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A SEM Analysis of Predictive Factors Underlying Iranian EFL Teachers' Motivation

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Abstract

The researchers in the current study were pinpointing the factors contributing to teacher motivation. Among the myriad of variables which were deemed liable to influence teacher motivation, the researchers opted for teacher motivation, namely teacher burnout, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teaching style as the main predictive variables for teacher motivation. To conduct the study, a total of 200 English language teachers were asked to fill the study questionnaires. The target group encompassed teachers from both public school and language school contexts. The teachers were from both genders and came from a variety of age groups, years of experience, and language backgrounds. The participants were recruited from 10 cities across West Azarbaijan. To facilitate the data collection process, the questionnaires were sent to participants via Google forms link. The obtained data were analyzed through SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) to find the exact interrelationships between the four variables considered as predictors and teacher motivation. The findings pointed toward the existence of significant paths from burnout, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence (EI), and teaching styles toward teaching motivation. Additionally, EI, self-efficacy, and teaching styles were depicted to be significant predictors for burnout. The path from EI to self-efficacy was also significant. Furthermore, teaching style was significantly predicted by EI and self-efficacy. Finally, the findings obtained via interview analysis demonstrated that teacher motivation can be influenced by a variety of factors including low income and lack of environmental/social support, which can, in turn, lead to increased levels of burnout and hence diminish teaching efficacy and hence motivation. The implications of the findings are discussed throughout the paper.

Keywords: Burnout, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, teachers' motivation, teaching styles

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1. Introduction

Motivation has a multi-faceted nature and various factors can contribute to the development of proper motivation in individuals, based on different factors, including their needs, personal profile, and contextual issues. In this regard, Ayub, Gul, Malik, Sharjeel, and Rauf (2021, p.5), are of the view that "Motivation is an internal condition which is based on a person's perceptions and needs." It must also be noted that based on the recent theories of motivation, more attention must be paid to the dynamic nature of motivation (Larsen-Freeman, 2019) and hence motivational fluctuations (e.g., Waninge, Dörnyei, & De Bot, 2014), based on different learning contexts and situations, as well as the interaction between these contextual factors, task features, and individual characteristics.

There is a range of factors that can influence teaching quality and teaching success. Among the myriad of variables having a role in teaching mention can be made of teacher motivation, which is doubtlessly one of the key determiners in teaching success. According to Akhtar and Iqbal (2017, p.7), "motivation is a vital variable in educational institutions as it progresses staff performance and efficiency." Though studies on motivation abound in the literature, teacher motivation and its underlying factors is a fairly recent preoccupation for researchers within the field of English language teaching. Perhaps one of the major publications that gave rise to increased popularity of the concept of teacher motivation, and hence further research in this domain, was the book published by Richardson, Karabenick, and Watt (2014). The review of the book (Author[2] & Isavi, 2016) reveals that it

> can be regarded as an all-encompassing introduction to teacher motivation as it provides a thorough literature and maps the future direction of the concept. Mainstream motivational theories as tailored to the study of teacher motivation, motivational processes, and changes to teacher motivation throughout their career have been detailed in the book, as well (p.134)

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, cited in Saleem, Gul, & Ahmad, 2021, p.7) refer to "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." Among the various factors having a role in sparking and augmenting teacher motivation, the researchers in the current study have chosen four key variables of burnout and self-efficacy (with a high frequency and comprehensive coverage in the literature), and emotional intelligence and teaching styles (with a comparatively lower degree of coverage but with an equal significance) as regards determining and predicting teachers' motivational levels.

It goes without saying that among the four factors referred to earlier, burnout has a reverse relationship with teacher motivation, while the other three (self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teaching styles) are said to have a direct relationship with teacher motivation. Regarding the correlation between burnout and teaching styles as the two prominent determiners of teacher motivation, Abos, Harens, Sevil, Aelterman, and Gonzalez's (2018) probe revealed that for coming up with increased levels of teacher motivation, burnout must be minimized. It was also indicated that adopting proper teaching styles plays a key role in escalating the level of teacher motivation.

As regards the adoption of appropriate teaching styles that can positively impact teacher motivation, reference can be made to the studies done by Reeve (2018) and Tang, Kikas, Pakarinen, Lerkkanen, Muotka, and Nurmi (2017). Reeve (2018) concluded that "Motivating teaching styles refer to the interpersonal tone and face-to-face behavior displayed by teachers when interacting with students" (Reeve, 2018, p.9). Tang et al. (2017), on the other hand, were of the view that teacher motivation can be influenced by both the teaching styles the teachers adopt for their own teaching and their real practices in the teaching context.

The principal objective of the current investigation was to pinpoint the factors contributing to teacher motivation. The current researchers were long concerned with the issue and hence were after determining the main factors underpinning and giving rise to teacher motivation. Hence, based on the research conducted thus far, they concluded that burnout and self-efficacy were among the factors that could directly predict teacher motivation. Among the other variables cited in the literature, the researchers opted for emotional intelligence and teaching styles.

