 | 8.3 | 1 | .3 | |
| Q38 | 121 | 40.3 | 83 | 27.7 | 76 | 25.3 | 19 | 6.3 | 1 | .3 | |
| Q39 | 133 | 44.3 | 63 | 21 | 59 | 19.7 | 37 | 12.3 | 8 | 2.7 | |
| Q40 | 164 | 54.7 | 45 | 15 | 62 | 20.7 | 28 | 9.3 | 1 | .3 | |
| Q41 | 84 | 28 | 85 | 28.3 | 112 | 37.3 | 14 | 4.7 | 5 | 1.7 | |
| Q42 | 94 | 31.3 | 98 | 32.7 | 70 | 23.3 | 29 | 9.7 | 9 | 3 | |
| Q43 | 118 | 39.3 | 100 | 33.3 | 45 | 15 | 32 | 10.7 | 5 | 1.7 | |
| Q44 | 108 | 36 | 89 | 29.7 | 70 | 23.3 | 28 | 9.3 | 5 | 1.7 | |
| Q45 | 90 | 30 | 56 | 18.7 | 76 | 25.3 | 48 | 16 | 30 | 10 | |
| Q46 | 56 | 18.7 | 61 | 20.3 | 91 | 30.3 | 66 | 22 | 26 | 8.7 | |
| Q47 | 82 | 27.3 | 82 | 27.3 | 98 | 32.7 | 19 | 6.3 | 19 | 6.3 | |
| Q48 | 60 | 20 | 60 | 20 | 76 | 25.3 | 69 | 23 | 35 | 11.7w | |

According to the table, for the first sub-construct (Critical thinking and problem solving skills) of the 21st CSANC which contained five items, the majority of the instructors selected "To a minor extent" and "To a moderate extent". Among the items, item 4 had the highest percent of "To a minor extent" (f=119, p=39.7%) and item 5 had the highest percent of "To a moderate extent" (f=116, p=38.7%). For the second sub-construct (Collaboration skills) of the 21st CSANC which contained five items, the majority of the instructors selected "To a minor extent" and "To a moderate extent". Among five items, item 10 had the highest percent of "To a minor extent" (f=116, p=38.7%) and item 9 had the highest percent of "To a moderate extent" (f=115, p=38.3%). For the third sub-construct (Communication skills) of the 21st CSANC which contained five items, the majority of the instructors reported that BA students had a moderate extent level in Communication skills. Among five items, item 14 had the highest percent of "To a moderate extent" (f=119, p=39.7%) and item 12 had the lowest percent of "To a moderate extent" (f=75, p=25%). For the fourth sub-construct (Creativity and innovation skills) of the 21st CSANC which contained four items, the instructors had different views for this sub-construct. Among four items, item 19 had the highest percent of "Not really" (f=96, p=32%), item 18 had the highest percent of "to a minor extent" (f=89, p=29.7%), and item 19 had the highest percent of "to a moderate extent" (f=96, p=32%). For the fifth sub-construct (Self-direction skills) of the 21st CSANC which contained five items, the instructors had different views on this sub-construct. Among five items, item 22 had the highest percent of "Not really" (f=88, p=29.3%), item 21 had the highest percent of "to a minor extent" (f=121, p=40.3%), and item 24 had the highest percent of "to a moderate extent" (f=111, p=37 %). For the sixth sub-construct (Technological literacy) of the 21st CSANC which contained five items, the majority of the instructors selected "To a minor extent" and "To a moderate extent". Among five items, item 26 had the highest percent of "To a minor extent" (f=88, p=29.3%) and items 29 and 30 had the highest percent of "To a moderate extent" (f=92, p=30.7%). For the seventh sub-construct (Global and local connection skills) of the 21st CSANC which contained five items, the majority of the instructors selected "To a minor extent" and "To a moderate extent". Among five items, item 32 had the highest percent of "To a minor extent" (f=101, p=33.7%) and item 35 had the highest percent of "To a moderate extent" (f=97, p=32.3%). For the eighth sub-construct (Economic and financial literacy) of the 21st CSANC which contained four items, the majority of the instructors selected "not really" for this factor. This mean that BA students' had a very low level of Economic and financial literacy from their instructors' view. More than half of the instructors reported that item 40 "students learn how to balance their budget and manage financial risks." had the highest percent of not really (f=164, p=54.7%). For the ninth sub-construct (Business and entrepreneurial literacy) of the 21st CSANC which contained four items, instructors had different views about students' level of Business and entrepreneurial literacy. Among four items, item 43 had the highest percent of "Not really" (f=118, p=39.3%) and the highest percent of "to a minor extent" (f=100, p=33.3%). Moreover, item 41 had the highest percent of "to a moderate extent" (f=112, p=37.3 %). And for the tenth subconstruct (Media literacy) of the 21st CSANC which contained four items, instructors had different

views about students' level of Media literacy. Among four items, item 45 had the highest percent of "Not really" (f=90, p=30%), item 47 had the highest percent of "to a minor extent" (f=82, p=27.3%) and the highest percent of "to a moderate extent" (f=98, p=32.7%).

