

## **Examining Iranian EFL Teachers' Demotivating Factors: Years of teaching experience in focus**

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### **Abstract**

In spite of the importance of teacher's motivation only a limited number of studies have been conducted on teacher's demotivation in Iran. This study was an attempt to investigate demotivating factors among Iranian EFL language institute teachers in terms of years of teaching experience. To this end, the researchers tried to utilize a questionnaire as a research method. To collect data, a validated questionnaire was administered to a sample of 77 English teachers who were teaching in Iranian language institutes in Najafabad, Isfahan, Iran. A convenience sampling was used in this study. The data were classified and analyzed based upon the relevant research questions. The one-way between-groups ANOVA conducted on demotivating factors showed that there was a significant difference between professional development and other domains of demotivating factors among the groups of English teachers. Moreover, it was uncovered that insufficient income was among the most crucial factors providing dissatisfaction for Iranian EFL teachers in the field of teaching process. Therefore, it is important for educational institution to improve teachers' perceptions of their job through improving job environment and condition or payments to manage language learner institutes better than before.

**Key words:** Teachers' demotivation, teacher's motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic motives

### **Introduction**

Just like motivation, demotivation is a significant issue in second language acquisition (SLA) research and language learning. A demotivated person can be identified as someone who was initially motivated but because of negative external factors has lost it (Sugino, 2010). When students have learned something from what they have been thought and find satisfaction in studying, the teacher will feel motivated. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) stated that "if a teacher is motivated to teach, there is a good chance that his or her students will be motivated to learn" (p. 158). If teachers are intrinsically motivated, correspondingly the learners will become intrinsically motivated. However, if the teachers get bored or demotivate, the students will have the same feeling ( Davis, 2009).

According to Dörnyei (2001a), demotivation "concerns specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action" (p. 143). A motivated teacher not only has been satisfied with his or her job, but also is encouraged to attempt growth in their educational practices. More specifically, if teachers are extremely motivated to teach English as an L2, this will help facilitate their L2 teaching and professional development (Zhang, 2007). A motivated teacher supports learning experiences and consequently educates well practiced and motivated learners of the target language.

In spite of the importance of L2 teacher motivation described above, recent studies have demonstrated that most teachers are not adequately motivated and there is an overall reducing of motivation among teachers (Dinham & Scott ,2000; Sugino, 2010). In the prior studies, most of L2 teachers stated that they are unsatisfied with their current teaching conditions. The negative

attitude of the learners toward L2, the heavy projects and burnout are mentioned among the most general reasons of this dissatisfaction. Therefore, it is important to recognize why L2 teachers lose their motivation and become demotivated. However, being still in its initial stage, the research of L2 teacher motivation has not entirely studied what factors have influenced on the demotivation of EFL teachers and why they consider these factors unfavorable to their teaching.

## **Literature Review**

### **Intrinsic motivation in teaching**

Speaking generally, Dörnyei (2001b) has described intrinsic motivation as "performing a behavior for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction such as joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity"(p.47). Based on such definition, intrinsic motivation is divided into most rewarding views of teaching such as the educational process itself, and the subject matter. Teacher performance is accompanied with the first one by working with the students and viewing the changes in the students' behavior and performance whereas the second concerned with getting new information from the teaching environment to improve professional skills and knowledge. This kind of intrinsic rewards help the teachers go for high salaries and social recognition (Dörnyei, 2001b).

### **Extrinsic motivation in teaching**

In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation requires a factor between the activity and some separable outcomes such as concrete or verbal rewards. Therefore, enjoyment derives not from the activity itself but from the extrinsic influences to which the activity precedes (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Ryan & Connell, 1989). The activity is completed just for receiving a reward or avoiding some punishment when it has been ended (Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, & Legault, 2002). Extrinsic motivation refers to visible rewards such as pay, benefits, work environment, work conditions, and job security (Mullins, 1999).

