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Conceptualization of Iranian English Teachers' Emotional Fatigue and the Ways They Handle It

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Teaching is an emotionally demanding job that frequently has negative effects on teachers, especially when done within the setting of a second or foreign language (L2).

Methods: In order to close the gap, this phenomenological investigation looked at the reasons behind emotional fatigue among Iranian EFL teachers as well as its consequences and regulating strategies. Twenty teachers participated in a semi-structured interview.

Results: The results of the thematic analysis demonstrated that there were numerous causes and consequences of this emotional state. The most frequent reasons were 'Pressures at work,' 'Mismatches and Identity Conflicts,' 'Stressful Environments in Classrooms,' 'High Expectations,' 'Students' Disengagement and Poor Cooperation,' 'Students Poor Academic Performance,' 'Out of Class Activities,' 'Repetitive and Boring Behaviours.' Furthermore, It was found that teachers' emotional fatigue can result in 'Poor Quality of Instruction,' 'Burnout at Work,' 'Insufficient Work Engagement,' 'lack of Passion for teaching,' 'A Lack of Self-efficacy,' 'Low Student Performance,' 'Feeling Several Negative Emotions.' The participants employed a range of responsive and preventive techniques both before and after the event of negative emotion in order to regulate it.

Conclusion: The study provides some conclusions and implications for Iranian L2 teachers, teacher trainers, and policymakers to enhance their understanding of the nature and process of emotional fatigue in English teaching and its regulation.

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1. Introduction

Considering the characteristics of L2 education, teachers face a variety of stressors and challenges related to language, culture, context, and teaching (Derakhshan et al., 2024; Fan & Wang, 2022; MacIntyre, 2021). Recent research in the psychology of teaching second or foreign languages (L2) shows that the field is highly emotional and shaped by individual psycho-affective traits (Derakhshan, 2022; Derakhshan & Fathi, 2024; Mercer, 2020).

English language teachers undergo emotional fatigue and various negative emotional states as a result of the interplay between external and internal factors (Derakhshan et al., 2023; MacIntyre et al., 2019). Burnout, boredom, disengagement, lack of motivation, exhaustion, and related negative feelings often stem from the emotional pressure and stress that teaching L2 imposes on teachers (Akram & Li, 2024; Derakhshan, 2022; Kruk, 2021; Mall-Amiri, 2024; MacIntyre, 2021). As emotions have a significant impact on teachers' performance, quality and teaching methods, recent research has shifted from linguistic issues to the study of emotions, guided by the trend of positive psychology (PP) (Derakhshan et al., 2023; Derakhshan et al., 2023; Qi & Wang, 2024; Shakki, 2022; Solhi et al., 2023). Emotional tiredness is one of the most emotional problems teachers encounter in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, yet scholars have not given this subject much thought. The depletion of one's emotional reserves and negative emotions associated with stress are the hallmarks of emotional exhaustion, a component of teacher burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2024). Teachers who experience burnout often feel worn out, despondent, and under a lot of stress at work (Klusmann et al., 2023).

Emotional weariness manifests as a complete loss of energy and emotional exhaustion (Cui, 2022). Because its presence and severity can have a detrimental effect on teachers' well-being, efficacy, and instructional quality, it is a crucial component of education (Bing et al., 2022; Yin et al., 2019). Additionally, teachers' motivation, enthusiasm for teaching, professional behaviours, mental health, and accomplishment are all directly impacted by their felt emotional exhaustion at work (Klusmann et al., 2022; Madigan & Kim, 2021; Schulze-Hagenest et al., 2023). Prior studies have also shown that the setting and manner of instruction, together with the dominating relationships between teachers and students in the classroom, affect teachers' emotional exhaustion (Olivier et al., 2024; Voss et al., 2023).

In EFL contexts, emotional fatigue has been shown to influence teachers' reflectivity (Mahmoodi & Ghaslani, 2014), self-efficacy views (Chang, 2022), and classroom management (Köksal, 2024). Teachers may react differently to emotional fatigue depending on their previous experience, personalities, and available resources (Bleck & Lipowsky, 2022). They use a range of emotion management strategies to address this unpleasant feeling in the classroom (Gross, 1998). These tactics are methods that a person employs to regulate, suppress, or intensify an emotion