4.3.2. Results of Research Question Two

In order to answer the second research question, instructors' demographic information (gender, age, experience, academic degree, and place of teaching) was analyzed. To find out whether 21st CSANC differs significantly between genders an independent-sample t-test was performed. Table 5 shows the results of the t-test.

Table 5

Results of the Independent-samples T-test for Instructors' Gender

| | | | Test for | • | | | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|------|----------|------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|---------|
| | | Equa | lity of | | | | | | | |
| | | Vari | ances | t-te | st for Equ | | | | | |
| | | / | | | 1 | | | | 95% Con | fidence |
| | | | | | | | | | Interval | of the |
| | | | J.) | | | | | | Differ | ence |
| | | | | | | Sig. | Mean | Std. Error | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | (2-tailed) | Difference | Difference | Lower | Upper |
| 21st CSANC | Equal variances assumed | 3.93 | .04 | 73 | 298 | .46 | -3.18 | 4.34 | -11.73 | 5.35 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | Pr. | 73 | 298.00 | .46 | -3.18 | 4.33 | -11.71 | 5.3 |

The t-test revealed no significant difference in 21st CSANC of males and females t(298)=-.73, p=.46. It shows that with a confidence interval of difference of 95%, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female teachers. To find whether 21st CSANC differs significantly between different age groups ANOVA was performed. Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics of different age groups in the 21st CSANC.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Different Age Groups in 21st CSANC

| | | | | 001 | 95% Confidence | Interval for Mean | | |
|-----------|-----|----------|----------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| Age Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | Minimum | Maximum |
| 25-30 | 96 | 124.52 | 19.18 | 1.95 | 120.63 | 128.40 | 89.00 | 181.00 |
| 31-35 | 61 | 111.65 | 38.16 | 4.88 | 101.88 | 121.42 | 63.00 | 164.00 |
| 36-40 | 72 | 101.16 | 37.10 | 4.37 | 92.44 | 109.88 | 51.00 | 191.00 |
| 41-45 | 22 | 118.22 | 52.45 | 11.18 | 94.97 | 141.48 | 53.00 | 173.00 |
| 46-50 | 34 | 107.73 | 54.98 | 9.42 | 88.55 | 126.91 | 50.00 | 171.00 |
| Over 50 | 15 | 87.73 | 27.36 | 7.06 | 72.57 | 102.88 | 63.00 | 116.00 |
| Total | 300 | 112.0967 | 37.56494 | 2.16881 | 107.8286 | 116.3647 | 50.00 | 191.00 |

As the table shows, among the six groups, the 25-30 years old group has the highest mean score (124.52) and Over 50 has the lowest mean score (87.73). Table 7 shows the results of the one-way ANOVA for different age group of instructors.

Table 7
Results of the One-way ANOVA for Different Age Group of Instructors

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | 33809.05 | 5 | 6761.81 | 5.12 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 388117.14 | 294 | 1320.12 | | |
| Total | 421926.19 | 299 | | | |

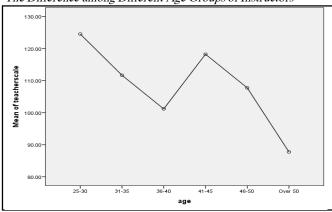
There was a statistically significant difference among the means of the age groups: F(5, 294)=5.12, p=.000. At this phase, the post hoc Scheffe's test (see Table 8) was used to show the place of the differences among the groups.

Table 8Scheffe's Test for the Differences of 21st CSANC among Different Age Groups

| | | | | | 95% Confid | lence Interval |
|---------|---------|-----------------------|------------|------|-------------|----------------|
| (I) age | (J) age | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 25-30 | 31-35 | 12.86 | 5.94 | .25 | -4.20 | 29.93 |
| | 36-40 | 23.35 | 5.66 | .00 | 7.10 | 39.60 |
| | 41-45 | 6.29 | 8.58 | .97 | -18.34 | 30.92 |
| | 46-50 | 16.78 | 7.25 | .19 | -4.01 | 37.58 |
| | Over 50 | 36.78 | 10.08 | .00 | 7.85 | 65.72 |
| 31-35 | 25-30 | -12.86 | 5.94 | .25 | -29.93 | 4.20 |
| | 36-40 | 10.48 | 6.32 | .56 | -7.64 | 28.62 |
| | 41-45 | -6.57 | 9.03 | .97 | -32.49 | 19.34 |
| | 46-50 | 3.92 | 7.77 | .99 | -18.38 | 26.22 |
| | Over 50 | 23.92 | 10.47 | .20 | -6.11 | 53.96 |
| 36-40 | 25-30 | -23.35 | 5.66 | .00 | -39.60 | -7.10 |
| | 31-35 | -10.48 | 6.32 | .56 | -28.62 | 7.64 |
| | 41-45 | -17.06 | 8.85 | .38 | -42.45 | 8.32 |
| | 46-50 | -6.56 | 7.56 | .95 | -28.25 | 15.11 |
| | Over 50 | 13.43 | 10.31 | .78 | -16.14 | 43.01 |
| 41-45 | 25-30 | -6.29 | 8.58 | .97 | -30.92 | 18.34 |
| | 31-35 | 6.57 | 9.03 | .97 | -19.34 | 32.49 |
| | 36-40 | 17.06 | 8.851 | .38 | -8.32 | 42.45 |
| | 46-50 | 10.49 | 9.94 | .89 | -18.02 | 39.01 |
| | Over 50 | 30.49 | 12.16 | .12 | -4.40 | 65.39 |
| 46-50 | 25-30 | -16.78 | 7.25 | .19 | -37.58 | 4.01 |
| | 31-35 | -3.92 | 7.77 | .99 | -26.22 | 18.38 |
| | 36-40 | 6.56 | 7.56 | .95 | -15.11 | 28.25 |
| | 41-45 | -10.49 | 9.94 | .89 | -39.01 | 18.02 |
| | Over 50 | 20.00 | 11.26 | .48 | -12.30 | 52.30 |
| Over 50 | 25-30 | -36.78 | 10.08 | .00 | -65.72 | -7.85 |
| | 31-35 | -23.92 | 10.47 | .20 | -53.96 | 6.11 |
| | 36-40 | -13.43 | 10.31 | .78 | -43.01 | 16.14 |
| | 41-45 | -30.49 | 12.16 | .12 | -65.39 | 4.40 |
| | 46-50 | -20.00 | 11.26 | .48 | -52.30 | 12.30 |

