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The Relationship among Anxiety, Motivation, and Burnout: A Study of Iranian EFL Teachers

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Abstract

Over the years, teachers are considered as one of the most influential factors, which play an important role in pedagogical and educational settings. Numerous research studies have been done about teachers and their performance in the classrooms. Among the investigated factors motivation, anxiety, burnout can be considered as having higher importance concerning related literature. Therefore, the present study sheds light on their interaction and relationship with Iranian language teachers' performance. To this purpose, 80 male and female English teachers with at least 10 years of teaching experiences were selected in Neyshabur, and their motivation, anxiety, and burnout were examined through filling out the related questionnaires. The design of the study was correlational, focusing on the correlation between each two variables. The data analysis showed that there is a significant correlation between teachers' burnout and the research factors such as their motivation and anxiety. Finally, some pedagogical implications of the study concerning the improvement of teachers' performance at schools are presented. The findings of the present study put much emphasis on designing and administrating teacher-training programs with especial regard to psychological traits such as language teachers' motivation and anxiety to reduce the probable great burnout, which the majority of language teachers may feel after several years of teaching experiences.

Keywords: EFL teachers, anxiety, burnout, motivation

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1. Introduction

In the course of the past few decades, teachers have been the focus of research in educational settings. This fact is due to the effectiveness of teachers in learning contexts. Teachers have not received enough attention, which deserve their role in classrooms (Harmer, 2001). Since language instruction is very dependent on teachers, their importance has been acknowledged in this area (Brown, 2001).Meanwhile, teachers may experience different psychological moods like self-efficacy, sense of loss (Nias, 1999), and stress, which may affect their behaviors and practices in classrooms (Pishghadam, Adamson, Sadafian, & Kan, 2014).

Dealing with stress may vary across different people, and those who fail to cope with, will experience burnout in their jobs (Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003). Actually, burnout is defined as "The feeling of always being tired" by Longman Dictionary of contemporary English. In technical aspect, it is defined as "a chronic state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that arises in personnel from the cumulative demands of their work' (Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard, 2006, p.857). Numerous research studies have been done investigating the consequences of teachers' burnout and its related factors such as anxiety and stress (Kyriacou, 2001; Liu & Ramsey, 2008; Perrachione, Rosser, & Petersen, 2008). Besides, burnout could be attributed to different factors such as personality factors, marital status and age (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

Apart from age and marital status, personality factors are major sources of contribution that may lead to burnout. Motivation, as a personal attribute, provides bases of good performance in real life, and teachers would use this factor not only to accelerate the rate of their progress, but also to prevent the burnout syndrome. On the other hand, anxiety may have different sources. Anxiety, as an impeding factor, may affect both students and teachers performance and a neat solution to this problem is required in educational settings. The fact that motivation and anxiety highly affect practitioners in educational setting has been overlooked in the current body of research in this area. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the relationship between anxiety, motivation, and burnout syndrome among Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers.

Presently, human beings are greatly immersed in their jobs not paying attention to the changes that happen to their bodies and souls. Teachers are also involving in this enterprise and experiencing burnout syndrome in their profession after passing a limited period. Failure, loss of hope, and stress are not context- dependent issues, and all teachers around the world may feel them truly within their job but treating with such issues may vary across contexts and lead to actual consequences. Burnout may bring about both physical (e.g. headaches, insomnia, fatigue) and mental (e.g. depression, anxiety) problems (Huebner & Huberty, 1984). Since teachers play underlying roles in learning process, their behavior influences level of learners' academic achievement (Ingersoll, 2001). In other words, by eliminating the basis and root of the factors leading to teachers' burnout, not only the quality of teaching will increase but also educational setting will be enriched by productivity, motivation, and effectiveness (Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005).

1.1 Statement of the Problem and Significance of the Study

Although various research studies are done in different dimensions of teacher burnout (Chaplain, 2008; Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006; Levy, Fields, & Jablonski, 2006), the lack of a comprehensive model, proposing the potential relationship among anxiety, motivation, and burnout is evident. Nowadays, the importance of teacher is undeniable. This fact suggests that any related issue to teachers' behavior and capabilities would affect directly students' achievements. Research suggests that teaching is one of the top five most stressful carriers, facing burnout in their job (Coombe, 2008), and investigating its roots and consequences could enormously increase the quality of job, satisfaction, and effectiveness.

Therefore, this study puts its emphasis on investigating the relationship among anxiety, motivation, and burnout syndrome among teachers, which is the most influential part of education systems in language learning contexts. Unfortunately, this factor has long been overlooked. The teaching competence of language teachers is often evaluated by their content knowledge and degree without paying enough attention to their important psychosocial traits such as motivation, attitude, interest, self-regulatory power, self-confidence, income, respect or admiration for their particular personal abilities, knowledge and skill, social prestige, and so forth. As English is taught as the foreign language in Iran, English teachers have to carry the heavy burden of effective teaching of English in an artificial educational setting without great exposure of the language learners to the authentic target language situations. Therefore, many language teachers may lose their internal motivation and suffer from great anxiety in too much hard and laborious process of language teaching, which may inevitably lead to great burnout and exhaustion. Under such a heavily laborious

situation, they may lose their great enthusiasm for effective teaching process, and even the situation may get much worse in case of insufficient income.

