On the Relationship between Iranian EFL Teachers' Burnout and Motivation: A Mixed Methods Study

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A B S T R A C T

Burnout is a persistent, negative, work-related state which involves mental, emotional, or physical exhaustion. Teacher burnout has been a major concern in mainstream education in recent years. However, it has been less examined among EFL teachers. Therefore, this study adopted a mixed methods sequential design to fill the gap by (a) identifying some Iranian EFL teachers' burnout and motivation profiles, (b) examining the (possible) relationship between their burnout and motivation to teach, and (c) investigating motivational factors which would predict teacher burnout. To these ends, 115 EFL teachers from language schools in southwest Iran took part in this study. To collect the data, Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, developed by Maslach and Jackson (1986), Motivation to Teach Questionnaire, developed by Soenens, Sierens, Vansteenkiste, Dochy, and Goossens (2012), and a follow-up semi-structured interview with 15 participants were employed. Descriptive statistics showed that the EFL teachers had low levels of burnout and were autonomously motivated in their teaching. Correlation analysis also revealed negative relationship between autonomous forms of motivation (i.e., intrinsic and identified) and burnout. Moreover, multiple regression analysis demonstrated that the autonomous forms of motivation and external regulation could be better predictors of EFL teachers' burnout. The qualitative data from the interviews provided further insight into the quantitative results and explained some person- and work-related factors in relation to teacher burnout. Some implications are finally provided for decision-makers in the area of EFL pedagogy to improve EFL teachers' autonomous motivation to reduce their burnout experience.

Keywords: teacher burnout; motivation; EFL teachers; emotional exhaustion; autonomous motivation

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Introduction

Teacher quality has recently become the focus of attention in many education-related discussions, and some steps have been taken to improve education quality (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006). However, language teachers, who embrace a central role in developing students' competence and achievements in second/foreign teaching contexts, have not received adequate attention (Brown & Lee, 2015). Thus, it seems necessary to take into account different factors which can influence teacher quality in L2 contexts.

Like other educational settings, teachers engaging in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) continuously need to deal with new challenges and difficulties which can influence the quality of their teaching and put them at high risk for emotional drainage (Byram, 2013; Cook, 2013). In fact, there is a concern over the problems which may arise if a mismatch is found between what language teachers expect in their job and what they actually experience (Reeve & Su, 2014). This mismatch may elevate the level of stress (Travers & Cooper, 1996) and lead to some psychological problems such as ineffectiveness, exhaustion, physical complaints, anxiety, and depression (Maslach, 2015). That is why the role of *burnout* may come into play with regard to L2 teaching.

Burnout is defined as "a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity" (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996, p. 4). Likewise, teacher burnout is a job-related syndrome which is viewed as a syndrome of physical, emotional, and attitudinal exhaustion toward teaching and work-relates issues (Kyriacou, 2015; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). More likely, teachers experiencing burnout may lose their energy, commitment, and enthusiasm to continue their work (Kyriacou, 2015), which can have a negative effect on their students in the L2 learning process.

Thus, there should be a pressing concern to identify the factors which can predict EFL teachers' burnout in order to improve teacher quality and avoid EFL learners' academic failure. To prevent teacher burnout, as Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) point out, research has focused mostly on organizational factors as a determinant of burnout. However, not much attention has been paid to affective and personality factors such as motivation in burnout studies. The concept of motivation may be an important underlying mechanism in the burnout process because, as Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) state, "demotivated teachers suffer from stressful nature of teaching job, insufficient self-efficacy, the inhibition of autonomy, and inadequate career structures" (p. 168). Motivation is recognized to be an antecedent of productivity, which increases the effectiveness of the individuals in the workplace, provided that their basic psychological needs are satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2014). Thus, L2 teachers' motivation to teach should be enhanced and their psychological needs should be satisfied so that they can perform well in their L2 classes. To improve students' motivation, recent research (e.g., Claeys, 2011; Paulick, Retelsdorf, & Moller, 2013) also emphasizes teacher motivation as an influential factor in educational processes. However, there is little empirical evidence on the role of motivation to teach in relation to burnout experience among L2 teachers, in general (Fernet, Guay, Senécal, & Austin, 2012), and EFL teachers, in particular (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). More specifically, how EFL teachers' motivation contributes to their burnout experience and to what extent motivation to teach can be helpful in minimizing the detrimental outcomes of burnout among EFL teachers are the areas which require further investigation. Therefore, building on self-determination theory, SDT, (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b), which is a new perspective towards motivation, the current study sought to examine the relationship between teachers' burnout and their motivation to teach, and the extent to which motivational factors could predict burnout experience in the EFL context of Iran.