As it can be seen in Table 8 there are significant differences among 25-30 and 36-40, and 25-30 and over 50 in total 21st CSANC which are marked by asterisks. Figure 1 shows the difference among different age groups of instructors.





To find whether 21st CSANC differs significantly between different years of teaching experience groups of instructors, ANOVA was performed. Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics of different years of teaching experience groups in 21st CSANC.

Table 9Descriptive Statistics of Different Years of Teaching Experience Groups in 21st CSANC

| | | | | AT. | 95% Confidence | Interval for Mean | | |
|---------|-----|--------|----------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | Minimum | Maximum |
| 1-5 | 93 | 125.56 | 29.53 | 3.06 | 119.487 | 131.65 | 63.00 | 181.00 |
| 6-10 | 55 | 89.01 | 25.04 | 3.37 | 82.24 | 95.78 | 61.00 | 138.00 |
| 11-15 | 87 | 133.58 | 28.11 | 3.01 | 127.59 | 139.57 | 66.00 | 191.00 |
| 16-20 | 38 | 87.42 | 46.24 | 7.50 | 72.22 | 102.62 | 51.00 | 170.00 |
| 21-25 | 19 | 84.57 | 31.25 | 7.17 | 69.51 | 99.64 | 50.00 | 123.00 |
| Over 25 | 8 | 63.00 | .00 | .00 | 63.00 | 63.00 | 63.00 | 63.00 |
| Total | 300 | 112.09 | 37.56 | 2.16 | 107.82 | 116.36 | 50.00 | 191.00 |

As the table shows, among the six groups, the 11-15 years group has the highest mean score (133.58) and Over 25 has the lowest mean score (63.00). Table 10 shows the results of the one-way ANOVA for different experience groups of instructors.

Table 10

Results of the One-way ANOVA for Different Age Groups of Instructors

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 143161.42 | 5 | 28632.28 | 30.19 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 278764.77 | 294 | 948.18 | | |
| Total | 421926.19 | 299 | | | |

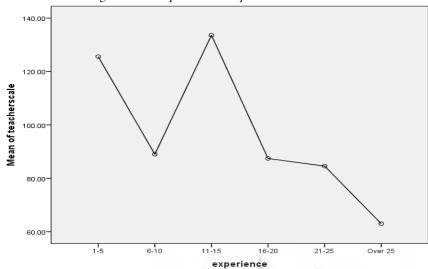
There was a statistically significant difference among the means of the experience groups: F (5, 294)=30.197, p=.000. At this phase, the post hoc Scheffe's test (see table 11) was used to show the place of the differences among the groups.

Table 11Scheffe's Test for the Differences of 21st CSANC among Different Experience Groups