2. Literature Review

In the recent years, teacher motivation has turned to a ubiquitous catchword among language teachers and teacher educators. While learner motivation was once a topic of primary interest and importance in the previous decades, today teacher motivation seems to have taken a more pivotal role in language education and research domains. A variety of factors have been found to be influential in determining the degree of teacher motivation (Bacova, 2022; Sah, 2016; Zhang, Yu, & Liu, 2019); besides, teacher motivation, in itself, influences different factors related to teaching success, including proper class management, rapport (e.g., Santisi, Magnano, Hichy, & Ramaci, 2014),

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innovation in teaching (e.g., Gokce, 2010), commitment to their own professional development (e.g., Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), and higher levels of student accomplishment (e.g., Akhtar & Iqbal, 2017; Hayden, 2011).

As researchers like Özbilen, Günay, and Yıldız (2020) and Hung (2020) contend, teacher motivation is not only a significant but also a mandatory requirement for achieving teaching success. Also, in Yıldız, Günay, and Özbilen's (2021) eyes, teacher motivation plays a seminal role in the burgeoning movement of one's teaching career and motivated teachers can prove to be highly efficacious in making the students motivated, as well. In like manner, researchers like Burić and Kim (2020), and Sari and Yetkiner (2020) refer to the close bonds between teacher motivation and career success.

As stated earlier, a myriad of factors can trigger teacher motivation and hence act like predictors for the degree of motivation in teachers. A quick glance at the literature on the issue reveals that among the manifold variables determining teachers' motivational profiles, constructs like burnout, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teaching styles are noteworthy. Though the first pair of factors (i.e., burnout and self-efficacy) have a more prominent part in this regard, the second two items (i.e., emotional intelligence and teaching styles) are also thought to both influence and be impacted by teacher motivation.

As Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2015) put it, burnout is among the most seminal factors that correlate with teacher motivation as well as student performance. Furthermore, it must be noted that burnout, by itself, is of a multidimentional nature, and a range of different issues can have an impact on the degree of burnout in an individual. For instance, emotional exhaustion as the first component of burnout construct can be caused by various factors such as age and teaching experience. The other two main components of burnout are depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment. High levels of burnout can lead to higher degrees of job dissatisfaction and hence lower teaching motivation (e.g., Shen, McCaughtry, Martin, Garn, Kulik, & Fahlman, 2015). Thus, in view of the reverse relationship prevailing between burnout and teacher motivation, performance and success (Davaribina & Ghobadi Asl, 2021), it goes without saying that to cater for higher levels of teacher motivation, attempts must be made to diminish burnout levels in teachers (Abos et al., 2018). In addition to teacher motivation, the teachers' psychological health and well-being are also said to be impacted by burnout (Gómez-Domínguez, Navarro-Mateu, Prado-Gascó, & Gómez-Domínguez, 2022).

Another key factor that might act as a determiner of teacher motivation is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, as an influential psychological construct in language teaching, is delineated as "an individual's capabilities to perform given actions" (Schunk, 2011, cited in Ma, 2022, p.1154). In another definition by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010), teacher self-efficacy is characterized as "an individual teacher's beliefs in his or her ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain educational goals" (p.9). As Allouh, Qadhi, Hasan, and Du (2021, p. 9) state, "several studies have demonstrated the importance of teachers' self-efficacy as the main factor of education quality and learning outcomes." Among the main investigations that have addressed this issue and claimed the go-togetherness between self-efficacy and teacher motivation, and hence teaching success, reference can be made to the studies conducted by Affouneh, Salha, and Khlaif (2020), Infurna and Luthar (2016), Lin and Zheng (2015). Also, as Sahertian and Soetjipto (2011) contend, self-efficacy beliefs can have an influence on the decisions made by the teachers throughout their teaching performance, and the activities and tasks they opt for in the class (Sahertian & Soetjipto, 2011).

According to Woodcock, Hitches, and Jones (2019), teachers with better self-efficacy beliefs can come up with more innovative ways of teaching, and hence feel more motivated and spark motivation in learners, as well. In line with other researchers' claims, higher degrees of teaching motivation and commitment to teaching also result from better self-efficacy beliefs (Bamburg, 2004; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2006; Klassen & Tze, 2014).

Self-efficacy also correlates well with other constructs such as teacher burnout which is also considered in the current study. Among the studies that have probed the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and burnout reference can be made to the investigations done by Avanzi et al. (2013), Adabi and Ghafournia (2020), Daniilidou, Platsidou, and Gonida (2020) and Savas, Bozgeyik, and Eser (2014).

The next rudimentary trait that is considered in the current study as a major determiner of teacher motivation is emotional intelligence (EI). Researchers have looked at the concept in diverse manners, and while some have called it a trait, others have claimed it to be an ability (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). Though different experts have defined the term in different ways, one of the most illustrative definitions has been offered by Awan, Anwar, and Farooq (2021) who maintain, "emotional intelligence is all about understanding our emotions and managing our behaviors. It enables the individuals to sense feelings of others, their views and to manage collective relationship with others."