Literature Review

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Maintaining a high level of motivation is considered by several researchers and psychologists as one of the important qualities that teachers need to develop (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gillet, Berjot, Vallerand, Amoura, & Rosnet, 2012). Being aware of the importance of motivation in education, Deci and Ryan (2000, 2002) have proposed SDT as a new perspective of human motivation. In this theory, they make a distinction between autonomous and controlled forms of motivation to engage in a specific activity. According to this theory, autonomous motivation is considered essential for optimal human functioning. When individuals are autonomously motivated, "they behave with a full sense of volition, willingness, and choice as opposed to being controlled, which refers to behaving with a sense of pressure and obligation" (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 16). According to SDT, a distinction is also made between intrinsic motivation (doing something for its own sake) and extrinsic motivation (doing something for an external reason). The intrinsic dimension of motivation is related to the inherent desire of doing a purposeful activity related to one's subject area of interest, in an autonomous manner with self-efficacy and instructional goal (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Unlike extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation can be associated with several desirable outcomes such as academic achievements (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Poonam, 1997).

Furthermore, Deci and Rayn (2000) describe the motivation continuum as comprising four forms which vary in their degree: Integrated regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation. Integrated regulation refers to individuals' functioning to meet basic psychological needs that are consistent with a true sense of self. Identified regulation is characterized as individuals acting to achieve personally valued goals. Introjected regulation comprises the behaviors performed to avoid punishment or gain pride. External regulation characterizes individuals' behaviors when they engage in activities for external reasons such as rewards or benefits. Moreover, integrated and identified regulations represent autonomous forms of motivation because they refer to behaviors performed by choice, but introjected and external regulations are viewed more as controlled forms of motivation because they exist in situations where individuals are hindered to feel autonomous and to have choices (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Burnout

Burnout emerged as a psychological concept in 1970s. The term was first used by a clinical psychologist, Herbert Freudenberger, in a journal of psychology in 1974 to describe how volunteers at drug addicted clinic had lost sense of commitment after working a year (Freudenberger, 1974). Later on, experienced with this phenomenon, he unfolded the psychological and physical status of the workers under observation and noted that the employees were expressing a "state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward" (Freudenberger, 1980, p. 13). Almost at the same time, Maslach (1976), a social psychological researcher, studied the behaviors of workers in the human services and investigated the emotional problems of the staff members in the job. Maslach's extensive research on individuals working in human service sections provided the most widespread definition of burnout. According to Maslach (2015), burnout is characterized with three key dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalization, and (reduced) efficacy or personal accomplishment. According to her:

- The emotional exhaustion refers to "feelings of being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources,"

- The cynicism or depersonalization is identified by "a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to various aspects of the job,"

- The (reduced) efficacy or personal accomplishment refers to "feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity in work" (Maslach, 2015, p. 930).

The introduction of burnout by Freudenberger and Maslach has opened new ways of burnout inquiry in various jobs and fields including teaching. Teacher burnout is "a syndrome of physical, emotional, and attitudinal exhaustion toward one's work, which results from experiencing teacher stress over a long period" (Kyriacou, 2015, p. 72).

So far, researchers have mostly investigated some interpersonal and environmental/organizational factors in relation to teacher burnout. For example, Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, and Vanroelen (2014) investigated the role of workload and interpersonal relationships at work in predicting teacher burnout. They examined how interpersonal relationships among students, colleagues, supervisors, and parents and teaching related and nonteaching related workload (e.g., paperwork) were related to the components of teacher burnout. Their findings revealed that teaching-related and nonteaching-related workload were both related to emotional exhaustion component of burnout.

Also, the role of personality traits (Cano-Garcia, Padilla-Munoz, & Carrasco-Ortiz, 2005), perceived self-efficacy (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000), and existential fulfillment (Tomic, Evers, & Brouwers, 2004) has been investigated in relation to teacher burnout. For instance, in their crosssectional study, Foley and Murphy (2015) investigated the role of individual differences, work environment, and coping factors in Irish teachers' burnout. Their sample consisted of 192 teachers. The results of different co-rrelational and regression analyses suggested that individual differences (personality factors), environmental, and coping factors would play a significant role in predicting burnout.

Furthermore, in recent years, burnout has attracted EFL researchers' attention in the mainstream education in Iran. For instance, Royaie, Ghonsooly, and Ghanizadeh (2015) explored the association between teachers' self-regulation and burnout among 125 Iranian EFL teachers in Mashhad. The results of correlation analysis showed that there was a negative significant relationship between applying self-regulated strategies and burnout. Subsequent data analyses via regression analysis showed that goal setting component of self-regulated strategies was the best predictor of burnout.

In a recent study, Heidari and Gorjian (2017) explored the effect of teachers' level of burnout on the EFL learners' general English achievement at a senior high school in Izeh, Khuzestan. They selected two groups of participants: low-burnout and high-burnout teachers. The results of their study revealed that the EFL teachers' level of burnout significantly affected the learners' general English achievement. According to them, the low-burnout teachers had more effective teaching than the high-burnout teachers.