| | | | | | 95% Confid | ence Interval |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|-------|-------------|---------------|
| (I) experience | (J) experience | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 1-5 | 6-10 | 36.55 | 5.23 | .000 | 21.52 | 51.57 |
| | 11-15 | -8.01 | 4.59 | .50 | -21.19 | 5.15 |
| | 16-20 | 38.14 | 5.92 | .000 | 21.14 | 55.15 |
| | 21-25 | 40.99 | 7.75 | .000 | 18.75 | 63.22 |
| | Over 25 | 62.56 | 11.34 | .000 | 30.02 | 95.11 |
| 6-10 | 1-5 | -36.55 | 5.23 | .000 | -51.57 | -21.52 |
| | 11-15 | -44.56 | 5.30 | .000 | -59.78 | -29.35 |
| | 16-20 | 1.59 | 6.49 | 1.000 | -17.03 | 20.23 |
| | 21-25 | 4.43 | 8.19 | .99 | -19.06 | 27.94 |
| | Over 25 | 26.01 | 11.65 | .22 | -7.40 | 59.44 |
| 11-15 | 1-5 | 8.01 | 4.59 | .50 | -5.15 | 21.19 |
| | 6-10 | 44.56 | 5.30 | .000 | 29.35 | 59.78 |
| | 16-20 | 46.16 | 5.98 | .000 | 28.98 | 63.34 |
| | 21-25 | 49.00 | 7.79 | .000 | 26.63 | 71.37 |
| | Over 25 | 70.58 | 11.37 | .000 | 37.95 | 103.22 |
| 16-20 | 1-5 | -38.14 | 5.92 | .000 | -55.15 | -21.14 |
| | 6-10 | -1.59 | 6.49 | 1.000 | -20.23 | 17.03 |
| | 11-15 | -46.165 | 5.98 | .000 | -63.34 | -28.98 |
| | 21-25 | 2.84 | 8.65 | .99 | -21.97 | 27.66 |
| | Over 25 | 24.42 | 11.97 | .32 | -9.93 | 58.78 |
| 21-25 | 1-5 | -40.99 | 7.75 | .000 | -63.22 | -18.75 |
| | 6-10 | -4.43 | 8.19 | .99 | -27.94 | 19.06 |
| | 11-15 | -49.00 | 7.79 | .000 | -71.37 | -26.63 |
| | 16-20 | -2.84 | 8.65 | .99 | -27.66 | 21.97 |
| | Over 25 | 21.57 | 12.97 | .55 | -15.64 | 58.80 |
| Over 25 | 1-5 | -62.56 | 11.34 | .000 | -95.11 | -30.02 |
| | 6-10 | -26.01 | 11.65 | .22 | -59.44 | 7.40 |
| | 11-15 | -70.58 | 11.37 | .000 | -103.22 | -37.95 |
| | 16-20 | -24.42 | 11.97 | .32 | -58.78 | 9.93 |
| | 21-25 | -21.57 | 12.97 | .55 | -58.80 | 15.64 |

As can be seen in Table 11 there are significant differences among different groups in total 21st CSANC which are marked by asterisks. Figure 2 shows the difference among different experience groups of instructors.





To find whether 21st CSANC differs significantly between different Degree levels, an independent-sample t-test was performed. The results of the independent-samples t-test are presented in Table 12.

Table 12
Results of the Independent-Samples T-test For Instructors' Degree

| Independent S | amples Test | | | | 17 | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|---------|-----------|
| | | Leve | ne's Test | | 7 | | | | | |
| | | for E | quality o | f | | | | | | |
| | | Va | riances | t-test for | r Equalit | y of Mear | ns | | | |
| | 6.5 | 26 | 1116 | 1110 | 11.1 | o V | 24 | | 95% Co | nfidence |
| | 60 | _ | مصالف | 200 | 1000 | 00 | 13/ | | Interva | al of the |
| | | | | | | | 7 | | Diffe | rence |
| | | - ") | 1"11 | - 600 | val - | Sig. (2- | Mean | Std. Error | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | tailed) | Difference | Difference | Lower | Upper |
| 21st CSANC | Equal variances assumed | 5.10 | .02 | 1.73 | 298 | .08 | 7.49 | 4.33 | -1.03 | 16.03 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 1.70 | 269.23 | .08 | 7.49 | 4.39 | -1.15 | 16.14 |

The t-test revealed no significant difference in 21st CSANC of MA and PhD groups t(298)=-.1.73, p=.08. It shows that with a confidence interval of difference of 95%, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the MA and PhD instructors.

To find whether 21st CSANC differs significantly between different Places of teaching groups of instructors, ANOVA was performed. Table 13 shows the descriptive statistics of different Places of teaching groups in 21st CSANC.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics of Place of Teaching Groups in 21st CSANC

| | | | | | 95% Confidence | Interval for Mean | | |
|-------------------------|-----|---------|----------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | Minimum | Maximum |
| state university | 46 | 106.82 | 28.54 | 4.20 | 98.34 | 115.30 | 66.00 | 149.00 |
| Islamic Azad university | 119 | 111.31 | 44.00 | 4.03 | 103.32 | 119.29 | 50.00 | 173.00 |
| Nonprofit university | 135 | 114.58 | 33.96 | 2.92 | 108.80 | 120.36 | 51.00 | 191.00 |
| Total | 300 | 112.096 | 37.56494 | 2.16881 | 107.8286 | 116.3647 | 50.00 | 191.00 |

As the table shows, among the three groups, Nonprofit university has the highest mean score (114.58) and state university has the lowest mean score (106.82). Table 14 shows the results of the one-way ANOVA for different Places of teaching groups of instructors.

Table 14

Results of the One-way ANOVA for Different Places of Teaching Groups of Instructors

| | Sum of Squares df | | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|-------------------|-----|-------------|-----|------|
| Between Groups | 2187.32 | 2 | 1093.66 | .77 | .46 |
| Within Groups | 419738.87 | 297 | 1413.26 | | |
| Total | 421926.19 | 299 | | | |

There was no statistically significant difference among the means of the Place of teaching groups: F(2, 297) = .77, p = .46.