Thus, the present study is an attempt to scrutinize the possible significant relationship among the three variables of Iranian English teachers' burnout, their anxiety, and motivation in their teaching process in Neyshabur, one city in Khorasan E Razavi, Iran. The participated teachers were from several high schools in Neyshabur-Iran. The topic of this research is significant theoretically, methodologically, and practically. Theoretically, it provides insights to the phenomena of burnout and widens our understanding in this regard (Akbari & Moradkhani, 2010). Methodologically, it identifies the possible relationship between teachers' characteristics and psychological mood, which may turn to burnout (Bruce, 2009). And practically, it proposes the possible solutions to prevent or eradicate the potential sources of burnout syndrome. Finally, it may help both students and teachers to achieve their goals in a peaceful and energetic environment. The findings are of significance since the relationship between nonlinguistic paradigms of language teachers and their teaching quality and burnout was statistically investigated. The findings suggest the significance and necessity of focusing too much on psychological traits of language teachers, namely motivation and anxiety and removing these variables through designing and administrating effective teacher-training programs.

1.2 Research Questions

The questions of this study are as follows:

1. Is there any significant relationship between teachers' motivation and teachers' burnout?

2. Is there any significant relationship between teachers' anxiety and teachers' burnout?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The researchers proposed the following hypotheses for this research:

H01. There is not any significant relationship between teachers' motivation and teachers' burnout.

H02. There is not any significant relationship between teachers' anxiety and teachers' burnout.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1 Teachers' Anxiety Level

The possible relationship between anxiety and education has been investigated by many different researchers (Horwitz, 2001; Young, 1991). Since anxiety in not bound with learning process, it could be also stated that teaching a new concept is stressful. As it was asserted by Brown (2001), teaching a new language is very demanding because there are a lot of variables that may stem from psychological, cognitive, and affective areas. Human learning is considered as one of the most complicated issues that is extremely difficult to determine exactly the process taking place during learning. Therefore, it would be difficult to decide about the theory of teaching that should be used in educational contexts. In fact, cognitive, emotional, biological, and the other variables significantly influence one's success or failure in learning. In fact, a theory of teaching cannot dismiss the importance of teachers, and also their anxiety as an affecting factor in the process of learning.

Language learning, of course, is influenced by a variety of variables among which teachers' anxiety level may affect the whole process of learning. Even though the teachers may know what anxiety is and we all have experienced feeling of anxiousness, anxiety is still not easy to define in a simple sentence (Brown, 2000). Anxiety, as defined by Scovel (1978), is associated with feeling of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry. Anxiety is generally seen as a psychological concept. A distinction is always made between trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situational specific anxiety. Scovel (1978) defines trait (i.e., characteristic) anxiety as a more permanent predisposition to be anxious. Some people are predictably and generally anxious about many things.

It is a stable predisposition to become anxious in a wide range of situations. It represents the tendency to react in an anxious manner. It is an aspect of personality. At a more momentary, or situational level, state anxiety is experienced in relation to some particular event or act. State anxiety is an immediate, transitory emotional experience with immediate cognitive effects. It is a combination of trait and situation specific anxiety. It arouses by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking.

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2.2 Teachers' Burnout

A collection of these consequences may cause the concept of burnout for teachers. Freudenberger (1974) defines burnout as a "symptom of emotional depletion and a loss of motivation and commitment" (p. 162). Majority of studies suggest environmental factors along with personality factors as the sources of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). In fact, Skaalvik and Skaalvik, (2010) asserted that burnout is defined as a result of long-term occupational stress, especially among human service workers such as teachers (Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003). A lot of teachers worldwide may experience stress in their work (Jennett et al., 2003), and only a limited number of them may cope unsuccessfully with stress, which leads to burnout (Jennett et al., 2003). Due to the statistics in USA, about 25 percent of novice educators are not willing to continue their job after three years, and by the fifth year this increases to 40% (Milner & Woolfolk Hoy, 2003).

In line with other studies, Kyriacou (2001) suggested a detailed list of the factors leading to burn out such as lack of motivation in students, unwanted changes, time pressure, being evaluated by others, administration, and lack of self-esteem. Moreover, researchers try to eliminate the factors, which lead to teachers' burnout because teachers are more in danger of facing burnout (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), and burnout is very common among teachers around the world (Rudow, 1999).

Teachers, due to the special context they work in, face various situations that lead to stress and tension. As it was asserted by Blasé (1982), this stress in educational setting could reduce the job satisfaction and effective teaching process. Actually, main sources of burnout are divided into two groups Environmental Factors and Personality Factors. Bryne (1994) investigated poor classroom climate, low salary, lack of time, and little support from superiors as the main causes of teachers' burnout. Moreover, societal factors may be due to erosion of public respect for and support of teachers (Zhang & Sapp, 2009). Self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-concept as major sample of personality factors paly an undeniable role in teacher burnout (Abdolzadeh, 2014).

The state of the art of research relationship exist between teachers' burnout and other constructs (Cano-Garcia, Padilla-Munoz, & Carrasco-Ortiz, 2005; Pishghadam & Sahebjam, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). In the following, some of these research studies have been mentioned. In a study, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) concentrated on burnout. They found that burnout and engagement were negatively related. Besides, the relationship between teachers' level of burnout and quality of teaching and learning in an educational setting was studied by Ghonsooli and Raeesi (2012) among 100 Iranian male and female EFL teachers. They concluded that a weak relationship between burnout and creativity exists.