Considering the above-mentioned studies, it becomes clear that teacher burnout has a negative effect on students' language learning achievement. Thus, its role cannot be ignored in L2 teaching/learning. However, most of the studies on burnout have been carried out in fields such as psychology and in relation to factors such as personality traits or organizational factors such as workload. Quite a few studies (e.g., Fernet et al., 2012) have focused on motivation to teach in the experiencing burnout. Also, among a small body of research focusing on teacher burnout in L2 education, only factors such as self-regulated strategies have been investigated and other variables which can be helpful in minimizing the detrimental outcomes of teacher burnout have not been

examined in L2 education. A gap is then felt in L2 teacher education to study EFL teachers' motivation to teach and its relationship with burnout experience. It is fruitful to see how motivation to teach relates to teacher burnout and examine the extent to which it can contribute to reducing teacher burnout.

Thus, the present study first sought to identify Iranian EFL teachers' burnout and motivation profiles. Second, it investigated whether there was a significant relationship between the motivational factors and burnout dimensions among EFL teachers. Third, it examined the motivational factors which could significantly predict teacher burnout. Therefore, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the Iranian EFL teachers' burnout profiles?

2. What are the Iranian EFL teachers' motivational profiles?

3. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' motivation to teach and their burnout?

4. Do Iranian EFL teachers' motivational factors significantly predict their burnout dimensions?

Method

Quantitative Phase

The quantitative section sought to identify the Iranian EFL teachers' levels of burnout and their types of motivation. This phase also tended to examine the relation between the two variables and the predictive role of motivational types as regards burnout among the EFL teachers.

Participants

The participants were 115 EFL teachers (35 males and 80 females) from two southwest provinces in Iran (Khuzestan & Chaharmahal Bakhtiari). The participants were selected through non-probability sampling (convenience sampling) because of the accessibility of the participants to the researchers. The participants' age ranged from 21 to 45, and they were teaching in various language schools/institutes with different years of experience from 5 to 30 years. They majored either in English Translation or Teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL). The majority of the teachers had bachelor's degree (about 62%), and the rest received master's degree (about 34%), or PhD degree (about 4%).

Instruments

Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (MBI-ES)

The MBI-ES questionnaire, developed by Maslach and Jackson (1986), represented three subscales: emotional exhaustion (9 items), measuring feelings of tiredness at work; personal accomplishment (8 items), assessing feelings of competence and successful achievement of teachers; and depersonalization (5 items), reflecting teachers' impersonal response to students (see Appendix A). The items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*), to 7 (*every day*). The reliability and validity of the MBI-ES were well established (Akbari, Ghafar Samar, Kiani, & Eghtesadi, 2011; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo, & Shuaufeli, 2000).

Using exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic techniques, Kokkinos (2007) supported the three factor structure of the construct. Also, the reliability index for the MBI-ES in the current study was acceptable (.76).

Motivation to Teach Questionnaire (MTQ)

MTQ (Soenens et al., 2012) was used to measure EFL teachers' motivation to teach (see Appendix B). In fact, this scale is an adaptation of the well-established Self-Regulation Questionnaire-Academic initially introduced by Ryan and Connell (1989). The MTQ contained a total of 16 items representing four subscales: intrinsic motivation (4 items), identified regulation (4 items), introjected regulation (4 items), and external regulation (4 items). The items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 5 (*completely agree*). The validity and reliability of the MTQ were confirmed by several researchers (Soenens et al., 2012; Van den Berghe et al., 2013). Also, the reliability of the questionnaire, measured by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, was satisfactory (.80) in the present study.

Qualitative Phase

The qualitative data were collected in the second phase of the study to gain further understanding of the underlying factors leading to EFL teachers' burnout and their motivation at work. In this phase of the study, which followed the quantitative phase, 15 teachers were purposefully selected for the interview to depict a better picture of burnout experience and its underlying reasons in the EFL context in Iran. They were volunteer teachers who were selected from the sample of EFL teachers in the quantitative phase to be interviewed. They included teachers with high and low level of motivation to teach. These participants included 8 EFL teachers with high scores on MTQ and 7 EFL teachers with low scores on MTQ. They were contacted by telephone or email and time was set for the interviews.

In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were carried out to find out what factors could lead to burnout experience among EFL teachers and to gain further information about their motives to teach. The participants responded to 10 yes/no and open-ended questions such as: Have you ever used up at the end of a workday? Explain why?; What have you accomplished in your job so far?; Do you think teaching English can help you learn more? How?; Why do you teach English?; Is it important what others think about you as a teacher? why?; and Are you obliged to teach? Besides, when necessary, the questions were followed by more probing questions.