4.3.3 Results of Research Question Three

To answer the third research question about the best model to describe the relationship between the ratings of the components of 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum by Iranian EFL university instructors, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run to assess the fit of the model for the participants. Based on the CFA analysis, the association between each sub-factor and overall variable was analyzed. Figure 3 shows the proposed model for 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum by Iranian EFL university instructors with 10 sub-constructs.

Figure 3

The Proposed Model for 21st Century Skills as One Aspect of the Null Curriculum by Iranian EFL University Instructors

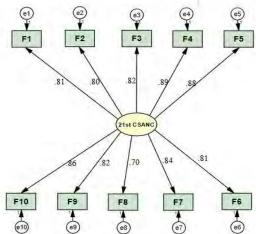


Figure 3 illustrates that the questionnaire has 10 sub-constructs (F1– F10). Loading of the first sub- construct that is critical thinking and problem solving skills (F1) with 5 items is .81. Loading of the second sub- construct that is collaboration skills (F2) with 5 items is .80. Loading of the third sub- construct that is communication skills (F3) with 5 items is .82. Loading of the fourth sub-construct that is creativity and innovation skills (F4) with 5 items is .89. Loading of the fifth sub-construct that is self-direction skills (F5) with 5 items is .88. Loading of the sixth sub- construct that is technological literacy (F6) with 5 items is .81. Loading of the seventh sub- construct that is global and local connection skills (F7) with 5 items is .84. Loading of the eighth sub- construct that is economic and financial literacy (F8) with 5 items is .70. Loading of the ninth sub- construct that is business and entrepreneurial skills (F9) with 4 items is .82. Loading of the tenth sub- construct that is media literacy (F10) with 4 items is .86. As the model of CFA shows, f4 (creativity and innovation Skills) has the highest loading (B=.89) and f8 (economic and financial literacy) has the lowest loading (B=.70). Based on the figure all ten factors were confirmed. The goodness of fit indices can be seen in Table 15. In this study, χ 2/df, GFI, CFI, and RMSEA were used.

Table 15
Goodness of Fit Indices

| | X2/df | GFI | CFI | RMSEA | |
|----------------|-------|------|------|-------|--|
| Acceptable fit | <3 | >.90 | >.90 | <.08 | |
| Model | 1.89 | .95 | .96 | .05 | |

As Table 15 shows, all the goodness of fit indices is within the acceptable range. Therefore, the 21st CSANC enjoyed perfect validity with empirical data with 10 sub-constructs for instructors.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

To answer the first research question, that is "What are the components of 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum in BA level", frequencies and percentages of items were utilized for each of the ten sub-constructs of the scale. The results of the instructors' responses to the first sub-construct, that is Critical thinking and problem solving skills, indicate that based on instructors' views this construct can be considered as an aspect of null curriculum in the ELT context of BA level in Iranian universities. The results of the instructors' responses to the second sub-construct, that is Collaboration skills, indicate that this construct can be considered as an aspect of the null curriculum in the ELT context of BA level in Iranian universities. The results of the instructors' responses to the third sub-construct, that is Communication skills, indicate that the majority of the instructors reported that BA students had a moderate extent level of Communication skills. Therefore, this construct cannot be considered as an aspect of a null curriculum based on instructors' views.

The results of the instructors' responses to the fourth sub-construct, that is Creativity and innovation skills, indicate that the instructors had different views about this sub-construct. To some

instructors, this skill should be regarded as an aspect of null curriculum in ELT context due to the fact that it is not enhanced through courses and textbooks. To some other instructors creativity and innovation skills are partly improved in university. However, it can be classified as an aspect of null curriculum due to the fact that instructors do not believe that this kind of skill is really improved in university and there is not enough attention to it.

The results of the instructors' responses to the fifth sub-construct, that is Self-direction skills, indicate that the instructors had different views about this sub-construct. This skill can be considered as the aspect of the null curriculum in the BA curriculum since most of the instructors believe that self-direction skill is not included as a course in BA courses and is not really developed in university; however, at the same time, some instructors believe that to some extent self-direction skill is partly regarded as important in university subjects.

The results of instructors' responses to the sixth sub-construct, that is technological literacy, indicate that the majority of the instructors believe in the lack of attention to technological literacy in the BA curriculum in the ELT context in Iran. Therefore, it can be regarded as an aspect of a null curriculum.

The results of instructors' responses to the seventh sub-construct, that is global and local connection skills, indicate that the majority of the instructors believe that global and local connection skills deal with students' ability to understand global issues and apply what they have learnt in local context and community, are not improved and worked on in BA level in an Iranian ELT context. Therefore, it should be regarded as an aspect of a null curriculum.

The results of instructors' responses to the eighth sub-construct, that is economic and financial literacy, indicate that the majority of the instructors selected "not really" for this factor in the questionnaire. This means that BA students' had a very low level of Economic and financial literacy from their instructors' point of view. Economic and financial literacy deals with students' ability to understand international and domestic economic situations and being able to manage and invest money. Therefore, it can be concluded based on the results that this skill should be regarded as an aspect of the null curriculum at BA level in the ELT context in Iran.