Although intrinsic motivation was known as self-determined, extrinsic motivation has been shown as the reflection of a lack of self-determination. The researches have revealed that extrinsic motivation does not necessarily reduce the effect of intrinsic motivation and it might even heighten it, indicating that extrinsic motivation is unrestrictedly controlled. The significance of extrinsic rewards suggested the lower level of interest and task enjoyment whenever the learners have taught a skill by an extrinsically motivated teacher. Considering the importance of teacher's motivation, Thompson and Phua (2012) suggested some strategies such as praising, encouraging, honoring feedback, increasing teacher's control over his or her work, collaborative relations and differentiating extrinsic rewards in the process of teaching and learning.

### **Teacher's demotivation**

According to Dörnyei (2001b), teacher demotivation is normally correlated with five crucial factors: "lack of teacher's self-determination, lack of self-effectiveness, stressful nature of the work, uninteresting content and inadequate profession construction" (p. 165). Factors such as bureaucratic stress, lack of necessities, low salaries, teaching students with insufficient motivation, the ability for handling the changes, being monitored by others, and the ambiguity have been represented considering as the result of the teacher's stress (Dörnyei, 2001a).

### **Related studies**

Although research activities on L2 teacher motivation in the field of teacher education have been increased, research on L2 teacher demotivation is in its nascent stage. Among the available studies on teacher demotivation, Doyle and Kim (1999) in a study on teacher motivation determined that salary, the relationship between teacher and administrator advancement problems, curriculum, course books, heavy workload, lack of teacher's autonomy, and job security were the factors leading to demotivation.

Kızıltepe (2008) in a study tried to identify the sources of motivation and demotivation among English teachers at a public university. The motivating factors were recognized as learners, profession and social attitude, while the demotivating factors were financial status, physical characters, research and working conditions. His research investigated the sources of motivation and demotivation among teachers at a public university in Istanbul. He concluded that students are the main source of motivation and demotivation.

Reflective on the above studies, Sugino (2010) organized a study on the topic of factors which demotivate Japanese English teachers. He planned a questionnaire with 37 items into four sub-sections of demotivating factors: student's attitudes, student's abilities, school facilities and working conditions, and human relationships. Participants were 97 Japanese English teachers working in universities. The first language of different participants was different as well. The findings revealed that the most frequent demotivating factor is the negative attitude of the students toward learning English and the least frequent factor is concerned with teaching materials and divergence in student's competencies.

In a mixed method study, T. Y. Kim, Y.K. Kim, and Zhang (2014) tried to determine differences in demotivation between Chinese and Korean English teachers. A questionnaire on demotivation was distributed between 58 Chinese and 94 Korean in-service teachers to compare the demotivating factors between two countries. The findings represented that the overcrowded classes was significantly detrimental for teachers for both countries. Chinese teachers were perceived to be more demotivated due to the expectations and the interference from the student's parents. The lack of student's willingness in English classes and administrative tasks were identified as the demotivating factors for Korean teachers.

Soodmand Afshar and Doosti (2016) conducted a research study on Iranian English teachers at secondary schools to investigate factors influence on their job satisfaction or dissatisfaction through a questionnaire. The results indicated that English teachers have the feeling of satisfaction with the intrinsic aspects of their job. whereas paying insufficiently, not adequate position in society, inadequate encouragement for creating teacher's professional development opportunities, lack of principals' attention to encourage teachers and appreciate their work, lack of students' motivation, and not being given a leading role to the teachers in the processes of solving problems and setting goals were among the most crucial factors contributing to Iranian EFL teacher's job dissatisfaction.

The present study was going to evaluate teachers' demotivation from a different point of view. To this end, the following research questions were posed for this study:

**Q1.** What factors are salient for teacher demotivation among Iranian language institutes teachers in terms of the years of teaching experience?

**Q2.** Are there any significant differences in the extrinsic and intrinsic demotivating factors among teachers in Iranian language institutes in terms of work experience?

## Methodology

As it is stated above, the current research aimed mainly at investigating the impact of demotivating factors on EFL teachers in language institutes in terms of years of teaching experience. In this section, a brief profile of the participants, the materials used, the procedures and measures applied for eliciting the necessary data will be presented.