Procedures and Data Analysis

This study employed a mixed methods sequential explanatory design in order to answer the research questions. Following Creswell (2013), the method consisted of two distinct phases: First, the quantitative data were collected and analyzed to find out the participants' burnout and motivational profiles and to examine the relationship between the EFL teachers' motivation to teach and their burnout. Second, the qualitative data were analyzed in order to help explain and elaborate on the quantitative results obtained in the first phase. To this end, the MTQ and MBI-ES questionnaires were initially administered to all of the participants. Descriptive statistics, Spearman rank order correlation, and multiple regression analysis were then used to analyze quantitative data. In the qualitative phase, the interview guide was piloted. The interview was guided by some open-ended and yes/no questions on issues related to burnout and motivation. The initial questions were reviewed by 2 PhD students majoring in TEFL. At this point in the process, modification was made. Permission was then obtained to interview 2 EFL teachers, who were similar to the group of participants for the main study. The appropriateness of the questions

was checked and some questions were sequentially aligned. Then, the interviews, lasting for approximately 30 minutes, were conducted face-to-face with each interviewee. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, returned to the interviewees to be read through and commented on. Afterwards, following Creswell (2013), the transcripts were coded and themes were identified through a within-case analysis.

Results

Addressing the First Research Question

The first research question was aimed at identifying the EFL teachers' burnout profiles. More specifically, it was intended to find out the levels of burnout experienced by the EFL teachers and the factors mainly leading to their burnout. Both quantitative data from the MBI-ES and qualitative data from the interviews were used to answer this question.

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics of three dimensions of burnout questionnaire (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for MBI-ES Subscales/Dimensions

Dimension	N of Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Scale Mean (On a 7-point scale)	Skewness	Kurtosis
EE	9	1	36	14.73	8.09	1.64	.74	-.07
DP	5	0	20	4.01	4.25	.80	1.37	1.59
PA	8	15	48	38.32	7.54	4.79	-.87	.36

Note. EE = Emotional Exhaustion; DP = Depersonalization; PA = Personal Accomplishment

As Table 1 shows, the skewness values for three burnout dimensions (i.e., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) were .74, 1.37, and -.87, respectively. Also, the kurtosis values were found to be -.07, 1.59, and .36 for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, respectively. According to Bachman and Kunnan (2005), the skewness and kurtosis values within the range of -1.5 to +1.5, indicate normality of variances; nevertheless, the kurtosis value for depersonalization was a little above 1.5, suggesting that the data tended to have heavy tails on depersonalization dimension. Also, as Table 1 demosntrates, the greatest mean score belonged to the personal accomplishment dimension (*M* = 38.32, *SD* = 7.54). Unlike the mean score for the personal accomplishment dimension, the mean score for the emotional exhaustion dimension was not large (M = 14.73, *SD* = 8.09). Likewise, the scale mean of 1.64 (on a 7-point likert scale) for emotional exhaustion was small, indicating a low level of burnout on this dimesion. According to Maslach et al. (1996), the high scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and low scores on personal accomplishment are all indicative of burnout. Conversely, a high score on the personal accomplishment subscale indicates a low degree of burnout. Also, Maslach et al. (1996) suggest that scores falling in the lower third of the distribution of scores for each subscale/dimenion be categorized as low, scores falling in the middle third be categorized as moderate, and scores falling in the upper third be categorized as high. Thus, three dimenions were categorized as low, moderate, or high. Table 2 shows the ranges for these three categories.

Table 2
Score Ranges Used for Categorization of Burnout Scores in the Three Dimensions

	Dimension	Low (Lower Third)	Moderate (Middle Third)	High (Upper Third)
	EE	≤ 16	17 – 26	≤ 27
	DP	≤ 6	7 – 12	≤ 13
Suggested Ranges	PA	≥ 39	38 – 32	≥ 31

As Table 2 displays, the mean scores for the three dimensions indicated a low degree of burnout, in general. According to Table 2, the sample in the present study had low scores on emotional exhuastion. The mean score for this dimension was 14.73, which was lower than the suggested score of 16, fallling in the lower third of the distribution. The mean score for depersonalization was 4.01, which was lower than the suggested score of 6. In addition, the mean score for personal accomplishment was 38.32, falling between the moderate and low categories. In sum, the quantitative data showed that the EFL teachers' degree of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were low in the sample, but their personal accomplishment level was in the moderate range of burnout.

Furthermore, the qualitative data analysis provided further details into the burnout experience as described by the participants in the interview. The emergent themes and subthemes based on the analysis of the participants' responses are presented below.

Conflict. The most prominent source of burnout in the sample was kind of the mismatch between the teachers' expectations and the real job demands or their requirements. The interviewees pointed out several reasons. For instance, almost all of the burned-out teachers in the interview highlighted the fact that the low salary they received had demotivated them. Thus, they felt frustrated. They believed that there was not a balance between the workload and the payment. One of the EFL teachers with a high level of burnout and 10 years of teaching experience (Mohammad) expressed his dissatisfaction: "I receive a low salary….they don't pay me enough, and I keep asking myself 'what a mistake I have ever made'."