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(Gross & John, 2003). Even though the amount of research is increasing on the concept of emotional fatigues, most of these studies are conducted in occupational or contexts for general education (Olivier et al., 2024; Pöysä et al., 2021; Schulze-Hagenest et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the conceptualization of this psycho-affective variable in relation to teachers' burnout has been the subject of numerous studies (Chang, 2022; Köksal, 2024; Leiter & Maslach, 2016). Furthermore, the majority of the researches are correlational, and very few, if any, have looked qualitatively at the emotional fatigue of EFL teachers. To present, L2 researchers have failed to identify the sources and effects of this teacher-related feeling. Given that teaching L2 is an extremely demanding and emotionally laden profession (Ghiasvand et al., 2024), It's critical to describe how EFL teachers experience and manage their emotional fatigue. This would help teachers and trainers in L2 training come up with practical ways to deal with negative emotions. Iranian EFL teachers' feelings and perceptions of emotional exhaustion and coping strategies in response to these demands were the subject of a phenomenological investigation by the researchers.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing body of research on teacher emotions, emotional fatigue remains insufficiently investigated in English language education, particularly through qualitative inquiry. Previous studies have primarily examined emotional exhaustion as one dimension of teacher burnout using quantitative methods and have focused mainly on identifying statistical relationships with variables such as self-efficacy, work engagement, and job satisfaction. Consequently, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how teachers themselves perceive the sources, consequences, and regulation of emotional fatigue.

In the Iranian context, previous research has shown that emotion regulation significantly predicts burnout among Iranian EFL teachers (Ghanizadeh & Royaei, 2015), while recent studies have highlighted the emotional complexity of English language teaching and the professional identity challenges experienced by Iranian teachers (Ghiasvand et al., 2023). Internationally, studies have demonstrated that emotional exhaustion negatively affects teachers' instructional quality, professional well-being, and relationships with students (Olivier et al., 2024; Schulze-Hagenest et al., 2023). Nevertheless, these investigations have largely relied on survey data and have provided little insight into teachers' lived experiences of emotional fatigue.

Therefore, an important gap exists in understanding how Iranian EFL teachers experience emotional fatigue, what factors contribute to it, what consequences they perceive, and how they regulate this emotional state in their everyday professional practice. Addressing this gap can contribute to both theory and practice by providing a richer understanding of teachers' emotional lives within the sociocultural context of English language education in Iran.

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1.2 Objectives of the Study

The present study aimed to explore Iranian EFL teachers' lived experiences of emotional fatigue using a phenomenological approach. The specific objectives were to:

1. Identify the perceived causes of emotional fatigue among Iranian EFL teachers.

2. Explore the perceived consequences of emotional fatigue for teachers and classroom instruction.

3. Investigate the strategies Iranian EFL teachers employ to regulate emotional fatigue.

4. Provide pedagogical implications for improving teachers' emotional well-being and professional development.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing literature on teacher psychology and positive psychology in second language education by providing an in-depth qualitative understanding of emotional fatigue among Iranian EFL teachers. Unlike previous research that has predominantly employed quantitative methods, this study explores teachers' lived experiences and provides detailed insights into the factors that generate emotional fatigue and the strategies teachers use to regulate it.

The findings have practical implications for several stakeholders. For EFL teachers, they offer greater awareness of emotional fatigue and effective coping strategies. For teacher educators and professional development providers, the findings may inform training programs that strengthen teachers' emotional competence and resilience. Educational administrators and policymakers may also benefit by designing supportive working environments that reduce occupational stress and enhance teacher well-being. Finally, the study provides a foundation for future qualitative and mixed-method research examining teacher emotions across diverse educational contexts.

2. Literature review

2.1 Teacher Emotional Fatigue

EFL teachers typically feel a variety of undesirable feelings in their work (Derakhshan et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2021). According to Maslach (1982), emotional fatigue is one such emotion and is characterized by a feeling of emptiness and energy depletion during work. Teachers who experience this sensation become depersonalised, lose enthusiasm to work, and demonstrate less accomplishments due to their reduced affective resources (Leiter & Maslach, 2016). Due to the high demands and stresses of their job, which can lead to a sense of detachment, teachers may experience emotional fatigue in the classroom (Maslach et al., 2001). Teachers' experience and demographic background are thought to have an impact on the frequency and severity of emotional fatigue (Olson et al., 2019). The initial indication of teacher burnout, according to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2020), is emotional fatigue and is characterised by a feeling of emotions emptiness

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caused via imposed job stresses, conflicts, and burdens. When emotional fatigue is not well addressed, it can lead to depersonalization, indifference, disrespect, and a lack of interest in one's career (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). This negative sensation could also come from a variety of sources. Teachers may become exhausted in L2 education due to the emotional dissonance of teaching a foreign language in non-native English-speaking contexts (Benesch, 2017; Jalilzadeh et al., 2024). Emotional exhaustion in EFL teachers can also be greatly influenced by the needs of the students and the teacher-student relationship (Ghanizadeh & Royaei, 2015; Köksal, 2024).