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Researchers have long underscored the importance of EI as a contributing factor and a key constituent of both teaching and learning processes (e.g., Allen, MacCann, Matthews, & Roberts, 2014; Becker, Goetz, Morger, & Ranellucci 2014; Maamari & Majdalani, 2019). In addition, browsing the literature helps reveal that EI correlated well with other constructs like self-efficacy (e.g., Hassan, Jani, Som, Hamid, & Azizam, 2015), and classroom management efficacy (e.g., Wahyuddin, 2016). Numerous researchers (e.g., Abiodullah, Sameen, & Aslam, 2020; Krishnan & Awang, 2020; Ponmozhi & Ezhilbharathy, 2017) have underscored the importance of teachers' emotional intelligence for both their teaching success and students' accomplishments and improved performance. In this regard Akhtar (2021, p.5) asserted the "importance of emotional intelligence teacher in classroom process. The emotionally intelligent teacher has capability and resourceful skills to devise a classroom learning environment that subsequently enhance the students' academic and emotional performance."

Finally, it is averred in the current study that the implementation of optimal teaching styles is another major determiner of teachers' motivational level. Though a variety of definitions have been offered for teaching styles by different researchers, one of the most elucidating delineations is the one provided by Aldajah, Haik, and Moustafa (2014, p.6) where they claim that "teaching style is the mechanism of how we convey the knowledge and information to students." A number of researchers have highlighted the prominence of teaching styles as a contributing factor for teacher motivation, among whom reference can be made to Khandaghi and Rajaei (2011) as well as Mazloom and Hussain (2020). In this respect, Sheikh and Mahmood (2014) regard teaching styles as one of the most prominent underpinning elements of quality education and burgeoning teacher-learner relationship.

Some researchers are of the view that in adopting the proper teaching styles, the instructors must consider the learners' needs (e.g., Megasari, Arafat, & Yan, 2021), and in so doing, adjust the teaching styles to their needs. Tindog and Celestial (2021) even go further to maintain that the teaching styles must be aligned with the learning styles of different class members. Informed by the literature part of which was presented in the foregoing discussion, the researchers concluded that a number of factors can act as stronger predictors of teacher motivation, namely burnout, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teaching style. Though literature abounds with studies investigating each of these factors in isolation and at times in relation to one another, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has tried to put all these variables together in a single investigation, and hence this might be regarded as the major novelty of the current study. Moreover, the current researchers have opted for a mixed method design of research in which the interview protocol is intended to consolidate the obtained findings. Therefore, in line with the study objectives, the following research questions are formulated:

RQ1: Does teacher burnout predict Iranian EFL teachers' motivation?

RQ2: Does teacher self-efficacy predict Iranian EFL teachers' motivation?

RQ3: Does teacher emotional intelligence predict Iranian EFL teachers' motivation?

RQ4: Does teachers' teaching style predict Iranian EFL teachers' motivation?

RQ5: Which of the above-mentioned variables is a stronger predictor of Iranian EFL teachers' motivation?

RQ6: What are Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions about the factors underlying teacher motivation?

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the Study

The current study followed a mixed methods design. At the outset, the study questionnaires were administered to all the participants. Hence teachers' burnout, self-efficacy, EI, and teaching styles were assumed to function as the predictors of teaching motivation. In the second phase of the study, the participating teachers' perceptions about the factors influencing teacher motivation were tapped via interviews.

3.2 Participants

A total of 200 English language teachers were asked to fill the questionnaires. The target group encompassed teachers from both public school and language school contexts. In gathering the data, an attempt was made to include an equal proportion of male and female teachers. The teachers came from a variety of age groups, years of experience and language backgrounds. Since the participants were recruited from a variety of cities across West Azarbaijan province (including Urmia, Khoy, Miandoab, Boukan, Mahabad, Sardash, Piranshahr, Oshnavieh, Salmas, and Maku), to facilitate the data collection process, the questionnaires were sent to them through Google forms link. The data were analyzed through SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) to find the exact interrelationships between the four variables considered as predictors and teacher motivation.

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The study participants were all English language instructors at the high school, university, or language institutes. Their ages ranged from 21 to 47 years (M = 30.12; SD = 6.39). In selecting the participants, an attempt was made to include an equal number of males and females. Hence, the study sample was composed of 100 male (50 %) and 100 female (50 %) teachers. Their teaching experiences varied from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 22 years (M = 6.95; SD = 5.17). Among them, 155 (77.5 %) held BA, 35 MA (17.5%), and 10 (5%) PhD (see Table 1). It's worth noting that one fifth of participants (i.e. 40 members) agreed to take part in the qualitative phase of the research and were interviewed by the researchers.