Also, the mismatch between teachers' expectations and their experiences/practices in the classroom was indicative of the conflict theme. Most of the teachers were eager to see their students learning English so well in the classroom. However, this could not happen and their expectations were beaten. A 35-year-old EFL teacher (Nima), who had a high level of burnout stated:

> When I started working in the school, I would really like to learn everything about it. I wanted to be the best, to make changes …. Now, after six or seven years of teaching, little by little I am getting disappointed when I see my students not learning so well. I feel disappointed now when I see them not learning the way I expected.

Lack of support and security. This was a major reason which caused the teachers to develop a feeling of disappointment towards their job. The majority of the interviewees who felt frustrated (80%) put claims on the job insecurity. They stated that the L2 policymakers in their country did not support language teachers, which could make them detached from the society. Mina, with six years of teaching English in different institutes, explained: "They do not care about language teachers' bad working conditions, and there is no job security in language schools." Several EFL teachers experiencing burnout stressed the lack of support from their school administrators and authorities. One of them (Maryam) contended: "In Teacher's Day, they do not even offer any congratulations to us, which makes us demotivated and tired."

Excessive workload. Several interviewees reported experiencing fatigue due to too much teaching. They could not perform their job-related tasks adequately because of too many classes and insufficient time. One of them (Reza) explained: "I have many intensive classes, which really make me do the routines in the class. Well, most of the time, I feel used up at the end of the workday."

Demotivation. The participants pointed out that their students' demotivation was an important cause of their frustration. A burned-out teacher (Neda) expressed her feeling towards this issue: "If my students are not motivated, I do not feel energetic and get tired." In contrast, Morteza, an EFL teacher with a low level of burnout, explained: "Most of my students are really motivated and this is a great motive for me, so I feel less exhausted … and very energetic."

Student classroom behavior. Disruptive classroom behavior was another source of problem which could reduce teacher efficacy. The interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with a number of behaviors (e.g., calling out, annoying other students, being aggressive toward other students, and exhibiting oppositional behavior in response to the teacher's requests) which were endorsed by the teachers as problematic or disappointing. Samira, with 12 years of teaching experience, showed her feeling of dissatisfaction and ineffectiveness about managing her students' disruptive behavior: "I don't know how to deal with my students' aggressive and noncompliant behavior in the classroom. They don't cooperate…. I feel all my effort to make a change is ineffective…. I feel fatigued."

Control and lack of autonomy. The interviewees complained about the lack of autonomy in making decisions about their own teaching in the classroom. They said that the administrators did not allow them to make their own choice regarding materials development and assessment. Hamid, a burned-out EFL teacher with 15 years of experience, criticized the current educational system and maintained: "Day in day out, we're doing the routine and there is no creativity … the education system does not allow us to use our own techniques in class to avoid boredom."

Addressing the Second Research Question

The second research question intended to determine the motivational profiles of the participants, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The four motivational variables (intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation) were subjected to descriptive analysis to describe the main features of the participants' forms of motivation. Table 4 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the MTQ scores.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of the MTQ Scores for Each Subscale

Variables	N of Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Scale Mean (On a 5-point Scale)	Skewness	Kurtosis
IM	4	20	16.67	3.05	4.17	-1.38	1.59
IDR	4	6	20	16.79	2.95	4.20	-1.45	1.95
INR	4	4	20	11.37	3.88	2.84	-.18	-.88
EXR	4	4	20	10.87	3.47	2.72	-.03	-.32

Note. IM = intrinsic motivation; IDR = identified regulation; INR = introjected regulation; EXR = external regulation

As Table 4 displays, the skewness values were negative in all types of motivation, which showed a clustering of scores at the high end, but they were within the range of -1.5 to +1.5. Also, the positive kurtosis values for intrinsic motivation and identified regulation suggested that the distribution of scores in these types of motivation was rather peaked and clustered in the center. Moreover, according to Table 4, identified regulation (M = 16.79) obtained the highest mean score. The scale mean score for this type of motivation on a 5-point scale was 4.20. This number was high and it was between the fourth (i.e. *agree*) and fifth (*completely agree*) options on a 5-point Likert scale. This high mean score indicated that most of them were autonomously motivated. The intrinsic motivation with the mean score of 16.67 was the second among motivation mean scores. The scale mean for this type of motivation was almost high. It was between the fourth (i.e. *agree*) and fifth (*completely agree*) options on a 5-point Likert scale. In contrast, the introjected regulation (M = 11.37, SD = 3.88) and external regulation (M = 10.87, SD = 3.46) received lower mean scores, indicating lower scores for the controlled forms of motivation compared with the autonomous forms. In sum, intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, which would represent internalized forms of behavioral regulations, were dominant in the sample, and autonomous forms of motivation received the highest mean scores.