### Participants

Participants of the study were 77 English teachers with BA, MA, and PhD degrees, teaching in English language institutes in Najafabad, Isfahan, Iran. The participants were teachers with various years of teaching experiences (from one to 10 years and above). They were divided into three groups. The teachers with one to four years of teaching experience (novice), teachers with 5 to 9 years of teaching experience, and the last group the teachers with 10 and above ten years of teaching experience (experienced). Convenience sampling was used as a technique of sampling in this study. It is a non-random sampling method and is defined as the selection of individuals who happen to be available for the study.

### Instrumentation and procedure

The purpose of the questionnaire used in this study was to investigate the demotivating factors among EFL teachers in language institutes in Najafabad, Isfahan in terms of the years of teaching experience. The teacher's questionnaire was developed mainly from the following sources:

- ▶ Teacher demotivating factors' questionnaire by Sugino (2010)
- ▶ Lester's teacher's job satisfaction questionnaire (TJSQ) (1987)
- ▶ Teacher motivation questionnaire by Mifsud (2011)

The questionnaire consisted of two sections and five subsections to provide the researcher with an overall teacher's demotivating factors for teaching English as a foreign language. Since the participants were English teachers, the questionnaire was developed in English.

In order to assure validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher examined the questionnaire designed for similar purposes (Lester, 1987; Mifsud, 2011; Sugino, 2010). The first draft of the questionnaire was developed while considering the issues in the literature. To check the validity of the questionnaire, it was sent to two experts to be observed in order to verify the content and face validity of the questionnaire. Based on two criteria of the appropriateness of the items regarding the topic and the accuracy of the meaning of the items, the content validity of each item in the questionnaire was viewed by the experts. Some changes were made based on the expert's suggestions; then the revised draft of the questionnaire was piloted with a group of English teachers, and internal reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The Cronbach's Alpha of scale should be above 0.7. Calculating the reliability of the items of the questionnaire illustrated a high reliability among the items of the questionnaire.

**Table 1.** *The results of the reliability of the questionnaire*

<b>Reliability statistics</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	No. of items
.863	2.457	47

As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha value exceeded the minimum required value of 0.7 and hence, the scale of variables was highly reliable.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts; the first part of the questionnaire was designed with the detailed background information such as gender, age, academic qualification, and years of teaching experience. Every participant was asked to read the statements and then decide if they 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5= strongly agree.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of five sub- sections regarding teacher's demotivating factors, including: 1. student's attitudes, 2. class facilities, teaching materials, and curriculum, 3. working conditions and job satisfaction, 4. human relationships and supervision, and 5. teacher development. Six items concerning student's attitudes towards teacher's demotivation, seven items regarding class facilities, teaching materials, and curriculum for teacher's demotivation, twenty one items concerning working conditions and job satisfaction for teacher's demotivation, five items concerning human relationships for teacher's demotivation, and eight items related to teacher development for teacher's demotivation were developed in this questionnaire.

To analyze the quantitative data, the data were arranged and analyzed by a set of one way ANOVA to find the differences between demotivating factors among four groups of English teachers in terms of years of teaching experience.

### Results

One of the purposes of this study was to investigate the factors which are salient for teacher demotivation among EFL teachers in Iranian language institutes in terms of the years of teaching experience. To this end, a descriptive analysis was used to examine the general characteristics of demotivation factors and one-way ANOVA as well as post hoc test were employed to probe into the specific differences in demotivating factors among different groups of English teachers.

First, the descriptive statistics of items for demotivation of English teachers in language institutes are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Descriptive statistics of items for demotivation of English teachers in language institute*

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>				
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
Students' attitude	1-4	52.6923	7.94533	26
	5-9	60.3922	10.98499	17
	10 and above	53.3333	13.60828	34
	Total	54.6753	11.66366	77
Class facility, teaching material and curriculum	1-4	48.6813	11.03555	26
	5-9	49.4118	11.41806	17
	10 and above	48.0672	11.82161	34
	Total	48.5714	11.33420	77
Working condition and job satisfaction	1-4	48.7912	8.01951	26
	5-9	51.4846	6.21306	17
	10 and above	49.1036	10.31675	34
	Total	49.5238	8.75329	77
Human relationships	1-4	49.3846	10.17871	26
	5-9	52.0000	12.24745	17
	10 and above	46.8235	7.27166	34

	Total	48.8312	9.63191	77
Professional development	1-4	43.0769	9.06388	26
	5-9	50.5882	11.67695	17
	10 and above	43.0147	10.97137	34
	Total	44.7078	10.85925	77

According to this table, among four dimensions of teacher demotivation in language institutes, student's attitude section received the highest mean score ( $M=60.39$ ,  $SD=10.98$ ) while professional development section obtained the lowest mean score ( $M= 43.01$ ,  $SD= 10.97$ ).