Previous studies reveal that teachers feel emotional fatigue as a result of their perceived decline in pedagogical effectiveness and accomplishment, and this negatively impact on students' academic life (Hui et al., 2022; Maslach et al., 2001; Rumschlag, 2017). Emotional exhaustion can also harm academic interpersonal connections by fostering negative feelings of detachment, cynicism, retreat, and disengagement from obligations (Dai & Wang, 2024; Maslach et al., 2001; Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017; Zhi et al., 2024). Other research indicates that teachers who experience high levels of emotional exhaustion also have poorer levels of job commitment, self-efficacy, well-being, and job satisfaction (Bing et al., 2022; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Yin et al., 2019). Teachers who are emotionally exhausted also exhibit less passion for their work as teachers and commitment to their main responsibilities (Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017). Moreover, it has been asserted that teachers' work departure rate and turnover intentions are highly predicted by their emotional fatigue (Haerens et al., 2022). Research on teachers' emotional tiredness has so far focused on how it is conceptualised and how it relates to other teacher-related emotions as well as professional behaviours and results. Considering many antecedents and consequences, not enough research has been done on how EFL teachers control this emotion.

2.2 Emotion Regulation

People use a variety of methods and strategies known as emotion regulation strategies to control their emotional experiences, just like they do with many other behaviours and practices. According to King and Ng (2018), they are used to manage emotions and maintain productivity. These techniques are employed to diffuse, amplify, modulate, and sustain feelings (Gross, 1998). In this study, EFL teachers employ emotion regulation strategies as a means of overcoming emotional fatigue when teaching English. These strategies are divided into two categories in the relevant literature: those that take place prior to emotional experiences and those that take place after they happen. The former is referred to ante cent-focused regulation strategies, while the latter is known as response-focused strategies (Gross, 1998). The Process Model of emotion regulation serves as the basis for this categorization. Selection of situations (i.e., deciding whether to confront or stay away from an emotional circumstance), situation modification (i.e., attempting to change an emotional situation), attentional deployment (i.e., distancing oneself from an emotional circumstance), and cognitive change/appraisal (i.e., altering one's evaluation and thought process

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of an emotional situation) are examples of antecedent-focused strategies. Response-focused techniques such as "response modulation" involve changing how a person reacts to an emotion. People sometimes use acceptance, suppression, or avoidance to control their emotions (Hofmann et al., 2009).

The body of research on EFL teachers' strategies for controlling their emotions is growing. Research has shown that these strategies for L2 teachers strongly forecast various factors and emotions, such as job engagement, success, well-being, resilience, and self-efficacy (Amirian, Edalati Bazzaz, Ghaniabadi, & Zareian, 2025; Chen & Tang, 2024; Fathi et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2023; Xie, 2021). Besides positivity, earlier research indicated that EFL teachers might utilize effective emotion regulation strategies to avert and lessen negative feelings such as anxiety, burnout, and boredom in L2 teaching and evaluation practices (Derakhshan et al., 2023; Solhi et al., 2023; Wang, 2024). In a separate study, Donker et al. (2020) maintained that the emotional regulation methods employed by Dutch teachers influenced their feelings of emotional exhaustion. Ghanizadeh and Royaei (2015) discovered that methods of emotional regulation could forecast emotional exhaustion, or burnout, among Iranian EFL teachers. Although L2 researchers are increasingly concentrating on emotion regulation strategies, the implementation of these strategies to manage negative teacher emotions like emotional exhaustion has not been adequately addressed. The study, primarily centered on managing stress, anxiety, and boredom in L2 teaching, has insufficiently addressed emotional fatigue, which plays a more crucial role in emotional exhaustion within L2 learning. To address this gap, this qualitative study investigated the causes, effects, and related coping strategies of emotional exhaustion in L2 teaching as perceived by Iranian EFL teachers. The subsequent research questions arose as a consequence:

1. In what ways do Iranian EFL teachers understand the reasons and effects of emotional fatigue?
2. How do English as a Foreign Language teachers in Iran cope with their emotional fatigue?

3. Method

3.1 Participants and Context

Twenty EFL teachers from private English language institutes in Iran, located in cities including Zarghan, Shiraz, Marvdasht, and Kazerun, took part in the study. The selection of the participants was done using their educational backgrounds, which included master's degrees in English education, applied linguistics, translation, and a few with doctoral degrees, as well as their experience as teachers, which varied from under five years to over ten years. The goal of this diversity was to include a wide range of viewpoints and experiences about emotional fatigue in EFL teaching. The sample consisted of 10 females and 10 males between the ages of 28 and 42.