With having a psychological view to what have been done, it could be understood that teachers act not only as an instructor but also as someone who can help student and support them in their academic performance and personal life (Abdollahzade, 2014). If burnout happens to teachers, a number of shortcomings may appear such as reduction of motivation and class productivity, leading to reduction of success , development of a negative attitude toward the students (Williams & Burden, 2007), lower tolerance towards probable irregularities (Bryne, 1994) and significant increase in stress (Black, 2001). Various strategies are applicable to cope with teachers' burnout, which were suggested by Kyriacou (2001) such as providing adequate resources and facilities as well as clear job descriptions and expectations. Moreover, there should be open lines of communication between teachers and administrators to provide administrative support.

Actually, Pyhältö, Pietarinen, and Salmela-Aro (2011) revealed that social working conditions play an important role in this area:

"The teachers reported a range of different kinds of events and episodes causing destructive frictions and negative experiences in their work. The teachers perceived social interactions as being the most challenging and problematic part of their work in terms of burnout, on several different levels in their school community. Experienced burdening was situated in social interactions with the members of the school community" (p.1105).

Teaching is among those jobs with the highest levels of stress (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Some researchers have investigated probable causes of stress and its consequences (Kyriacou, 2001; Liu & Ramsey, 2008). In a research study by Abdolzadeh (2014), the probable causes of teacher burnout in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms were investigated. Burnout in that study refers to the negative results, connected to lasting job frustration. Teachers are engaged in teaching to students and establishing a connection with the management of human behaviors, teachers have one of the top five most frustrating careers in the world (Coombe, 2008). Therefore, teachers' burnout is one of

the major problems to be resolved as it highly influences learners as well as teachers. Abdolzadeh (2014) attempted to provide the definition, historical background, and the reasons for burnout. In addition, the harms of burnout cycle on English language teachers along with the approaches to remove them were investigated in his study. The results showed that these stress reduction activities would not be enough, and teachers need to make other important alterations in their teaching approaches. In another study by Lima (2003), the results showed that the recent deep economic, political, social, and cultural changes have affected work organizations, especially burnout syndromes in teachers.

The emergence of different side effects, which have been brought about to occupational health, has a strict relationship with psychosocial factors and workers' performance at workplace. In this regards, burnout syndrome can occur when the balance between the demands and requirements is violated (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), and major conflicts between individual motivations and institutional values come to existence (Leiter, Bakker, & Maslach, 2014).

Research substantiates the issue of teacher burnout in different countries and diverse educational contexts (Durr et al., 2014; Marek et al., 2017). Moreover, the evidence indicates teacher burnout negatively affects teachers' self-efficacy, self-confidence, motivation, self-esteem, productivity, professional engagement, and job satisfaction (Gold & Roth, 2013; Herman et al., 2018; Larrivee, 2012; Marek et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). As teachers have to constantly modulate their social interactions with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents, they are continually exposed to "emotional labor" in their career (Xu, 2013), and this can lead to an ever-growing likelihood of teacher burnout. Emotional labor and burnout stem from the reformed educational system, sabotaging teachers' instructional consciousness. That is, new systems encourage an obsession with satisfying the needs of the administrators and policy-makers instead of attending to the needs of their students (Dworkin & Tobe, 2014).

Additionally, the effectiveness of the instruction is mostly gauged by students' test results, while these results lack sufficient contextual sensitivity. The sources of teacher burnout have been theorized and studied at three different levels, namely, organizational, individual, and transactional (Chang, 2009; Durr et al., 2014). Organizational factors that influence teacher burnout include poor classroom climate, role conflict, low salary, large class size, students' misbehavior, inadequate administrative support, work overload, job mobility, demanding paperwork, excessive testing, and role-ambiguity (Durr et al., 2014; Gold & Roth, 2013; Larrivee, 2012; Marek et al., 2017; Xu, 2013). Individual components that contribute to teacher burnout include age, experience, education level, language, gender, or socioeconomic status (Chang, 2009; Gold & Roth, 2013). Finally, Chang (2009) asserted that transactional factors also provoke burnout. Transactional factors consist of interactions between individual factors and organizational and/or social factors. Chang (2009) cites teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes, and beliefs as examples of transactional factors. The transactional level has gathered moment-tum in educational research by offering much fodder for research on burnout with a focus on contextual interactions. From a scientific standpoint, this shift of focus proves out, given the existence of ample evidence asserting the central role of interactional or contextual variables in educational settings.

2.3 Teachers' Motivation

Defining teacher's motivation, as one of the most often-researched topics in the field of psychology and education, motivation has been generally viewed as an energy or drive that moves people to do something by nature. However, given the complexity of motivation, there seems to be no consensus in the understanding of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Therefore, researchers were rather selective in their study focus by applying a range of motivation theories. Williams and Burden (1997) differentiated two aspects of motivation. The first is the initiation of motivation, which is concerned with the reasons for doing or deciding to do something. The second dimension is concerned with sustaining motivation that refers to the effort for sustaining or persisting in doing something. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) identified two dimensions of defining motivation on which most researchers would agree. They are concerned with direction and magnitude of human behavior. Accordingly, motivation specifies the reason why people decide to do something, how long people are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue the activity.