A between-subjects ANOVA was performed in order to compare the three groups of teachers in the recognition part of the test. The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** A one-way between subjects ANOVA for demotivation of three groups of English teachers

<b>One-way ANOVA</b>							
<b>Factors</b>		<b>Sum Squares</b>	<b>ofdf</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Partial Eta Squared</b>
Students' attitude	Between Groups	719.070	2	359.535	2.766	.069	.070
	Within Groups	9620.035	74	130.000			
	Total	10339.105	76				
Class facility, teaching material and curriculum	Between Groups	20.962	2	10.481	.080	.924	.002
	Within Groups	9742.303	74	131.653			
	Total	9763.265	76				
Working condition and job satisfaction	Between Groups	85.316	2	42.658	.550	.579	.015
	Within Groups	5737.813	74	77.538			
	Total	5823.129	76				
Human relationships	Between Groups	315.710	2	157.855	1.734	.184	.045
	Within Groups	6735.095	74	91.015			
	Total	7050.805	76				
Professional development	Between Groups	754.469	2	377.234	3.401	.039	.084
	Within Groups	8207.706	74	110.915			
	Total	8962.175	76				

The one-way between-groups ANOVA conducted on demotivating factors suggested that there is a significant difference on professional development ( $p=.039 < .05$ ) and other domains of demotivating factors among three groups ( $.001 \leq .05$ ). The value of Partial Eta Squared confirmed a moderate effect size (Partial Eta Squared=.084).

Finally, Tukey HSD test performed to find which groups exactly differ. Although no statistically significant differences were reported by the ANOVA carried out on the factors

related to students' attitude, post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the participants with 5-9 years of work experience responded significantly different from the participants with 1-4 as well as 10 and more years of experience. A moderate size effect was reported (Partial Eta Squared=.07).

This study also aimed to investigate whether there would be significant differences between intrinsic and extrinsic demotivating factors among three groups of teachers in Iranian language institutes. Descriptive statistics of extrinsic and intrinsic demotivating items are presented in table 4.

**Table 4.** *Descriptive statistics of extrinsic and intrinsic demotivating items*

<b>Descriptive statistics</b>				
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
Extrinsic	1-4	49.4477	5.92599	26
	5-9	52.5490	5.86983	17
	10 and above	49.2760	8.25583	34
	Total	50.0566	7.08447	77
Intrinsic	1-4	43.0769	9.06388	26
	5-9	50.5882	11.67695	17
	10 and above	43.0147	10.97137	34
	Total	44.7078	10.85925	77

As reported in Table 4, the difference between the mean scores of intrinsic and extrinsic demotivating factors was calculated 52.54 for extrinsic factors among 5-9 years of teaching experience, and 50.58 for intrinsic factors among 5-9 years of teaching. To test the aforementioned hypothesis, another one-way between-groups ANOVA was performed. The results are reported in Table 5.

**Table 5.** *One-way ANOVA for extrinsic and intrinsic demotivating item*

<b>One-way ANOVA</b>								
Source	Dependent Variable	Type of III	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
							Partial Eta Squared	
Intercept	Extrinsic		180615.808	1	180615.808	3633.476	.000	.980
	Intrinsic		147449.505	1	147449.505	1329.393	.000	.947
Experience	Extrinsic		135.962	2	67.981	1.368	.261	.036
	Intrinsic		754.469	2	377.234	3.401	.039	.084
Error	Extrinsic		3678.453	74	49.709			
	Intrinsic		8207.706	74	110.915			
Total	Extrinsic		196750.559	77				
	Intrinsic		162868.750	77				

The between-groups ANOVA results reported in Table 5 show statistically significant p-value for the difference among the groups (.039  $\geq$  .05) suggesting that significant differences were

observed only in intrinsic factors with a moderate effect size (Partial Eta Squared=.084). The post hoc comparisons by the use of Tukey HSD test were performed in order to find where exactly the differences reside.