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They taught a variety of courses including 'Listening and Speaking', 'Reading and Writing', 'Top-Notch Series', and 'Summit Series'. The majority of the students they taught were freshmen and sophomores with CEFR B1 (intermediate) levels of English proficiency who had passed the national college admission exam. There were about 40 students in each class on average. Their workplaces offered a range of support services, including well-equipped language labs, team-building subsidies, and funds for educational reform projects.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Semi-structured Interview

The data of this research were collected through a semi-structured interview conducted in face-to-face in the participants' working institute. First, a series of questions were written in accordance with the study's goal. The items' content validity was then examined by three experts. After a redundant item was removed, five open-ended questions were chosen to be utilized in the actual interview (Appendix). The respondents' demographic information was requested at the beginning of the interview process. English was used for the interviews. The duration of each interview was thirty minutes. The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder so as not to interfere with the respondents' concentration.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Considering the goals, a phenomenological approach was chosen to examine how Iranian EFL teachers perceive and deal with emotional fatigue and associated regulation strategies. Studies that concentrate on a sample's experiences and perceptions of a phenomenon are a good fit for this design (Wilson, 2015). In light of this, 20 Iranian EFL teachers took part in a semi-structured interview to find out more about their perceptions of the causes, effects, and coping strategies of emotional fatigue. Prior to the main phases, a panel of qualitative research specialists approved the content validity of all items after the interview questions were pilot-tested. Prior to the interviews, all participants gave their informed consent. The study's objective, the procedures used, and the possible risks and benefits were all discussed in both written and verbal form. In addition to being told that their participation was completely optional, and they might leave at any time without facing any consequences, participants received guarantees of their privacy and anonymity.

All participants signed consent forms confirming their understanding and willingness to take part in the study. No conflicts of interest existed. An interview process was consistently followed to guarantee systematic data collection. Even though the interview questions were predetermined to maintain conformity, Participants were allowed to offer examples and clarifications in any order they preferred. The researchers took a reflective approach throughout this procedure, critically analysing how their experiences as EFL teachers and their interactions with participants might influence the research findings. This reflective practice covered the aspect of researcher

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positionality, essential for analysing qualitative data. The audio recordings of the interviews were made using a small voice recorder tool beside the researcher. The interviews were conducted between October 1, 2024, and October 18, 2024, and took 18 days to complete.

Before moving on to the final analysis, the data's accuracy and any missing information were subsequently confirmed. The study used triangulation, utilizing a variety of data sources, including field notes and interview transcripts, to ensure the trustworthiness of the results. As an essential component of the verification process, member checking was carried out; the participants were informed of the initial results for feedback, which helped to confirm the data's accuracy and provided more information. The credibility and dependability of the study findings were improved by this feedback loop. Persistent observation and prolonged involvement in the research setting significantly increased credibility. Spending a significant amount of time in the field allowed for the development of rapport with participants and a thorough comprehension of the context. Because of this immersion, the researchers were able to document the nuances of the participants' experiences and make sure that the findings were based on their actual experiences. All designs and procedural modifications made during the study process were recorded in an audit trail. This procedure improved the study's transparency and made it possible to assess its dependability and confirmability.

3.4 Data Analysis

To analyse the data, first, the participants' responses were entered into an Excel file. In order to identify the common causes, effects, and coping strategies of teachers' emotional fatigue, the researchers then used thematic analysis. Every word of the interview recordings was transcribed. In accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) model, a thematic analysis was conducted. There were multiple steps in the process: getting to know the data, coming up with preliminary codes, looking for themes,--

evaluating themes, defining and labelling themes, and producing the final report. After each interview the transcript was read multiple times, initial codes were generated in a systematic way. After that, these codes were categorized into possible themes, which were then reviewed and improved to make sure they appropriately represented the data. A second researcher examined the themes on their own to ensure dependability, and disagreements were resolved through discussion.

Ultimately, a report was written based on the findings. A second person also double-checked the themes and provided feedback a week later. Cohen's Kappa Coefficient was used to calculate inter-coder reliability, and the results showed a satisfactory reliability index (r =.77). By providing readers with a detailed account of the study's stages and participants, transferability was ensured. To ensure the conformability of the findings, a second researcher also re-examined the data analysis stages. Lastly, it's crucial to remember that the researchers were the ones who collected and

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analysed the study's data. They made every effort to take neutral positions. However, complete neutrality would be impossible in qualitative research because the researcher actively participates and serves as an instrument.

4. Findings

4.1 Perceived Causes and Consequences of Emotional Fatigue

According to the analysis of the fourth interview question, Iranian EFL teachers viewed several causes and consequences for the unpleasant feeling of emotional fatigue in their jobs. According to the respondents, there are eight reasons why teaching English in Iran might lead to emotional fatigue (Figure 1). 'Pressures at work,' 'Mismatches and Identity Conflicts,' and 'Stressful Environments in Classrooms' were the most commonly cited factors. *'Many occupational pressures and forces are imposed that really make teachers pressed in various aspects.' They truly destroy teachers' emotions and demotivate them'* (T11). *'The abundance of identity conflicts in teaching English and what actually is done that sometimes violates our own beliefs and goals. Teachers typically lose their positive emotions when there are such mismatches'* (T5).