The results of instructors' responses to the ninth sub-construct, that is Business and entrepreneurial literacy, indicate that, instructors had different views about students' level of Business and entrepreneurial literacy. The results of the analysis show that instructors believe that the ability to do innovative projects to develop entrepreneurial mind- sets does not receive the due attention in BA level curriculum and the ability to increase entrepreneurial thinking through different programs are not dealt with in the BA curriculum. Therefore, business and entrepreneurial literacy should be regarded as an aspect of the null curriculum. However, some instructors believe that this kind of skill is not completely absent and to a short extent, it is included in some courses.

The results of instructors' responses to the tenth sub-construct, that is Media literacy, indicate that instructors had different views about students' level of Media literacy. Instructors believe that students do not really learn how to use appropriate sources of information when

needed, but learners become somehow familiar with media ethics and conventions. Therefore, this skill can be considered as an aspect of the null curriculum in the BA curriculum in the ELT context in Iran.

The second research question of the present study is "Do Iranian EFL university instructors' ratings on different components of 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum significantly differ?" In order to answer the second research question, instructors' demographic information (gender, age, experience, academic degree, and place of teaching) was analyzed. The results indicate that regarding the gender difference among participants who are university instructors in this phase of the study, the t-test revealed no significant difference among male and female instructors which means that gender has no effect on instructors' ratings on different components of 21st-century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum. Regarding the second demographic factor which is age, ANOVA was performed. The results reveal that among the six different age groups, 25-30 years old group has the highest mean score and over 50 has the lowest mean score. This means that those university instructors who are over 50 years old believe that the ten various constructs of the questionnaire should be regarded as aspects of the null curriculum in BA level curriculum in ELT context in Iran. Therefore, it should be reported that age is a significant factor which has an effect on instructors' ratings of different components of 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum.

The other demographic factor which is considered in the present study is experience. ANOVA was used to find out whether the ideas of university instructors about the components of 21st century skills are under the influence of their teaching experience or not. The results reveal that among the six groups, those instructors with the experience of 11 to 15 years have the highest mean score and those instructors with more than 25 years of experience have the lowest mean score. This means that this kind of difference is significant and those university instructors with 25 years of teaching experience believe that constructs of 21st century skills should be regarded as null curriculum aspects in BA level curriculum in the ELT context in Iran. Therefore, it should be reported that experience is a significant factor which has an effect on instructors' ratings of different components of 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum.

Another demographic factor which is considered in the present study is degree. An independent-sample t-test was performed to find out whether the ideas of university instructors about the components of 21st century skills are under the influence of their degree or not. The results reveal no significant difference between MA and PhD instructors. Therefore, a university degree cannot be considered as a determining and significant factor in the ideas of university instructors.

The last factor in demographic information which is regarded in the present study deals with place of teaching. ANOVA was performed to find out whether place of teaching can have any influence on the ideas of instructors about the components of 21st century skills as aspects of a null curriculum. The results show that there is no significant difference between the place of teaching

and the ideas of instructors. State University, Azad University and Nonprofit University were considered as different places of teaching in the present study.

In order to answer the third research question which is "What is the best model to describe the relationship between the ratings of the components of the 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum by Iranian EFL university instructors", confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run to assess the fit of the model for the participants (instructors). According to the CFA analysis, the association between each sub-factor and overall variable was analyzed. A model has been proposed for the 21st century skills as one aspect of the null curriculum by Iranian EFL university learners with 10 sub-constructs based on which all ten factors have been confirmed. Based on the goodness of fit indices which are within the acceptable range it can be concluded that the 21st CSANC enjoyed perfect validity with empirical data with 10 sub-constructs for BA students.

The results of the present study are comparable with the results of Adib et al. (2014) who investigated the null aspects of the curriculum of education courses in the university education system in the Islamic Republic of Iran and concluded that the public education system should consider the needs of scientific activities, accelerating the world of science, needs of people and curriculum standards. The results of the present study are also in line with the findings of Chowdhury and Siddique (2017) who believed that some aspects of the null curriculum in Bangladesh are related to subjects which are contradicted with religion.

This study seeks to explore aspects of the null curriculum in the ELT context in Iran with a special focus on and attention to 21st-century skills. For this reason, the language curriculum employed in BA classes in universities is taken into account and is under investigation. Future studies can take private language institutes and public schools into account and consider the curriculum which is dominant in such contexts. Furthermore, university instructors are the participants of the present study. Future studies can select school students, school teachers and stakeholders as the main participants of the study. In addition, those students studying in private language institutes and teachers teaching in language institutes can be selected as participants in the future research. After that, just some aspects of the null curriculum including 21st century skills are under investigation; therefore, the other aspects of the null curriculum which are ignored in the present study can be under consideration in future studies.