As for teacher motivation, Sinclair (2008) defined it in terms of attraction, retention, and concentration. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) highlighted the two dimensions of teacher motivation in accordance with their conceptions of motivation, namely, the motivation to teach and the motivation to remain in the profession. Their review of literature came to a conclusion of four featured components of teacher motivation as prominent intrinsic motivation, which was closely related to inherent interest of teaching; social contextual influences, relating to the impact of external

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conditions and constraints; temporal dimension with emphasis on lifelong commitment; and demotivating factors, emanating from negative influences.

Given the existing definitions of teacher motivation, the second dimension identified by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) is much inclusive of the persistence and effort with teaching profession, which constitutes the second and third dimensions of Sinclair's definition. Therefore, teacher motivation refers to the reasons that emanate from individuals' intrinsic values to choose for teaching and sustaining teaching. The intensity of teacher motivation is indicated by their actual efforts, influenced by a number of contextual factors.

2.4 Teacher Career Motivation

In terms of teacher career motivation, the proposed influencing factors are multifaceted and multidimensional. In this regards, in China, the government tried to take the responsibility for providing chances for teachers. However, the transition from a planned economy to a market economy brought a dramatic change in the educational systems (Zhang, Hu, & Pope, 2002). Nowadays, state-guaranteed jobs are no longer secured as before.

The adoption of such employment system entails the freedom in choosing jobs for students. Nevertheless, students should make them ready and prepared for achieving the proper amount of motivation for facing their challenges. The students' motivation, to a large extend, stems from their teachers' teaching styles. Therefore, if the educational system authorities try to eliminate the recruitment barriers, teachers show more interest in their teaching jobs, which may provide better future for students (Yang & Wu, 1999). Nevertheless, as education is influenced by economy, the economic transition leads to the higher education expansion (Li, Morgan, & Ding 2008), which has enabled flows of well-educated and competent people to the areas where the economy is better.

The central and local governments have different motivators for teachers and instructors. The differences are due to the scope of the strategies that are applied along with the special economic circumstances. Nevertheless, with regard to special and inclusive education, the factors influencing teaching choice are even more complex. Considering teaching as low status profession as well as the ineffective education system in some societies leads to the lack of respect for teaching profession and teachers' great demotivation and further attrition (Day & Sachs, 2004). In particular, inclusive education has placed huge responsibilities on the teachers who are increasingly frustrated by the challenges due to the widening the gap between the high expectations of inclusion policy and the low capacity for implementation. Concerning the models that have been consequently suggested for improvement of teachers and all the practitioners in pedagogical setting, the following is one of the most comprehensive ones, which is suggested by WDR institute (2018)

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Synthesis principle	Where this fails	Models that identify a mechanism behind this failure	Approaches that address the modeled mechanism
Provide individually targeted and repeated teacher training, with follow-up coaching.	Much teacher training is one-off, with little to no follow-up coaching in the classroom.	*Simple optimization (by government) with information failure:* Follow-up coaching is more costly than centrally delivered training, and centrally delivered training may give the impression of effectiveness by changing teacher knowledge but not practice. General pedagogical training may be cheaper than training in specific techniques, and evidence on relative effectiveness is recent.	In India, a program with limited preservice but repeated follow-up for community teachers led to sizable learning gains. In the United States, programs associated with a specific pedagogical technique were twice as effective as general pedagogical training.
Pitch teaching to the level of the student.	In many countries, most students fall far behind the curriculum, and, facing large, heterogeneous classes, teachers have difficulty teaching at a level that allows students to learn.	*Information failure:* Policy makers may have an imperfect understanding of how little many students are learning. *Behavioral (mental models):* Teachers may believe that lower-performing learners cannot succeed; curriculums may be optimistically pitched higher than most students can keep up with.	In India and Kenya, reorganizing classes by ability improved learning. In India, complementing teachers with dynamic computer-assisted learning programs that adapt to learners' ability levels improved math ability. Teachers receive explicit guidance to teach students at their level.
Strengthen teacher motivation by incentivizing actions that are within teachers' capacity and that are essential to learning.	In many systems, teachers have few incentives (financial or professional) for good performance beyond their intrinsic motivation.	*Principal-agent:* If the education system signals that learning is not valued, teachers will not have the same incentives as students and parents have.	Teacher financial incentives have been effective in countries with high absenteeism, such as India and Kenya.

Figure 1. Models of Human Behavior

2.5 Empirical Background

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) reported that approximately 20% of comprehensive school teachers in England found teaching to be very stressful or extremely stressful. Borg and Riding (1991) found even higher results in the stress levels of Maltese teachers, with almost 34% of Maltese teachers, rating their jobs as either very stressful or extremely stressful. Ferguson (2012) citing the work of Manthei and Gilmore (1996) claimed that over 26% of New Zealander intermediate teachers felt that teaching was either very or extremely stressful. Kyriacou (2001) mentioned that the level of teaching stress led to teaching being categorized as one of high stressful occupations parallel to other stressful jobs like the police, the prison service, air traffic controllers, doctors, and nurses.

In line with other research studies, Aslrasouli and Pour Vahid (2014) investigated teacher anxiety among practicing EFL teachers in Iran and identified different sources of anxiety among male and female teachers with regard to their experience. They found that 57.65% of teachers had the feelings of anxiety in one way or another. Furthermore, of five main categories, Interpersonal Relations had the highest impact whereas Employment Structure seemed to have the lowest effect on anxiety. Other categories, Language Proficiency and Knowledge, Facilities and Resources and Other Factors, exercised moderate effects on teacher anxiety. Moreover, they found weak and negative relationship between years of experience and the amount of tension experienced by teachers. However, no meaningful correlation was found between gender and occupational anxiety.