Furthermore, the analysis of the data from the interview showed that the majority of the interviewees (60%) with the low level of burnout pointed out an internal reason for teaching English. They described several intrinsic reasons for their teaching, including enjoyment and interest, and the exciting nature of the English language. For example, one EFL teacher, Mina, who was autonomously motivated, explained: "I love teaching, … if I were born again, I would become an English teacher."

However, those teachers with low intrinsic motivation pointed out some factors such as payment and work related issues for their low motivation to teach. One of the interviewees (Reza) with a high level of burnout and low level of autonomous motivation explained: "I used to love teaching, but I receive low payment now, which makes me demotivated. If they [the administrators] support us financially, we will work with higher motivation." Another teacher (Zahra), who exhibited a high level of burnout in the survey, agreed that "teaching could be fun, depending on some factors such as its payment." To her, the intrinsic motivation toward teaching cannot persist unless the teachers' needs are satisfied.

There were other motives, which could be subsumed under the identified regulation (i.e., autonomous form). One of the teachers (Marzieh) said, "Teaching has helped me a lot. [I] have developed as my students have grown personally and socially. This is mutual." Another teacher (Hamed) emphasized the role of teachers in their students' lives: "I am a role model for my students because they learn from me…, so if they take interest in you …, they will follow you, which boosts my own confidence."

Introjected regulation was also represented in the EFL teachers' responses to some extent. One of them (Bizhan) said, "Giving teachers some encouragement and praise will motivate them to find different ways to improve and teach better …, but when some people discourage you or don't praise you…, you think that you are doing something in vein". Other people's expectations towards their teaching were important to many of the respondents. Thus, the external regulations could be traced in the teachers' responses. Sara, whose motivation to teach was found to be mainly controlled, explained: "One of my reasons to teach is that I am expected to teach…you know, because this is my major, and if I don't teach, others will reprimand me for that decision."

Addressing the Third Research Question

The third research question of the current study intended to estimate the probable relationship between EFL teachers' burnout and their motivation to teach. The Spearman rank order correlation was computed to find significant relationships. Table 5 displays the correlation coefficients between each possible pair of burnout and motivation subscales.

Table 5
Correlation Coefficients Between Burnout and Motivation Subscales

Variables	IM	IDR	INR	EXR
EE	-.20*	-.22*	.17	.13
	(.031)	(.016)	(.069)	(.155)
DP	-.08	-.14	.15	.31**
	(.357)	(.112)	(.093)	(.001)
PA	.01	.11	-.22*	-.16
	(.865)	(.216)	(.015)	(.086)

* p < .05; ** p < .01

As Table 5 shows, a number of significant correlations were identified. Statistically significant negative correlations between emotional exhaustion and autonomous forms of motivation, i.e. intrinsic motivation ($r = -.20$, $p = .031$) and identified regulation ($r = -.22$, $p = .016$), were observed. However, emotional exhaustion had a positive relationship with controlled forms of motivation, namely introjected ($r = .17$, $p = .069$) and external regulation ($r = .13$, $p = .155$). Also, depersonalization had a positive correlation with both external ($r = .31$, $p = .001$) and introjected regulation ($r = .15$, $p = .093$), and a negative correlation with intrinsic motivation ($r = -.08$, $p = .357$) and identified regulation ($r = -.14$, $p = .112$). Moreover, the third burnout dimension, personal accomplishment, had a positive relationship with intrinsic motivation ($r = .01$, $p = .865$) and identified regulation ($r = .11$, $p = .216$), but it had a negative correlation with controlled forms of motivation, namely introjected regulation ($r = -.22$, $p = .015$) and external regulation ($r = -.16$, $p = .086$). In closing, the direction of relationship between burnout dimensions and two forms of motivation (autonomous vs. controlled) was different.

Addressing the Fourth Research Question

Three multiple regression analyses were conducted to answer the fourth research question of the present study. They regressed each burnout dimension on the correlated independent variables (motivation types) to see which types of motivation could predict the EFL teachers' burnout. Table 6 reports the model summary of the first regression analysis for the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout, and Table 7 summarizes the results of regression coefficients.

Table 6
Model Summery for Emotional Exhaustion

Model[a]	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.34	.12	.08	7.72

a. Predictors: (Constant) intrinsic motivation; identified regulation; introjected regulation; and external regulation
Dependent variable: emotional exhaustion

Table 7
Regression Coefficients for the Predictors of Emotional Exhaustion

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Part Correlation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	20.79	4.62		4.49	.000	
IM	-.15	.40	-.05	-.37	.707	-.034
IDR	-.71	.42	-.25	-1.66	.099	-.157
INR	.35	.19	.15	1.63	.105	.146
EXR	.42	.23	.18	1.80	.074	.161

The multiple regression, as depicted in Table 6, revealed that the motivation variables explained 12% of the variation in the EFL teachers' emotional exhaustion scores ($R^2 = .12$), which was small. According to Table 7, none of the independent variables (motivational factors) were found to be statistically significant.