The findings of the present study can help to a better understanding of the ELT curriculum and textbooks in the Iranian context. University instructors can gain a better understanding of elements of null curriculum and some aspects of that including technology, social networking, social media and 21st century skills which can help them identify, plan for, and provide support and service to increase different kinds of literacies among students and even teachers and instructors. Additionally, this knowledge can help universities and the Ministry of education in Iran to make required changes in the current language curriculum and textbooks to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the ELT context in Iran.

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Appendix

Null Curriculum in ELT: Focusing on 21st Century Skills' Questionnaire

Dear respondent:

Educational institutions have always been dealing with curriculum development as one of the most important areas of language learning and teaching. Null curriculum has been viewed as one of the important kinds of curriculum types which is important due to its absence, being left out or overlooked, but it should not be disregarded.

The following questionnaire attempts to find out the instances of null curriculum (with a focus on 21st century skills) in Iranian ELT context. Please share your valuable opinion in this regard. All responses would be kept confidential.

| ELT context. Please share your valuable opinion in this | regard | l. All res | sponses | wou | ld be kept con | fidential. | | | | |
|--|----------|---------------|------------|--------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| A: Demographic Information: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender: Male□ Female□ Age: 25-30□ 31-35 | □ 30 | 6-40□ | 41-45 | | 46-50□ 50+ | | | | | |
| Teaching experience: 1-5 □ 6-10 □ 11-15 □ | 16- 20 | 0□ 2 | 21- 25 □ | 1 : | 25+ years □ | | | | | |
| Academic Degree: MA□ PhD□ C | ity: | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching at: State University ☐ Islamic Azad University ☐ Nonprofit/None state university ☐ | | | | | | | | | | |
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| B: Instruction | | | | | | | | | | |
| Please choose one of the choices given to state to what | t extent | t you agi | ree with | the | following state | ments about | English classes | | | |
| in TEFL BA level you teach at university: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not really / To a minor extent / To a moderate extent | / To a s | great ex | tent / To | o a ve | ery great exten | t | | | | |
| | | X | | | , 0 | | | | | |
| 1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills | | | | | | | | | | |
| (Refers to students' ability to analyze complex problems and | evaluate | e view po | ints and | bring | reasons to draw | their own con | clusions.) | | | |
| In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, | | | | | | | | | | |
| | - | really | exte | ent | extent | extent | extent | | | |
| 1. students' decision making skills are developed. | W . | . 7 | | V | | | | | | |
| 2. most students learn reasoning skills (applying logic to arr | J14 | | 7 | | | | | | | |
| conclusions) while in classes. | | \sim | L | _ | | | | | | |
| 3. Students compare information from different sources | while | U | 7 | | | | | | | |
| completing a task and learn how to tolerate different thought | s. | \mathcal{T} | N. | | | | | | | |
| 4. students are able to draw their own conclusions based on re | elated | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| information. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Students can solve complex problems or answer diff | ficult | | | 13 | 624 | | | | | |
| questions. | 200 | 101 | وعليام | K | 101 | | | | | |
| | - | 2" | | | 17 | | | | | |
| 2. Collaboration Skills | | | | | | | | | | |
| (Refers to students' ability to work together to solve problems | s and to | work eff | ectively i | n tea | ms and pairs for | doing tasks.) | | | | |
| In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, | Not | To a | minor | То | a moderate | To a great | To a very great | | | |
| | really | ех | tent | - 1 | extent | extent | extent | | | |
| 6. students learn how to listen actively to other members | | | | | | | | | | |
| and team working is developed. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. students learn to work in groups or pairs to complete a | | | | | | | | | | |
| task together. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. students learn to give feedback to other students (e.g., | | | | | | | | | | |
| giving feedback on each other's' text or speech). | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. students learn how to present their group work to the | | | | | | | | | | |
| class and teacher. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. students learn how to work with other students to set | | | | | | | | | | |
| goals and make a plan for their team. | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

3. Communication Skills (Refers to students' ability to organize their ideas, find information and share with others effectively.) In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, Not To a minor To a moderate To a great To a very really extent extent extent great extent 11. students' communication skills are developed (e.g., confidence, open-mindedness, respect, empathy, listening and etc). 12. students learn how to answer questions in front of others. 13. students learn to deliver an oral presentation or lecture to the 14. students can decide how they want to present their work and show their learning. 15. students learn to convey their ideas using media other than a paper (e.g., powerpoints, posters, blogs, videos, graphs, etc.). 4. Creativity and Innovation Skills

(Refers to students' ability to generate and innovate new solutions to complex problems and use them in different situations.) In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, Not To a minor To a moderate To a very great To a great really extent extent extent extent 16. students' curiosity and risk taking skills are developed 17. students learn how to use techniques for idea creation (e.g., brainstorming and concept mapping). 18. students learn how to produce their own ideas about problems or questions. 19. students learn how to invent a solution to a question or a problem. 20. students learn to test different ideas and work to improve them.

(Refers to students' ability to take responsibility of their own learning process and review and revise their own work.) In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, To a minor To a moderate To a great To a very really great extent extent extent 21. students' self- direction skills are developed. 22. students can choose their own topics of learning and choose 23. students learn to monitor their process of learning and their own progress of a task. 24. students learn to assess the quality of their work and to use feedback to revise their work. 25. students can plan the steps they will take to complete a task.