Teaching is among those jobs with the highest levels of stress (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Many research studies have investigated causes of stress and its consequences (Kyriacou, 2000, 2001; Liu & Ramsey, 2008).

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In a research study, Abdolzadeh (2014) investigated causes of teacher burnout in ELT classrooms. Burnout in that study refers to negative result connected to lasting job frustration. As teachers are engaged in teaching to students and arranging a connection with the management and many other issues all of which are related to human service and relation, teachers offer one of the top five most frustrating careers in the world (Coombe, 2008). Teachers' burnout is one of the problems to be considered as it influences learners in addition to teachers. Abdolzadeh (2014) attempted to provide the definition, historical background, and the reasons for burnout in additions to the harms of burnout cycle on ELT teachers and approaches to prevent from teacher burnout. Of course, these stress reduction activities would not be enough and teachers need to make other important alterations in themselves. In order to bridge this gap, the present study tends to investigate the relationship between teachers 'burnout and anxiety in Iranian context of language teaching.

Lima (2003) believed that deep economic, political, social, and cultural changes that have happened in societies; have affected work organizations and forms. These changes inevitably increase burnout syndrome among teachers. In this regards, burnout syndrome can occur when the balance between the demands and requirements is violated (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), and conflicts between values and individual motivations and institutional comes to existence (Leiter, Bakker, & Maslach, 2014).

Teacher motivation is assumed to be affected by their metacognitive awareness (Efklides, 2011). It is claimed that teacher metacognition affects the procedure of teacher teaching and student learning (Prytula, 2012). In educational contexts, metacognition is used to explain the process through which teachers learn to understand their thinking, considering that if they are able to regulate their thinking effectively, they will be better teachers (Perfect & Schwartz, 2002). Thus, metacognition can facilitate students' learning and within the last decade, there has been a growing body of research on the importance of metacognition in successful instruction (Jiang, Ma, & Gao, 2016).

As established by the background presented, there is growing research on each of these variables; however, the research studies have all taken a modular perspective on them and few studies have thoroughly evaluated student and teacher factors together (Bernaus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009). Therefore, there is still a need to investigate the interrelatedness of all these factors and examine these interrelations through an all-inclusive approach to see how they work together to affect teachers' teaching and students' learning in EFL settings (Karimi & Ziaabadi, 2019).

Considering the detrimental effects teacher burnout can have on educational quality and effectiveness, prevention and management of teacher burnout are imperative. An examination of the research literature on sources and remedies of burnout confirms the existence of effective coping strategies to be adopted by the individual teachers and preventive measures to be taken by their employers (Herman et al., 2018; Larrivee, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). However, the demarcation between the causes and effects of burnout is not entirely clear-cut. Most notably, there is the causation or correlation dilemma. For instance, there is converging evidence demonstrating the critical role teacher self-efficacy plays in teacher burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014).

Still, it is not clear if poor teacher self-efficacy is a product of burnout or a predictor of it. In the same vein, studies have found that teachers with low self-efficacy are more predisposed to burnout (Chang, 2009; Durr et al., 2014; Larrivee, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). On the other hand, a high level of burnout may lead to low self-efficacy (Gold & Roth, 2013; Herman et al., 2018; Marek et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). While there is robust evidence suggesting the high correlation between these two variables, the causational direction is not fully understood. Nevertheless, it should be noted that teacher burnout is a process, not a single occurrence. Thus, from a realistic standpoint, the efforts should be devoted to controlling burnout instead of seeking agents to exterminate it once and for all. It should also be noted, as discussed earlier, that teaching has been and will be a stressful profession to some extent, and symptoms of burnout may exhibit themselves in varying forms and degrees. Even so, equipping teachers with requisite resources to address these symptoms is conceivably the most efficient path ahead (Mahmoodi, 2017)

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the Study

Since no treatment was implemented in this study, and the relationship among the variables was calculated through regression and correlational analyses, the design of the study is correlational. Due to the limited number of teachers in our context, the random sampling was not possible to implement; therefore, the participants were selected conveniently. All the participants of this study were the teachers, who had the experience of teaching English as a foreign language to the students at different high schools in Neyshabur-Iran.

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3.2 Participants

The sample of this study consists of 80 male and female English teachers at Iranian high schools in Neyshabur. All of them were selected conveniently, and they sat for motivation and anxiety tests along with burnout Inventory. It is necessary to say that all the participants had at least 10 years experiences of teaching English at schools and language institutes. The participants' field of study was the same (i.e. Language Teaching), and they had participated in teacher training courses. With regard to the existing limitations, the majority of the participants were male language teachers, and the minority (less than half) was female English teachers. Table 1 shows the number and percent of the participants concerning gender.

Table 1. Distribution of the participants concerning gender

Participants	Number	Percent
Male	48	60
Female	32	40

3.3 Instruments

A modified version of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, which was proposed by Gardner (2004) to examine the level of teachers' motivation, was utilized in this study. This questionnaire comprised of 30 items, and 15 minutes were provided for the participants to answer the questions. The reliability index of the questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's alpha (a = 0.90). Besides, for the other part of the data collection, the second questionnaire was administered. This questionnaire included 46 items, measuring the main sources of anxiety. It was developed by Ferguson (2011) and was used for assessing teachers' anxiety in classrooms. The questionnaire was designed on a 5-point scale of not at all stressful, mildly stressful, moderately stressful, very stressful, and extremely stressful. The instrument proved to be very reliable. Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was calculated by Ferguson and found to be (a = 0.951). The allotted time to answer the questionnaire was 20 minutes.