Table 1. Participants' gender and degree

		Number	Percent
Gender	Male	100	50
	Female	100	50
Degree	BA	155	77.5
	MA	35	17.5
	PhD	10	5

3.3 Instruments

3.3.1 Questionnaires

To gather the data, five well-established questionnaires were used, namely Teacher Motivation Scale, adapted from the works conducted by Bernaus, Wilson, and Gardner (2009), and Claeys (2011), Teacher Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), Teacher Self-efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jeruselem, 1993), Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i, BarOn, 1997) and Teaching Styles Survey (Grasha, 1994). A brief account of the content and features of these questionnaires is presented below.

Teacher Motivation Scale was adapted based on the questionnaires developed by Bernaus et al. (2009), and Claeys (2011). In so doing, the irrelevant items were eradicated and the other items went through slight modification. At the end, the reliability of the questionnaire was measured through piloting it. The questionnaire was composed of 26 items, which fell on a five-point Likert-type scale. The second questionnaire used in the study was Teacher Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) consisting of 22 items, organized in three separate sections. This questionnaire was also Likert-type, and measured three components known as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment.

The third questionnaire utilized in the study was Teacher Self-efficacy Scale. Though the original Scale was developed by Bandura (1978), the researchers in the current study made use of the shortened version of the questionnaire (Schwarzer & Jeruselem, 1993), which contained 10 items on Likert-type scale. The forth questionnaire was employed to gain insight into the participants' emotional intelligence profile. Though a variety of scales are available for measuring emotional intelligence, the researchers in the present study made use of Bar-On's (1997) Emotional Quotient Inventory, the revised and domestically standardized version of which includes 90 items in 15 separate subscales. Finally, the last Likert-type scale used in the current study was Teaching Styles Survey (Grasha, 1994), which composed of 28 items organized in four separate sections, namely teacher-student interaction, decision-making negotiation, teaching structuring, and behavioral control.

3.3.2 Interview Protocol

A total of 40 participants agreed to take part in the interview section. To prepare the interview questions, the adapted version of the interview protocol used by Gao and Xu (2014) was utilized. There were initially seven questions in the interview, and owing to the similarity between some of the interview questions, two pairs of analogous questions were merged into two questions. Then, the interview questions went through expert validation. The interview responses were then transcribed and the overriding themes were extracted in the final analysis. The interview questions were as follows:

1. What are your perceptions of teachers and the teaching profession? What were your perceptions of teachers and the teaching profession when you were graduating from secondary school?

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2. If you divide your career into several stages, how would you divide your career experiences? Can you describe your experiences in these career stages?

3. Is there any particular person(s) or life event(s) that might have motivated you and influenced your decisions concerning your career choices and academic studies?

4. What reasons motivated you to teach?

5. Summarize the reasons that contribute to your desire to make/not to make the teaching profession a long-term career choice for you.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

To conduct the study, in the first place, the study questionnaires – Teacher Motivation Scale, adapted from the works conducted by Bernaus et al. (2009) and Claeys (2011), Teacher Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), Teacher Self-efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jeruselem, 1993), Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i, Bar-On, 1997) and Teaching Styles Survey (Grasha, 1994) – were piloted to further ensure their reliability prior to the main phase of the study.

For administering the questionnaires, all the scales were prepared in a user-friendly format. However, to ease the process of data collection, mainly due to the inaccessibility of some participants, the questionnaires were redesigned in Google forms. Successive to that, the link was shared with all the participants in telegram. It's worth noting that the participants' consent was obtained prior to the study, and all the participants were ensured of anonymity and confidentiality conditions. Fortunately, the return rate was unexpectedly high and all 200 participants cooperated well with the researchers. However, as is the case with all self-report measures, the researchers can't claim with certainty that all the participants revealed the truth about their current status.

It's worth noting that all the questionnaires were in Likert-type format. Upon receiving the raw data, following the guidelines provided by each of the five questionnaires, the scores were provided for each individual based on the given rubrics in the scales. In so doing, an attempt was made to follow the guidelines for reversely scored items in the questionnaires. The last part of the procedure involved gathering the interview responses from the participants through the adapted form of the interview protocol referred to in the previous section.

3.5 Data Analysis

Once the scores for all questionnaires were tabulated and the mean scores for each questionnaire were obtained, the data were submitted to SEM Analysis. To be more specific, based on the initial model hypothesized, the data were analyzed through SEM model. The second phase of data analysis involved transcribing the interview responses and extracting the main themes.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Findings

The researchers in the current study were intended to explore the factors contributing to teacher motivation. In dealing with the research questions, which mainly probed the role of study variables, i.e. burnout, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teaching styles constructs in shaping and predicting teacher motivation, SEM analysis was opted for, the results of which are presented in this section. The researchers' initially hypothesized model based on the insights from the literature is illustrated below:

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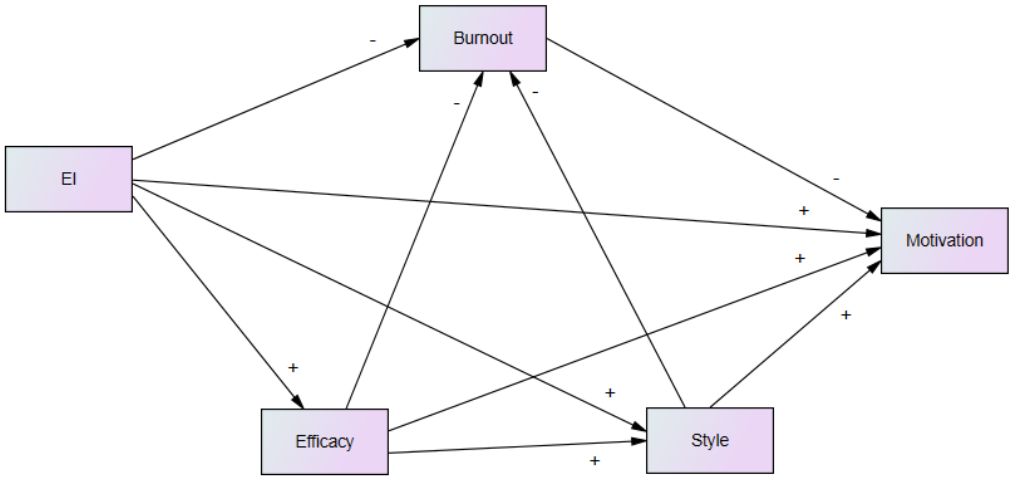


Figure 1. The hypothetical model of the relationship between research variables

Prior to running the main analyses, the assumptions of missing data, sample size, outliers, normality, linearity, and multicollinearity were tested, with all assumptions being accepted. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha reliability estimate, and inter-correlations between the variables are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and correlation matrix (n=200)

Variables	M / SD	α	1	2	3	4	5
1. EI	376.24/35.96	.93	-				
2. Efficacy	40.00/5.02	.91	.41**	-			
3. Motivation	115.20/ 22.70	.88	.57**	.58**	-		
4. Style	160.11/36.77	.86	.57**	.63**	.60**	-	
5. Burnout	51.73/14.75	.82	-.58**	-.62**	-.61**	-.63*	-

**$p < .01$

As shown in this table, burnout, self-efficacy, EI, and teaching style are all significantly inter-correlated with motivation at $p < 0.01$. SEM analysis was then employed to investigate the interrelations between/among the EFL teachers' burnout, self-efficacy, EI, teaching styles, and teacher motivation. To this end, following Ho (2006) and Smith and McMillan (2001) goodness of fit indices of Chi-square divided by degree of freedom (χ/2 df), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Normed Fit Index were taken into account. Generally, it is suggested that a cut-off measure of less than 3 for χ2/df , a cut-off point of less than .08 for RMSEA, and a cut-off point value of above 90 for CFI, NFI, and TLI would indicate an acceptable fit to data (Ho, 2006; Kline, 2005; Smith & McMillan, 2001).

SEM Analysis with maximum likelihood estimation was run via AMOS software. This statistical tool performs simultaneous examination of the connections among different independent and dependent variables and investigation of complex hypotheses. The expected model was tested, and the following measures of goodness-of-fit were obtained for the base model; goodness-of-fit index (CFI) = .95, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (NFI) = .92, comparative fit index (TLI) = .93, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .07, and χ2/df = 2.95 showing an acceptable good fit for the hypothesized model (see Table 3).

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Table 3. Fit indices in the structural model

	χ^2 /df	CFI	TLI	NFI	RMSEA
Recommended threshold value	<3	>.9	>.9	>.9	<0.08
The Model	2.95	.95	.93	.92	.07

In this model, significant paths were noticed leading from EI (β = .24; p < .01), self-efficacy (β = .20 p < .01), teaching style (β = .20; p < .001), and burnout (β = -.23; p < .001) to their expected destination of teaching motivation. EI (β = -.23; p < .01), self-efficacy (β = -.29; p < .01), and teaching styles (β = -.40; p < .001) also significantly predicted burnout. The path from EI to self-efficacy was significant (β = .41; p < .001). Furthermore, teaching style was significantly predicted by EI (β = .36; p < .01) and self-efficacy (β = .51; p < .01). The graphical representation of the final model with standardized path coefficients is given in Figure 2.