Table 8 reports the model summary of the second regression analysis for the depersonalization dimension of burnout, and Table 9 summarizes the results of regression coefficients.

Table 8
Model Summery for Depersonalization

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.43a	.18	.15	3.91

a. Predictors: (Constant) intrinsic motivation; identified regulation; introjected regulation; and external regulation. Dependent variable: depersonalization

Table 9
Regression Coefficients for the Predictors of Depersonalization

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Part Correlation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	4.342	2.34		1.85	.067	
IM total	.19	.20	.14	.97	.330	.084
IDR total	-.58	.21	-.40	-2.68	.008	-.231
INR total	.06	.10	.05	.64	.521	.055
EXR total	.49	.11	.40	4.17	.000	.359

As Table 8 displays, the R^2 value (.18) indicated that 18% of the variance in the dependent variable (i.e., depersonalization) could be explained by the model. According to Table 9, the identified and external regulations had the largest Beta values (-.40 and .40, respectively), showing the strongest unique contribution to the depersonalization (about 5.2% and 12%, respectively).

The final multiple regression analysis was used to assess the contribution of motivational variables to the third dimension of burnout, that is, personal accomplishment. Tables 10 and 11 report the model summary and regression coefficients for the participants' personal accomplishment.

Table 10
Model Summery for Personal Accomplishment

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Errors of Estimate
1	.35a	.12	.09	7.17

a. Predictors: (Constant) intrinsic motivation; identified regulation; introjected regulation; and external regulation. Dependent variable: personal accomplishment

Table 11
Regression Coefficients for the Predictors Personal Accomplishment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	*Sig.*	Part Correlation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	40.240	4.30		9.35	000	
IM total	.75	.37		2.03	.044	
IDR total	1.43	.39	.30	2.88	.005	.18
INR total	-.34	.18	.44	-1.86	.065	.25
EXR total	-.40	.21	-.17	-1.87	.064	-.16
			-.18			-.16

According to Table 10, the R^2 value indicated that 12% of the variance in the participants' personal accomplishment could be explained by the four types of motivation. The identified regulation with the Beta value of .44 made a positive unique contribution to explaining the EFL teachers' personal accomplishments (about 6.2%). The intrinsic motivation with the Beta value of .30 was another significant negative contributor to the EFL teachers' personal accomplishment, explaining about 3% of the variance in the dependent variable. In sum, the results revealed that the EFL teachers' motivation to teach explained 12% of the variance in their emotional exhaustion, 18% of the variance in their depersonalization, and 12% of the variance in their personal accomplishment.

Discussion

This mixed methods study made a contribution to the rather scarce literature on the association between EFL teachers' burnout and motivation to teach in the context of Iran. Overall, the results of the statistical analyses revealed that the sample of the EFL teachers in the present study did not exhibit a risk profile on the burnout measure, when compared with norms in the MBI manual (Maslach et al., 1996). Risk profiles are exhibited through high emotional exhaustion and low personal accomplishment. With the low levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions and the moderate level of personal accomplishment, one can infer that the

participants, in general, had a good sense of personal achievement and self-efficacy; they could work well with their students in class and care about them in a normal way without a major sense of exhaustion and frustration. This result indicated that the majority of the EFL teachers did not experience a high level of burnout.

Also, the in-depth qualitative analysis demonstrated that both organizational and personal factors were related to the burnout dimensions (i.e., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishments). These dimensions shared some sources which could account for burnout experience among EFL teachers. They include conflict, lack of administrative support, insecurity, demotivation, lack of autonomy, and student classroom behavior. This finding is consistent with the results of the study by Gupta, Paterson, Lysaght, and von Zweck (2012), who reported some common sources for burnout experience. The conflict was one major source of emotional exhaustion among those EFL teachers who had a high level of burnout. More likely, both internal and external factors such as low payment, lack of social support, and the mismatch between the teachers' expectation and job demands/requirements brought about this conflict.

Low payment played an important role in losing motivation and developing burnout. It seems that receiving less money for teaching English in language schools is a major conflict for teachers, which could diminish their commitment towards their job and cause frustration. This is also stressed by Maslach (2015) as an important correlate to teacher burnout. Also, the mismatch between the EFL teachers' expectations and job demands or between the EFL teachers' ability and job demands was another source of conflict, manifesting itself through the feeling of doubt and ambiguity among them.