In addition, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981) was used for investigating the existence of burnout among language teachers. For increasing the reliability and validity of the teachers' burnout questionnaire, the newly validated Persian version, developed and validated in the Iranian academic setting was used (Sepehri Shamloo, Hashemian, Khoshsima, & Shahverdi, 2017). This questionnaire consisted of 25 questions. The time of answering this questionnaire was 10 minutes. The questionnaire was checked in terms of validity in two different approaches, namely expert validity and construct validity. Besides, the reliability of the questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.7$) was checked by calculating Cronbach's Alpha in this study.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

After reviewing the literature and finding the gaps, the process of collecting data, developing the instruments of data collection, and data analyses were planned. Based on the topic of the study and its importance, a group of language teachers was selected and was prepared for the present investigation. The goal of the research study was kept untold, and they just were asked to fill out the three indicated questionnaires. In order to prevent the fake data, the researchers asked for voluntarily participation, and no obligatory participation was found among the teachers who participated in the study. The questionnaires were distributed among the teachers' participants, who had been invited and gathered in a conference hall in one high school in Neyshabur. Prior to distributing the three questionnaires, the researchers appreciated the participants' voluntary participation and their great contribution to the improvement of the academic project. Then, the questionnaires were distributed among the participants. The participants were fully briefed on the questions in each questionnaire and the way they had to answer the questions. In order to answer the research questions, the participants of the study sat for three different questionnaires namely: anxiety, motivation, and burnout. The place of the study was well prepared, and the participants answered the questionnaires in one- shot time. In fact, after experiencing some years of teaching English, the psychological states and attitudes of teachers often change. To this purpose, the participants were asked to fill the motivation questionnaire, showing their motivation toward their teaching job. The more they were interested, the higher scores they got on the test. Similarly, all the participants filled

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the anxiety and burnout questionnaires. The allotted time to answer the three questionnaires was 45 minutes, as explained in detail in the instrument section.

3.5 Data Analysis

After collecting the data and entering them into the computer in soft version, the obtained scores of the filled questionnaires by teachers were analyzed through using SPSS version 21 software package. Then, in order to find the answer of the research questions an in line with the purpose of the study, a Multiple Regression analysis was run. Multiple regression analysis paves the way for a better understanding of the predictive power of independent variables of the study for predicting the dependent variable, based on the existing correlations among all variables. In addition, the predictive powers of different variables of the study along with their correlations were calculated. Before this phase, the descriptive statistics of the participants was calculated, and the descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, maximums, and minimums were calculated.

4. Results

Success or failure of the teachers in educational setting is always tied with their knowledge and experiences; many studies attempted to explore the most effective factors on teachers' performance (Hashemi, 2008; Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009; Tamblyn 2000).

To reach a unanimous result, the issue was analyzed from different perspectives, and different factors were investigated (i.e. anxiety, motivation, and burnout). Accordingly, the present study was an attempt to assess the relationship between some factors, which lead to teachers' burnout. It is necessary to mention that the normality of the data was checked using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and the p value was more than ($P > .05$), showing a normal data for further analyses.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for teacher's burnout, anxiety, and motivation

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Burnout	20.3875	4.11694	80
Anxiety	28.8000	8.14334	80
Motivation	20.0250	6.09207	80

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the participants. The number of the participants was 80 and their burnout, anxiety, and motivation were examined. In Table 2, descriptive information of the collected data such as means along with standard deviations are shown, which enables the reader to see the existing differences between the participants and the distribution of the data. Since the aim of the study is to examine the correlation among teachers' burnout, anxiety, and motivation, a Pearson correlation test was run. The correlation coefficient indexes of each two variables are shown in Table 3.

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Table 3. Correlations among teachers' burnout, anxiety, and motivation

		Burnout	Anxiety	Motivation
Pearson Correlation	burnout	1.000	.765	-.660
	Anxiety	.765	1.000	-.879
	motivation	-.660	-.879	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	burnout	.	.000	.000
	Anxiety	.000	.	.000
	Motivation	.000	.000	.

Based on the obtained results, the correlation coefficient between motivation and burnout is significant (r =-.66, P<.05, Sig. 2 tailed), implying that as the amount of motivation increases, the amount of burnout decreases. Therefore, the first null hypothesis concerning no significant relationship between language teachers' burnout and anxiety is strongly rejected. Based on the findings shown in Table 3, the correlation coefficient between burnout and anxiety is (r = .76, P <.05, Sig. 2 tailed), which presents a high level of correlation between the two variables. It means that an increase in one variable provides an increase in the other variable. As the anxiety increases, the possibility of burnout increases. Therefore, the second null hypothesis concerning no significant relationship between language teachers' anxiety and burnout is strongly rejected.