5. Self-Direction Skills

| 6. Technological Literacy | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|--|--|
| (Refers to students' ability to use appropriate information and communication technology.) | | | | | | | |
| In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, | Not really | To a minor | To a moderate | To a great | To a very great | | |
| | | extent | extent | extent | extent | | |
| 26. students' technological literacy in learning is developed. | | | | | | | |
| 27. students learn how to select suitable technology tools for | | | | | | | |
| completing a task and extend assignments. | | | | | | | |
| 28. students learn to use technology to analyze information and share | | | | | | | |
| information (e.g., software, blogs, podcasts, etc.). | | | | | | | |
| 29. students learn to use technology to interact with others and | | | | | | | |
| collaborate in team works (e.g., email exchange, giving and receiving | | | | | | | |
| feedback, shared work spaces, etc.). | | | | | | | |
| 30. students use technology or internet for learning and self- | | | | | | | |
| instruction. | | | | | | | |

| (Refers to students' ability to understand global issues and ap | oply what th | ey have | learr | nt in lo | ocal co | ntext and co | mmuni | ty.) | |
|--|--|----------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|--------|--------------|---------------------------|
| In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, | | To a m | inor | To a moderat | | derate | To a | a great | To a very great |
| 31. students learn how to make local and global | | | | | | | | - | |
| connections. | | | | | | | | | |
| 32. students apply what they learn to local situations and | | | | | | | | | |
| talk to community members about class projects. | | | | | | | | | |
| 33. students study information about local issues and other | | | | | | | | | |
| countries or cultures. | | | | | | | | | |
| 34. students discuss issues related to local and global issues | | | | | | | | | |
| and understand the life experiences in their own and other | | | | | | | | | |
| cultures. | | | | | | | | | |
| 35. students can reflect on how their experiences and local | | | | | | | | | |
| issues are connected to global issues. | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Economic and Financial Literacy | | | | | | | | | |
| (Refers to students' ability to understand international and | domestic ec | onomic | situa | tions. |) | | | | |
| In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, | 1 | Not | Toa | n mino | or T | o a moderat | T | 'o a great | To a very |
| | | really | • | extent | t | extent | | extent | great extent |
| 36. students learn how to make, manage and invest money. | - / | | 1 | | | | | | |
| 37. students learn current global economic issues and they c | an use | ~ | | | | | | | |
| economic information in domestic situation. | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 38. students become familiar with infrastructures and eco | onomic | 1 | Ţ | | | | | | |
| crisis in society (e.g., inflation, market shocks, depression, etc. | c.). | | ŕ | V | | | | | |
| 39. students learn to read marketing situation online and discu | uss and | 2 | | | | | | | |
| share information with other students. | | 3. | $\overline{}$ | W | - | | | | |
| 40. students learn how to balance their budget and manage fin | nancial | H. | | | | | | | |
| risks. | | | 1 | _\ | | | | | |
| 9. Business and Entrepreneurial Skills | T X | - | 7 | | | | | | |
| (Refers to students' ability to understand marketing situation | and have a | n innov | ative 1 | mind | to star | t and establis | h new | job position | s and use curren |
| facilities.) | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, | | | N | Tot 7 | Гоат | inor To a m | derate | To a great | To a very grea |
| ./. | | | re | ally | exter | nt ext | ent | extent | extent |
| 41. students learn cooperative education and increase the | eir entrepre | neuria | تارا | 66 | | 4/ | | | |
| thinking through different programs. | -0 | | 1 | v. v | | 17 | | | |
| 42. students learn about marketing needs and skills and lea | ırn to use a | vailable | ; | | | | | | |
| resources and facilities to start a new business. | علده ا | 20 | À | 1/" | | | | | |
| 43. students do innovative projects to develop entrepreneuria | al mind- sets | | | JN. | | | | | |
| 44. students learn how to enhance self-evaluation | n, entrepre | eneuria | 1 | | 4 | | | | |
| accomplishments, and innovative skills. | | | | | | | | | |
| accomplishments, and innovative skills. | | | | | | | | | |
| - | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Media Literacy | | 6 1: | | , | | | cc | 1 > | |
| 10. Media Literacy (Refers to students' ability to gain information through differ | ent forms o | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Media Literacy | ent forms o | N | ot ? | Гоаг | ninor | To a moder | | o a great | |
| 10. Media Literacy (Refers to students' ability to gain information through differ In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, | | N rea | | | ninor | | | | To a very great |
| 10. Media Literacy (Refers to students' ability to gain information through differ In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, 45. students learn how to use appropriate sources of information. | | N rea | ot ? | Гоаг | ninor | To a moder | | o a great | |
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| 10. Media Literacy (Refers to students' ability to gain information through differ In my opinion, in TEFL BA classes, 45. students learn how to use appropriate sources of infor needed (e.g., journals, databases, encyclopedia, etc.). 46. students learn how to use appropriate media tools in and 47. students become familiar with media ethics and convention. | mation who | n N | ot ? | Гоаг | ninor | To a moder | | o a great | |
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