Some teachers emphasised the importance of classroom environment by stating that *'it is quite natural to become devoid of emotion and energy in stressful classroom contexts. Teachers who work in stressful environments are far more likely to experience weariness and exhaustion than those who work in environments that foster positivity'* (T20). 'High expectations' for teachers and 'students' lack of cooperation', 'academic performance,' and 'disengagement' were three additional recurring concerns. According to T15, *'students' behaviours and practices are largely to blame for our perceived emotional exhaustion. They hardly progress if they don't participate in class activities and ignore cooperation, which greatly depletes teachers' emotional resources and energy.'* As stated by T17,

'When teachers must handle numerous unrelated tasks outside of the classroom and return to the same teachings and practices every semester, it repletes their emotions and negatively impacts their mental health. For many teachers, performing repetitive tasks in many courses is incredibly tedious.'

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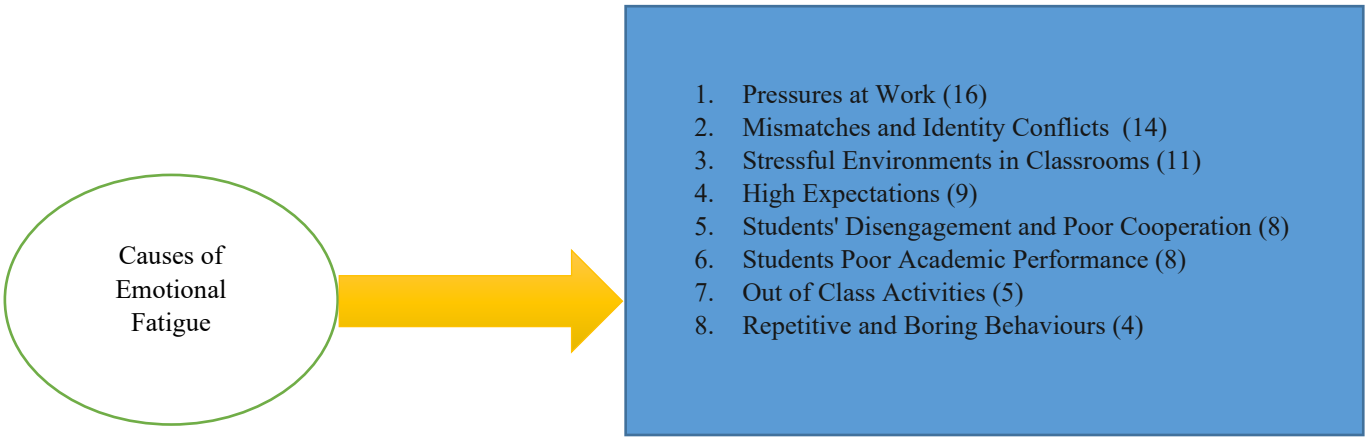


Figure 1. Iranian EFL teachers' perceived causes of emotional fatigue

According to the data analysis, there are seven areas that teachers' emotional weariness may impact in terms of its effects (Figure 2). 'Poor quality of instruction,' 'burnout at work,' 'insufficient work engagement,' and 'a lack of passion for teaching' were the most common outcome. One participant identified *'Teachers' emotional fatigue has immediate consequences. They could lead to ineffective teaching instruction and efficacy'* (T16). According to another teacher *'Since emotional fatigue seriously damages a teacher's feelings and performance, it reduces work engagement and enthusiasm to teach'* (T19). Additionally, some teachers claimed emotional fatigue as the cause of job burnout. For instance, T17 claimed that *'When we are emotionally exhausted and lack the energy to continue working, burnout overwhelms us and prevent us from becoming truly competent teachers.'*

Emotional fatigue was also found to reduce teachers' self-efficacy in the classroom and cause a variety of other undesirable emotions. *'Emotional fatigue is a broad and detrimental emotion in teachers. Its existence triggers additional negative traits, such as low self-efficacy views in one's capacity to teach'* according to T12. The findings of the theme analysis, which was used to respond to this question, demonstrated that Iranian EFL teachers identified many causes and consequences for their emotional fatigue in L2 teaching. 'Pressures at work,' 'mismatches and identity conflicts,' 'stressful environments in classrooms,' 'high expectations,' and 'students poor academic performance and cooperation' were the most common explanations. However, the participants contended that 'poor quality of teaching,' 'burnout at work,' 'insufficient work engagement,' and 'a lack of passion for teaching' could result from EFL teachers experiencing this unpleasant

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experience. It was also discovered to reduce teachers' self-efficacy and students' accomplishment outcomes by reducing other negative emotions.