On the other hand, the same pattern holds for the correlation coefficient between the participants' anxiety and motivation in the opposite direction. The correlation coefficient equals to (r = -.87, P <.05, Sig. 2 tailed), which is significant and shows that as the level of motivation increases, the level of anxiety decreases. It is notable that the correlation coefficient between all the variables of the study is statistically significant at P < 0.5. To investigate the predictive potentials of the variables, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Model summary of multiple regressions

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	Df 1	Df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.765[a]	.586	.575	2.68322	.586	54.489	2	77	.000

a. Predictors: motivation, anxiety

b. Dependent Variable: burnout

Table 4 serves to show the results of the analyses by the proposed model. As indicated in Table 4, R Square is (R *Square* = .58). Burnout is the dependent variable, which can be predicted by the independent variables (motivation and anxiety) in the model. In other words, 58.6% of the participants' burnout can be predicted by their motivation and anxiety. The findings show that there is a significant relationship among the variables included in the study. Table 5 shows the results of the analysis of the variance among the variables.

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Table 5. Analysis of variance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	784.612	2	392.306	54.489	.000
	Residual	554.376	77	7.200		
	Total	1338.988	79			

Taking into account the aforementioned results of ANOVA, we can say that there is a significant relationship between the dependent (burnout) variable and independent variables of the study (anxiety and motivation) at *P* = .000. Table 6 shows Correlations Coefficients among the variables.

Table 6. Correlation coefficients among burnout, anxiety, and motivation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
Burnout	7.786	4.192		1.857	.067			
Anxiety	.411	.078	.814	5.299	.000	.765	.517	.389
Motivation	.038	.104	.056	.362	.718	-.660	.041	.027

As indicated in Table 6, there is a significant correlation between burnout and anxiety at ($p < .05$). In order to find the strongest unique contribution of each independent variable in the model, the Standardized Coefficients under the box headed Beta was checked. Anxiety had the strongest unique statistically significant contribution to the model (Beta =.81). Likewise, the participants' motivation had a great contribution to the model (*Sig* = .000, *P* < .05), but unlike the anxiety, there was not any significant correlation between the variables (Sig = .36, *P* <.05). A detailed analysis of correlation was achieved by considering the correlation column into account, the section headed the Part correlations provides the information about how much of the dependent variable (burnout) is explained by the other independent variables. In fact, the largest amount of part correlation belonged to the anxiety *(alpha* = .38), followed by motivation (*alpha* =.02). Figure 1 shows the histogram related to the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

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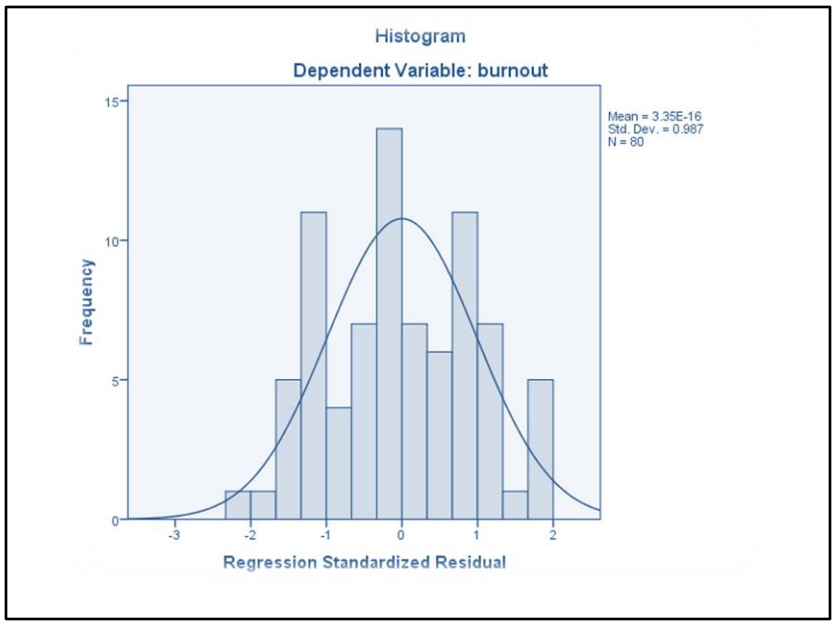


Figure 1. Histogram

The plot of residuals with the superimposed curve is developed from the dependent variable and the two predictive variables, showing that residuals are normally distributed among all levels of the dependent variable, and the assumption of normality is satisfied. The common boundaries between the bars confirm the continuity of the data, and the dense concentration of predictive variables has the greatest impact on burnout. In case the residuals are not distributed at all levels of the dependent variable, the assumption of normality is violated.

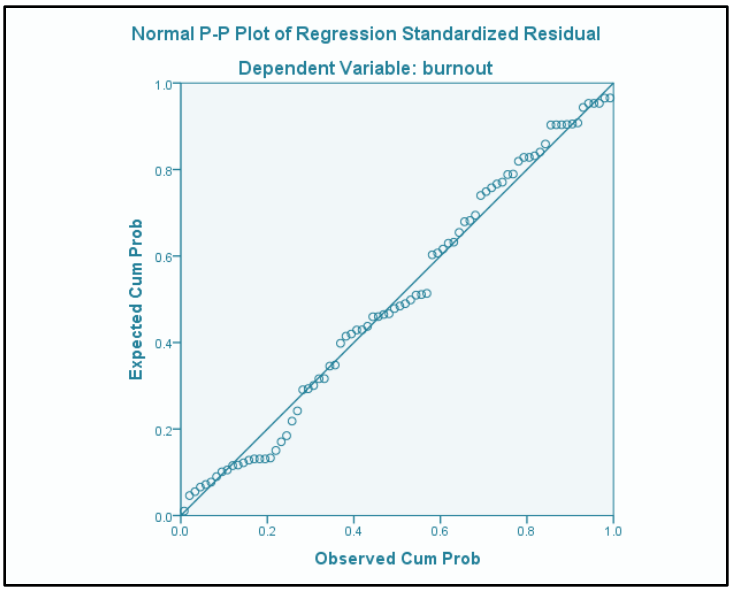


Figure 2. Normal plot of regression

The normal probability plot of the residuals is shown in figure 2. The points in the plot are observed residuals, and the straight line shows the normal distribution of the residuals. The closer the point to the straight line, the better normal