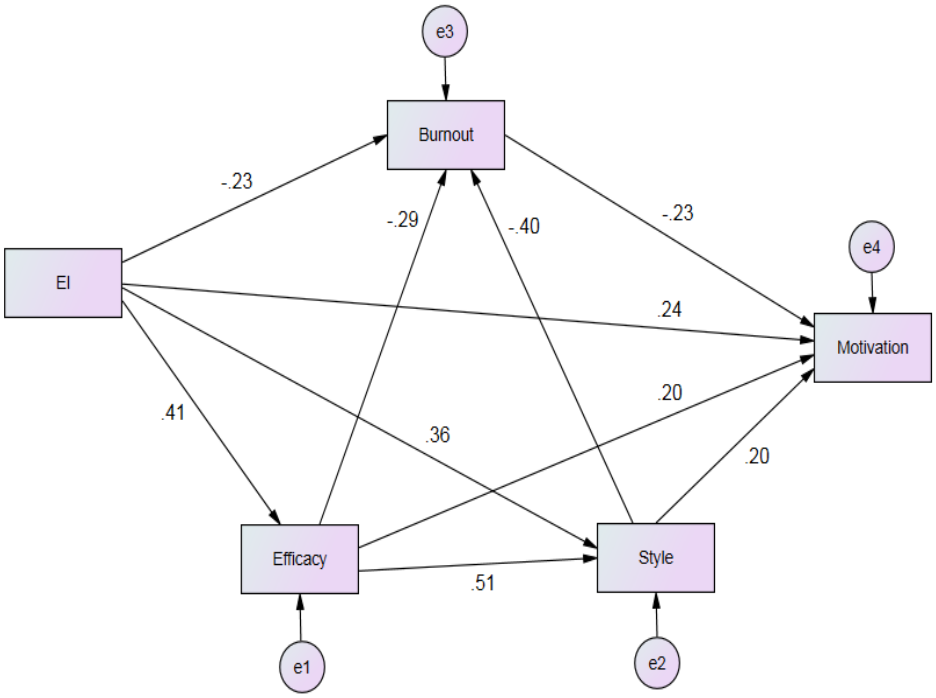


Figure 2. The final model of the relationship between research variables

4.2 Qualitative Findings

The qualitative phase of the study was conducted to find further evidence for the obtained findings and hence corroborate and consolidate the results through triangulation. The interview protocol which was adapted from Gao and Xu (2014) encompassed 5 questions. It's worth noting that the interview questions went through expert validation prior to the main administration. As the findings revealed, regarding the first interview question which focused on the interviewees' perceptions of teachers and teaching profession, the majority of the respondents reported that they were either interested in the profession or gradually got more interested in it. For instance, one of the participating teachers said:

"Now I'm a teacher. I love my career and it's a way of conveying my knowledge to others. Teaching, Talking and even playing with my students is a great motivation even for life."

Another teacher put it the following way:

"Understanding, motivating, using different ways of teaching, taking learner differences in to account, … are some of my perception from a teacher … You face too many new issues every day in classes. When I was graduated from

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secondary school I loved the teaching profession it was interesting for me because I was aware of the reality of this profession."

A third teacher said:

"Teaching is a great profession in order to improve yourself and your Academical skill level in the field you are passionate about. It is like a force that would push you forward."

Regarding the change of attitudes over time, one of the teachers averred:

"My perception has been changed since I started this university major, since then I used to have some negative perceptions not about the teaching profession, but about the teachers I had, that had given me wrong perceptions about them, and I think the educational system In my country had made it worst, luckily my insight has been changed positively and I love my job."

The second interview question dealt with the stages of development in teachers' experience throughout the time. As the results displayed, most teachers referred to the multi-layer nature of teaching experience, and believed that their experience had gone through gradual development and completion stages. In this regard, one of the participating teachers stated:

"I would like to state it by talking about the first stage which can be the interest that I realized I have, then I could think that in my teen ages a part time job as a teacher, to gain money and experience and at the same time complete my higher education."

Another teacher expressed:

"Despite I'm in the first stages of my carrier I learnt about my experiences a lot. Also I learned a lot of things from my students, I learned to be patient and a good-tempered Person, The teacher necessarily is not a person that considered to be knower of all things."

The third interview question explored the role of significant other people in the development of the teachers and the increase in their motivation. The results in this regard boil down to the influence of a family member (mostly parents) or the teacher. One of the teachers expressed:

"When I was 16 I had a teacher at private institute he told us to learn English beside school. He took us to international volleyball games as translator from then I considered how much I love English or studying and teaching it."

Another teacher maintained:

"All of my family members and teachers during my education life influenced my life and carrier, I always trusted to them more than anyone in my life."

A third teacher said:

"My Amazing teachers. They thought me to be a better human being and what I have learned as passing the knowledge is what humans should thrive for."

However, other teachers referred to other miscellaneous factors as their motives for selecting the teaching career. For instance, a teacher referred to teaching as an escape from life problems the following way.

"Actually my personal life problems motivated me to find a job faster and as I was good at studying English and I had very interest in it I chose it."

The forth interview question was after pinpointing the reasons underpinning teachers' motivation for teaching. Among the main motivators for teaching, the majority of teachers had referred to factors like interaction and relationship with the students, helping learners and transferring knowledge to them, prestige, and teaching being their field of interest. Thus, these were the four major themes underscored by the participants. For instance, one of the participating teachers said:

"There are some motivations like helping people, and also helping myself, establishing good relationship with young People is always a good motivation for me, sharing my knowledge and my experience is helping me to be a sharing Person."

Another participant expressed her motivation for teaching in the following manner:

"Relationship with kids and people younger than me lead me, to teaching, besides I've always liked to transform my knowledge to others, in an educational environment. To talk more about it, I really like to, teach to very young learners, because of my personal feelings, to them."