**Table 6.** *Crucial extrinsic and intrinsic demotivating factors among three groups of teachers*

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>(I) experience</b>	<b>(J) experience</b>	<b>Mean Difference (I-J)</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Extrinsic	1-4	5-9	-3.1013	2.19907	.163
		10 and above	.1717	1.83682	.926
	5-9	1-4	3.1013	2.19907	.163
		10 and above	3.2730	2.09430	.122
	10 and above	1-4	-.1717	1.83682	.926
		5-9	-3.2730	2.09430	.122
Intrinsic	1-4	5-9	-7.5113*	3.28487	.025
		10 and above	.0622	2.74375	.982
	5-9	1-4	7.5113*	3.28487	.025
		10 and above	7.5735*	3.12836	.018
	10 and above	1-4	-.0622	2.74375	.982
		5-9	-7.5735*	3.12836	.018

According to Table 6, the participants with 5-9 years of work experience responded significantly different from the participants with 1-4 as well as 10 and more years of experience in terms of intrinsic demotivating factors ( $p=.025 < .05$ ).

### Discussion and Conclusion

To investigating the impact of EFL teaching demotivation, the demotivating items were factor-analyzed. Five categorized factors were identified. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to obtain the reliability of the items. Five demotivating factors were identified in this study: 1. student's attitude towards teacher demotivation, 2. teaching materials and curriculum, 3. working conditions and job satisfaction, 4. human relationships, and 5. proficiency development for teacher demotivation. The proficiency development was the most prominent demotivate factor between EFL teachers. The findings of this study were in line with findings of the previous studies related to teacher's demotivation (Chen, 2010; Kızıltepe, 2008; Spear et al., 2000; Sudmand Afshar & Doosti, 2016). In their studies, they indicated that one of the most prominent demotivating factors for EFL teachers was insufficient income. In contrast, Perie and Baker (1997) in their report found that there was a positive rapport between teacher's fulfillment and learner's behavior, support from supervision, and working conditions.

Whereas salary and benefits were not related to teacher satisfaction, Afshar and Doosti (2016) in their study revealed that mainly satisfying factors for teachers are among the interior aspects of teaching process, as they mentioned exterior factors such as insufficient income, low status in society and occupation, lack of reinforcement in the educational system to create opportunities for teacher's professional development, lack of principal's attention in teacher's encouragement and their work appreciation, lack of student's motivation, and not being given a

prominent role to the teachers in teaching processes such as goal-setting and problem-solving at schools were among the most crucial factors providing dissatisfaction for Iranian EFL teachers in the field of teaching process. The findings of this study further support the results from Afshar and Doosti 's (2016) study.

When the relationships between teachers and the sense of competition are combined with the sense of suspicion and nervousness, these merits likely have effect on teacher's motivation (Barth, 2006). Some researchers in their studies found that one of the most effective factors for demotivating teachers is the relationships among teachers, colleagues, and administrator (Aydin, 2012; Doyle & Kim, 1999; Hettiarachchi, 2010; Hettiarachchi, 2013). However, considering this demotivating factor in previous studies, in this study this item was not between the prominent demotivating factors. It was likely that the teachers were working in a positive environment with a satisfaction rapport among teachers, colleagues, and administrator. They were observed to build more professional relationships with their colleagues who supported a space for cooperation and peer learning.

As the learning process demands teacher's creativity and effectiveness, the motivation in teaching can provide the greater value in learning process. Thus, the results of this study can be useful to teacher, educators and school administrators by helping them to understand the concerns of beginning teachers and experienced teachers alike. Such understanding should lead to changes in teacher preparation programs, better assistance during their beginning years of teaching, and the improved professional development for teachers at all experience levels. Furthermore, it is important for educational institution to improve teachers' perception of their job through improving job environment and condition or payments and to manage language learner institutes or schools better than before.

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