4.2 Teachers' Regulation Strategies for Emotional Exhaustion

The final interview question was examined to address this research question on Iranian EFL teachers' regulating strategies when they experience emotional fatigue. Preventive and responsive strategies are the two main kinds of emotion regulation strategies that resulted from the thematic analysis (Figure 3). The participants most frequently employed 'situation avoidance,' 'modification of the situation,' 'shift in attention,' and 'asking for assistance and advice from others' as ways to avoid experiencing emotional fatigue. With an emphasis on emotionally difficult circumstances, some teachers said that *'In emotionally pressing situations, the best technique is to either avoid it or change it to a positive situation.'* (T19). Nonetheless, the participants also stressed the importance of diverting focus away from the unpleasant situation. For instance, T14 stated that *'If our affective fatigue remain, it is a good idea to shift our focus to other issues in the class.'* The idea that *'In L2 instruction, interacting with others can help students recognise and regulate their emotional states. We can use their tried-and-true ways for controlling emotional fatigue'* (T3) was another popular preventive strategy.



Figure 2. Iranian EFL teachers' perceived consequences of emotional exhaustion

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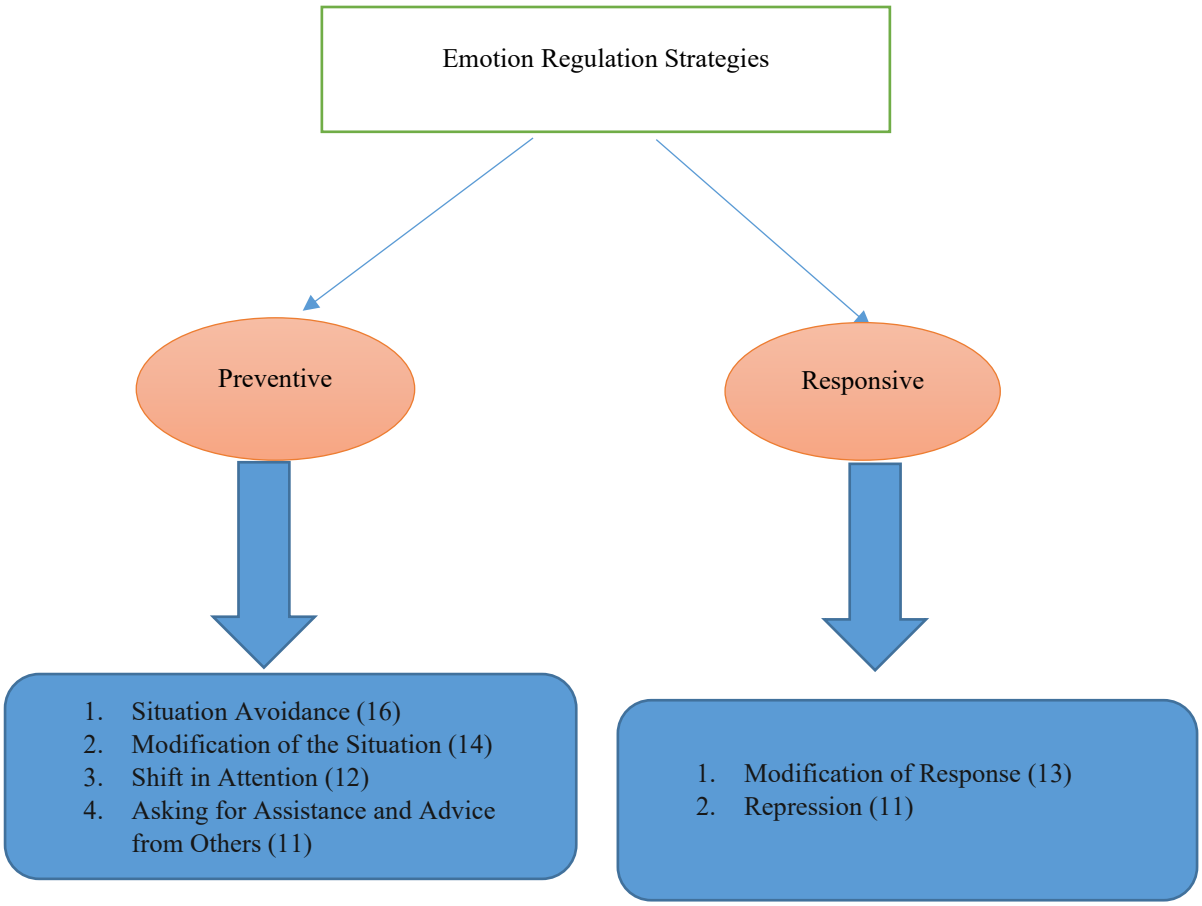


Figure 3. Iranian EFL teachers' employed strategies to regulate emotional exhaustion