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distribution of residuals exists in the model. In this case, the plot seems to be close to normal. With an overall assessment of the proposed model in the study and concerning the Normal Plot of Regression, an acceptable model has been suggested for the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

5. Discussion

The present study was an attempt to scrutinize the significant relationship between Iranian English teachers' burnout and their anxiety level. In addition, it explored the probable significant relationship between Iranian English teachers 'motivation and their burnout. Finally, it explored the probable significant relationship between Iranian language teachers' anxiety and their gender.

Based on the results of the study, both motivation and anxiety are the important elements in teachers' performance, which should be focused in any pedagogical settings. Concerning the first research hypothesis, stating that there is no significant relationship between teachers' motivation and burnout, the findings proved a significant correlation between these two variables. However, the correlation that is negative shows that by increasing the motivation in teachers, their level of burnout will be reduced, which is in accordance with the statement by Jennett, Heater, Harris, Mesibow and Gary (2003), who thought that there exists a lot of teachers all over the world, who may experience chronic stress in their work, which may lead to burnout. The idea of coping with stress is in direct positive relationship with teachers' motivation, eliminating the traces of extreme burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Leiter, Bakker, & Maslach, 2014).

As it was found in the reports published in USA, about 25 percent of novice educators are not willing to continue their job after three years, and by the fifth year, this increases to 40% (Milner & Hoy, 2003). The reluctance of novice teachers stems the lack of strong motivation for teaching. As the time passes, many teachers think that they are doing routine activities. They may lose their motivation, which is a good condition for manifestation of burnout syndrome. Kyriacou (2001) considered lack of motivation in students, unwanted changes, time pressure, being evaluated by others, and lack of self-esteem as the major factors, leading to teachers' burnout.

Concerning the second hypothesis of the study stating that there is no significant relationship between teachers' anxiety and teachers' burnout, a significant correlation was proved between the variables. With regards to the findings of the present study, it was asserted previously by Shillingford, Samir, and Ngazimbi (2012) that there are many factors contributing to teachers' anxiety such as gender, experience, school type, physical condition of the class and school, teachers' personality, students' characteristics, teachers' relationship with administrators and students' parents, the teaching context, the grade level of teaching, family concerns, and monetary problems changes in national or local curriculum. The significant relationship between teachers' burnout and some psychological traits has been also investigated by Mahmoodi (2017).

Regarding the third research hypothesis, stating that there is not any significant relationship between teachers' anxiety and gender, the findings proved that they affect each other significantly and positively. This means that particular gender of teachers is more at risk of having anxiety in their professional life. These findings are in accordance with those of the previous body of research, asserted by Dang and Gupta (1994), who explored the effect of work set-up, behavior pattern and gender on various role stressors of lecturers. They found that only "work set-up" accounted for significant differences in stress level. What's more, it was found that female teachers suffer from more stress in comparison with their male counterparts.

6. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the probable significant relationship among teachers' anxiety, motivation, and their level of burnout. It can be concluded that the relationship among the variables of the study were significant. Based on the findings, the relationship between teachers' burn out and motivation as well as teachers' burnout and anxiety was significant. The correlation coefficient between anxiety and burnout was significant, positive, and relatively high in value (r = .718). It means that the more stress and anxiety the teachers have, the more burnout they would experience in their teaching profession, debilitating the teaching efficiency and effectiveness. In case of motivation, the correlation was significant, but negative. In other words, the less motivated the teachers are, the more burnout they may experience in their teaching process. Besides, based on the findings, the most significant contribution to the prediction model belonged to the teachers' anxiety. The findings of the study suggest that the teachers' motivation should be increased to decrease their anxiety as well as burnout. Something which is inferred from the findings of this study is that language teachers' capabilities and skillfulness cannot be only assessed by their content

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language knowledge, and other nonlinguistic psychosocial factors should be seriously taken into account by the language teaching authorities, sponsors, and programmers. The findings suggest the importance of focusing too much on removing these psychological barriers to improve the effectiveness of language teaching programs and decreasing language teachers' burnout.

It is recommended to administer some teacher training courses, which can enhance language teachers' motivation for effective and updated teaching programs. In addition, administrating some related workshops to reduce the teachers' stress and anxiety is suggested. In these workshops, effective techniques to remove debilitating stress and teaching anxiety can be introduced and taught to the teachers. Language teachers can be also encouraged to read some effective materials to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem, which inevitably decrease their stress of the teaching process. The present study had the limited number of participants, and only three variables of teachers' motivation, anxiety, and burnout were investigated. Moreover, the teachers' participants were teaching at a particular field of study (English Language Teaching) in Neyshabur-one city in Khorasn e Razavi province, which may influence the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, for future studies, the participation of many more teachers of other languages are recommended. In addition, the comparison between the results of this study and other studies with different questionnaires and design are highly recommended. Finally using more complex methods of analysis such as structural equation modeling is recommended as well.

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