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A third teacher mentioned the following key incentives:

"Self-confidence to teaching are of the most important language of the world, making money, prestige, interest and good feelings."

The fifth and last interview question inquired the reasons contributing to the teachers' desire for making/not making the teaching profession a long-term career choice for them. The main theme with the highest frequency mentioned as the main factor underlying teachers' desire to stay in teaching profession was their love and devotion for the career. In this respect, one of the participating teachers stated:

"If I teach and I obtain good results from my teaching and good impacts of my students, I will encouraged to teaching for the rest of my life."

Another teacher reported:

"First reason is the love I have towards teaching. Secondly it makes me think about nothing but my student's understanding and it makes me feel. I'm the only one in their lives who can hear their real wants since they can talk about their true feelings in the class."

A third teacher mentioned her reasons for continuing the teaching profession the following way:

"In my opinion having interest is one of the most important Factor to continue career in life."

Also, among the demotivators and the factors leading to the teachers' going away from the profession, the participants mostly referred to the prominent role of economical issues, social and environmental dimensions, and the role of government in creating better job conditions. These three themes were hence the most important ones referred to by the participants. In this respect, one of the teachers held that:

"There are other motivations such as economic and social dimension, so that the government should facilitate the way to teachers to remain motivated and they should have a comfortable life and good facilities, because teachers deserve it."

A second teacher briefly stated:

"The financial issues are the biggest problems of this career."

A third teacher pointed out:

"It would be better if you have satisfactory in your payment very well, because making money itself, is one of the other and sensitive factor to continue a career."

Finally, another participant put his reasons in the following words:

"Teaching environment should be satisfying, the most important things payment has to be enough."

5. Discussion

As the findings of the current study revealed, burnout, self-efficacy, EI, and teaching styles, were all significantly inter-correlated with teaching motivation. Also, as the exploration through SEM model indicated, significant paths were found leading from burnout, self-efficacy, EI and teaching styles toward teaching motivation. Additionally, EI, self-efficacy, and teaching styles were depicted to be significant predictors for burnout. The path from EI to self-efficacy was also significant. Furthermore, teaching style was significantly predicted by EI and self-efficacy.

The obtained findings in the current study are corroborated by several other studies. As regards the relationship between burnout and teacher motivation, for instance, it is clear that a negative correlation was reported to exist between the two variables, the way the other researchers have designated. Therefore, the finding in this respect, is in line with that of Abos et al. (2018) who argued by lowering the burnout levels in teacher, we can achieve heightened degrees of teacher motivation. Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2015) also highlighted the close bonds between burnout and teacher motivation. It goes without saying that higher levels of burnout, as indicated in the current study, result in lower motivation for teaching. Hence, one way to augment teacher motivation is through diminishing the burnout levels in teachers. Evidence for this claim comes from the studies conducted by Abos et al. (2018), Davaribina and Ghobadi Asl (2021), and Shen et al. (2015).

The other major variable that was found to underpin teacher motivation, based on the results of the current investigation, was teachers' self-efficacy. This finding resonates with the one reported in the studies by Affouneh, et al. (2020), Infurna and Luthar (2016), and Lin and Zheng (2015). This result is also in accordance with what was reported in the studies by Bamburg (2004), Caprara et al. (2006), and Klassen and Tze (2014) all of whom unanimously claim that teachers' motivational level can be predicted by their self-efficacy beliefs. Among other

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probes that have revealed the go-togetherness between self-efficacy and teacher motivation, reference can be made to the research conducted by Klassen and Tze (2014), as well as a more recent project by Barni, Danioni, and Benevene (2019), both of which buttress the relatedness of these two constructs.

With regard to the correlation between EI and teacher motivation, as depicted by the study findings, the results of the study confirm the findings of other studies, including Abiodullah et al. (2020), Akhtar (2021), Krishnan and Awang (2020), Ponmozhi and Ezhilbharathy (2017), all of which underscore the significance of teachers' EI in their teaching success and hence motivation. In the current study it was also shown that the teachers' teaching styles can act as an important predictor of teacher motivation. For this finding, evidence can be gathered from other investigations, such as the studies conducted by Reeve (2018) and Tang et al. (2017). In both studies, the researchers reported that teacher motivation can be impacted by the teaching styles opted by teachers. Other researchers have underscored the significance of teaching styles as a determining factor underlying teacher motivation (e.g., Khandaghi & Rajaei, 2011; Mazloom & Hussain, 2020). Sheikh and Mahmood (2014) also refer to the teaching styles as one of the fundamental pillars for teaching quality and hence teacher motivation. Also, more recently Mahmoodi, Alizadeh, and Jafari (2021) maintain that teaching styles act as an important predictor of teacher motivation.

Furthermore, concerning the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout which was indicated as a part of the findings in the study, support can be provided from the investigations carried out by Avanzi et al. (2013), Daniilidou et al. (2020) and Savas et al. (2014), all of which pointed toward the existence of this correlation, which means when the teachers' self-efficacy rises, their burnout level decreases. Moreover, the correlation between EI and self-efficacy shown in the current study is corroborated by the results gained in the investigations by Hassan et al. (2015).