When it came to responsive strategies, it was shown that Iranian EFL teachers primarily used two main strategies: 'repression' and 'modification of response.' *'We may change how we react and respond to emotional weariness even after it has occurred. We are able to calmly modify our actions and responses'* (T20) said one interviewee in support of the first theme. Some teachers, however, adopted a more radical stance and proposed the suppression techniques. For instance, one teacher said, *'Since emotional tiredness is a common and harmful emotion, we must suppress it as soon as it appears. It may result in further negative effects. Therefore, I believe that the wisest course of action is to totally conceal it'* (T18). Overall, this study questions' findings showed that Iranian EFL teachers had used various techniques to control their emotional fatigue. They used both responsive and preventive strategies. The most common strategies employed before emotional

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fatigue were 'situation avoidance,' 'modification of situation,' 'shift in attention,' and 'asking for assistance and advice from others.' However, the participants recommended using 'repression' and 'modification of response' strategies to regulate emotional fatigue once it manifests.

5. Discussion

Examining Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of the causes, effects, and coping mechanisms of emotional fatigue in L2 education was the aim of this phenomenological study. By illustrating certain job demands particular to EFL teaching and identifying important resources that mitigate these demands, the study's findings enrich the Job Demands- Resources (JD-R) model. Furthermore, the practical implementation of Gross's techniques for controlling emotions in the classroom implies that the model should be modified to incorporate particular strategies that work well in educational settings. In addition to confirming the relevance of these theoretical frameworks, this study recommends that they be expanded to include certain facets of teaching foreign languages. In aligning the findings of this research with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, the high demands placed on EFL teachers, such as occupational pressures and high expectations, clearly lead to emotional fatigue. The high job demands identified in this study are consistent with the JD-R model's claim that burnout results from demands that are not balanced with sufficient resources (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Additionally, teachers' strategies for managing emotional fatigue might be seen as personal assets that lessens the impacts of these job demands. This interpretation expands on the JD-R model by placing in the context of the specific pressures experienced by EFL teachers in Iran. According to the participants' perceptions, the results showed a variety of causes and consequences of emotional fatigue. The most common causes were 'Pressures at work', 'Mismatches and Identity Conflicts', 'Stressful Environments in Classrooms', 'High Expectations', 'Students' Disengagement and Poor Cooperation' , 'Students Poor Academic Performance', 'Out of Class Activities' , 'Repetitive and Boring Behaviours'. The findings corroborate those of Maslach et al. (2001), who contended that a variety of conditions, including burnout, professional pressure, detachment, high expectations and demands, and poor interpersonal relationships, might lead to emotional fatigue. According to earlier researches, emotional fatigue can also be caused by emotional labour, job overload, students' lack of participation in class, and stressful work environments (Benesch, 2017; Jalilzadeh et al., 2024; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). The results further support Ghiasvand et al.'s (2023) argument that EFL teachers encounter a number of identity conflicts and paradoxes in their teaching, wherein their own goals contrasted with those set by the institution. They also emphasised how these disagreements contribute to teachers' negative emotional states.

The results deviate from other studies by taking into account an individual's identity and the overall working climate as contributing factors to emotional fatigue. The results obtained may be

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attributed to the emotional literacy and knowledge of L2 teacher psychology possessed by Iranian EFL teachers. It would be challenging to recognise and manage the emotional side of L2 education without such literacy (Ghiasvand et al., 2024). The emotional nature of L2 teaching had made the participants more sensitive to emotions and aware of the causes behind their fatigue. The main causes of emotional fatigue may also be due to the collaborative nature of perceived emotion. The participants mentioned the role of the classroom, workplace, interactions, and students' behaviours in the appearance of fatigue, which are all indicators of their comprehension of the social basis of emotions in L2 education. As is the case with other areas of L2 instruction, emotions are socio-cultural phenomena rather than only internal, socially isolated states.

Furthermore, it was discovered that 'poor teaching quality,' 'job burnout,' 'low work engagement,' 'low teaching enthusiasm,' and 'various other negative emotions and outcomes' are the main consequences of teachers' emotional fatigue. The findings are consistent with previous studies that suggested it may have a negative impact on work engagement, enthusiasm, and teaching quality (Bing et al., 2022; Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017; Rumschlag, 2017). In line with Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017), emotional fatigue also causes the development of other negative emotions such as depression, stress, anxiety, and mental health problems. One explanation for these outcomes could be because teaching L2 is a burdensome profession (Derakhshan, 2022). The results theoretically support the JD-R model, which takes into account how an individual's behaviours and emotions relate to the resources and requirements of their job (Demerouti et al., 2001).

The participants' perceptions of the consequences of emotional fatigue may be supported by their prior teaching experience and job expertise. Their prior education and training on the negative pressures of teaching L2 could also be a contributing factor. Furthermore, emotional fatigue is contagious and affects many aspects of teachers' instruction, shown by the primarily emotional consequences. Another explanation would be that Iranian EFL teachers are aware of the real consequences of emotional fatigue because of their pedagogical content knowledge. Their experimentation with the psycho-affective aspects of L2 education may have been the cause of this. Furthermore, the implementation of Gross's (1998) Process Model of Emotion Regulation is highlighted by the use of emotion regulation strategies by teachers, as revealed in this study. Teachers' employment of response-focused and antecedent-focused approaches demonstrates their proactive and reactive strategies for handling emotional stress. This research enhances Gross's model by showing how these strategies are especially used in high-stress learning settings, in addition to providing support for it. One example of how theoretical concepts are applied practically in real-world teaching situations is the frequent use of cognitive reappraisal by teachers to mitigate the emotional impact of classroom challenges.

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In relation to the regulatory strategies, the results demonstrated that different preventive and responsive measures had been used by Iranian EFL teachers. The most often cited preventive strategies were 'situation avoidance,' 'situation modification,' 'attention shift,' and 'seeking others' help and guidance.' Nevertheless, they claimed to solely employ the two techniques of 'suppression' and 'response modification' to control their emotional weariness following its occurrence. The process model of emotion management techniques aligns with these tactics developed by Gross (1998), which separated them into two categories: both antecedent- and response-focused. The study's preventive measures mirror Gross's (1998) 'situation selection,' 'situation modification,' and 'attentional deployment' characteristics. Similarly, the response modulation element of this paradigm is supported by the two responsive strategies. Donker et al. (2020) and Ghanizadeh and Royaei (2015), who carried out research in the Netherlands and Iran and came to the conclusion that emotion regulation strategies may prevent emotional fatigue, provide empirical support for the application of these strategies. The distinction is that this research concentrated on more deeply on specific regulatory strategies that can be used to manage fatigue both before and after it occurs.

Once more, these conclusions might have been reached due to the participants' pedagogical knowledge and teaching experience. They appear to understand how to handle negative teacher emotions, including burnout from their work. In addition to theoretical knowledge, the participants seem to prefer practical knowledge in coping with the pressures of L2 teaching. This is ascribed to the assistance provided by Iranian English education institutions for the professional development of teachers. It's also likely that the participants received specific training in professional therapy sessions on how to cope with the emotional pressure of their works. The significance of teacher emotions and how they are handled in Iran may also help to explain the study's findings. Although the literature emphasises the importance of teaching experience in understanding the causes, consequences, and regulating strategies of emotional fatigue, this study disregarded these issues (Bleck & Lipowsky, 2022; Olson et al., 2019). Therefore, in order to determine the mediating variables of feeling and coping with emotional fatigue, more research is encouraged.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This study found that Iranian EFL teachers have diverse perspectives on the causes, effects of, and strategies for controlling their emotions when teaching English. Given the results, it can also be said that a combination of context-, learner-, and teacher-related factors leads to emotional fatigue, and that all of these levels must assist its management and regulation. Affective fatigue is largely caused by work-related pressures in addition to teachers' personal emotional states. All things considered, emotional fatigue is an indication of a negative working environment and classroom climate that must be appropriately managed if teachers are to continue teaching. If not managed well, emotional fatigue can generate negative consequences for almost all parties in EFL contexts.

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In light of these claims, this study could help in the development of theories and models of the ecology of emotional fatigue in L2 teachers, which are currently lacking in the literature.

Furthermore, the outcomes can be beneficial for EFL teachers understand and manage the causes and consequences of their emotional fatigue and exhaustion. They can control such a negative emotion at work by using the strategies mentioned in this study. Additionally, various stakeholders must provide support in order to manage emotional fatigue. The study can therefore be used by Iranian school administrators and language policymakers to identify and deal with the reasons why emotional fatigue among EFL teachers. For L2 education, they can incorporate a psychological dimension into their lesson planning. The results may also help teacher teachers create professional development courses on the causes, consequences, and regulating strategies of emotional fatigue and burnout in early career teachers. They can also educate teachers regulating mechanisms for other negative feelings. This study had imitations, particularly its pure qualitative design, despite these contributions. It is thus advised that different research designs be used in future studies. The study's use of a one-shot interview with a limited sample of EFL teachers is another drawback. To provide a complete picture of emotional fatigue in Iran, more research is encouraged using other instruments and on a larger scale. Future research can also examine how teaching experience and educational degrees mediate how emotional fatigue is perceived and managed.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

Part 1: Background Information:

Age:

Gender:

Field of study:

Teaching Experience Level:

Part 2: Interview Questions

1. As an EFL teacher, can you describe your emotions in a daily classroom instruction?
2. How often do you experience negative emotion like fatigue?
3. Can you describe emotional fatigue in the context of L2 education? What do you think of it?
4. What are the causes and consequences of emotional fatigue in L2 teaching?
5. What strategies do you use to control and handle emotional fatigue in your job?

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