Additionally, the findings gained in the interview phase helped come up with a more comprehensive conceptualization of the factors impacting teaching motivation. The first interview question which tapped into the participants' perceptions of teachers and teaching profession, most teachers asserted that they were either interested in the profession or steadily became more motivated. This finding runs contrary to what was reported in Gao and Xu's (2014) study. As they concluded, the teachers in their study mostly maintained that teaching was not their desirable profession. The inconsistency in the results might be justified by the fact that Gao and Xu's (2014) research was implemented in the rural context where most teachers were deprived of the equitable distribution of facilities and resources.

As regards the second interview question, the respondents accentuated the multi-layer and developmental nature of their teaching trajectory. Moreover, in response to the third interview question, the participants mentioned the key role of a teacher or a family member (mostly parents) in shaping their motivation in the career. Also, responses to the forth interview question represented that the proclivity for interaction and relationship with the students, the desire for helping learners and transferring knowledge to them, prestige, and their intrinsic motivation for teaching acted as the principal motives for teachers. Further substantiation for this finding can be gleaned from the work of Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) who claim that commitment to one's professional development highly correlates with teacher motivation. Moreover, as Akhtar and Iqbal (2017) and Hayden (2011) claim, teacher motivation is closely associated with higher levels of student accomplishment. Also, as Syamananda (2017) argues, imparting knowledge and serving the society are among the main motives for teachers.

Finally, according to the results gained for the last interview question, teachers' dedication and devotion toward teaching was found to constitute their main predisposition for staying in the profession. In addition, economical issues, social and environmental dimensions, and the role of government in creating better job conditions were characterized as the key contributors to teachers' demotivation. Support for this finding can be provided from the study conducted by Syamananda (2017) claiming that low salary can be a major source of demotivation for teachers. Additionally, regarding the effect of environmental constraints on teachers' demotivation, reference can be made to the investigation carried out by Gul, Tahir, and Ishfaq (2020), in which both intrinsic and extrinsic factors were found to play a prominent role in building the teachers' interest in the profession and augmenting their interest in remaining in teaching career. Among the extrinsic factor, the teaching environment was reported by the researchers to have a conspicuous role in teachers' decisions to stay with the profession. Likewise, similar findings are obtained in Bürü's (2018) research, in which establishing an effective environment was mentioned as one of the principal prerequisites for teaching motivation and success.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The researchers in the present study aimed to probe the factors underlying teacher motivation. Among different psychological traits and teaching-related facets, the researchers opted for four major variables, i.e. burnout, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teaching styles, in accordance with the available body of research in the literature

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on the issue. The analysis of the obtained data through SEM analysis revealed that burnout, self-efficacy, EI, and teaching styles were all significantly inter-correlated with teacher motivation. In other words, significant paths were found leading from EI, self-efficacy, teaching style, and burnout toward teaching motivation. The findings thus obtained can provide all the educational stakeholders, including teachers, curriculum developers, and educational administrators, with fruitful implications. Drawing on the findings of the current study, the teachers will be further sensitized toward appraising their own motivation toward the teaching career, and in light of the obtained findings, will make an attempt to improve the relevant traits like self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. They will also be encouraged to diminish their burnout levels in different ways in order to heighten their teaching motivation.

Additionally, inspired by the findings of the study, the teachers might strive to ameliorate their teaching styles with the aim of reaching higher levels of motivation and teaching satisfaction. The instructional administrators will also gain some insights from the study findings, and arrange some pre-service and in-service programs for both novice and experienced teachers to make them more aware of their personality traits and the way different features like emotional intelligence and self-efficacy beliefs can positively contribute to their motivation development. Moreover, the educational administrators may think up some influential measures for tackling the problems leading to teacher burnout (Proshkina & Efremova, 2019; Zhaleh, Ghonsooly, & Pishghadam, 2018). Furthermore, they can hold workshops to familiarize the teachers with the most successful teaching styles. Last but not least, curriculum developers and educational authorities and policy makers are likely to come up with ways for addressing the problems that lead to teacher burnout, and in so doing, escalate the motivation level in teachers. Part of this can possibly be accomplished by making the materials more motivating and pleasurable for both teachers and learners. Also, preparing better teaching environments for teachers and equipping them with the required facilities can help escalate teachers' motivation.

Finally, it must be admitted that like all the other studies, the current investigation suffered from a number of limitations, the most important of which being the inaccessibility of participants, and their unwillingness to cooperate with the researchers. This problem was more manifest in the qualitative phase of the study, and while inviting the participants for the interview. Additionally, it must be noted that like other studies relying on self-report measures, the present investigation also had the problem of using self-report scales. Though an attempt was made to triangulate the data collection phase by drawing on the interview data, the findings must be generalized with due care. It is hoped that the future researchers delve into other perspectives of teacher motivation by going through the other potential predictors of the construct and provide further corroboration for the findings of the current study.

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