Moreover, as Thomas and Lankau (2009) state, workplace social support serves as a resource that can minimize emotional exhaustion through increased socialization and deceased role stress. For this reason, when EFL teachers face some job-related difficulty or stress, social support from their authorities, colleagues, and others in charge can help minimize emotional distress and nurture their self-esteem (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014). However, the majority of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with lack of support from the school administration.

In addition, workload expressed in terms of excessive working hours and accountability demands, together with the teachers' relationships with their students and policymakers were related the teachers' burnout experience. The above results find support from the findings of Jacobson (2016), who investigated the causes of teacher burnout in an urban high school in the northeastern United States. Her in-depth interviews with five high school teachers showed that an unrealistic workload, student misbehavior, and a lack of attention by administrators were the factors that contributed to the teacher burnout. Moreover, as Vandenberghe and Huberman (1999) point out, the quality of teacher-student interrelationship is one of the important draining aspects of burnout. The EFL teachers of the current study in the interviews stressed that students' demotivation and disruptive classroom behavior were important in developing the feeling of disappointment and frustration, which could negatively affect their teaching. Besides, they agreed that policymakers could play a part in disempowering EFL teachers and making them less autonomous, hence increasing burnout experience. Accordingly, to cope with external pressures and lower their burnout experience, teachers should be involved in decision making regarding the method of their teaching and assessing their students. As Ballet, Kelchtermans, and Loughran (2006) state, when teachers experience autonomy, they can cope actively and creatively with changes in the workplace.

The second research question addressed the issue of motivation to teach based on the tenets of SDT. According to the results, the majority of the EFL participants were autonomously motivated. The quantitative data analysis indicated that the autonomous forms of motivation (i.e.,

intrinsic motivation and identified regulation) were the most prominent types of motivation among the EFL teachers. These results are congruent with the results from previous research (e.g., Carson & Chase, 2009; Van den Berghe et al., 2013) in that they showed that those teachers who taught physical education courses in the state of Ohio and felt autonomous would teach either for inherent reasons (such as pleasure, enjoyment, and learning something new) or for internalized external reasons (such as gaining something important to their personal goals and identity).

Furthermore, qualitative data analysis suggested that the predominant types of motivation were the most internalized forms of behavioral regulations (i.e., intrinsic and identified forms), adhering to autonomous motivation. Their motives mainly included interest in teaching, the exciting nature of teaching/learning English, better social relations, and betterment of self and others. This result is in line with the quantitative data analysis which showed that external reasons were not as important as internal reasons for the highly motivated teachers. Also, the results from the interviews showed that some teachers with high levels of burnout were mostly identified with the controlled form of motivation, and factors such as low payment and excessive workload were the causes of their demotivation. Hence, lack of job resources could decrease the EFL teachers' motivation and contribute to their reduced personal accomplishments.

As to the third research question, the results from co-rrelational analysis revealed that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization had negative and significant relationships with the EFL teachers' autonomous motivation, but they had positive relationships with controlled motivation. It can be argued that autonomous motivation has a positive effect on EFL teachers' functioning, and, consequently, increases a sense of personal accomplishments and reduces emotional exhaustion. The negative relationship between EFL teachers' autonomous motivation with depersonalization and reduced efficacy is not far from expectation when one agrees with Pyhalto, Pietarinen, and Salmela-Aro's (2011) claim that autonomous motivation will lead to teachers' optimal engagement in their job. Moreover, those EFL teachers who have a high level of introjected and external regulation and believe that their lives are controlled by conditions outside of their control will engage in their work with a sense of pressure and they are more likely to develop depersonalization and emotional exhaustion, which can create a negative attitude towards work (i.e., teaching). The results from co-rrelational analysis are in agreement with the previous findings (Fernet et al., 2012), indicating that autonomous motivation would be connected with a low level of teacher burnout, an increased sense of personal accomplishments among teachers. Fernet et al. (2012) in a study with a large number of French-Canadian teachers in public elementary and high schools showed that changes in teachers' perceptions of classroom overload, students' disruptive behavior, and school principals' leadership behaviors were negatively related to changes in autonomous motivation and self-efficacy, which were in turn negatively related to burnout components. These findings also find support from the related literature indicating that internally motivated individuals, as compared with externally motivated individuals, are more efficacious (Fernet, Sen, Guay, Marsh, & Dowson, 2008).

As to the predictive power of the motivational factors in experiencing burnout (the fourth research question), the regression analysis results revealed that motivational types, in general, accounted for a small amount of variation in three dimensions of burnout. However, their small contributions to the EFL teachers' burnout should be taken into account. Some forms of motivations (intrinsic motivation, identified, and external regulation) reached the statistical significance. External regulation (a form of controlled motivation) positively contributed to the teachers' depersonalization, suggesting that controlled motivation might lead to burnout experience among teachers in the long run. That is to say, expecting an extrinsic reward from others and behaving with a sense of obligation on the part of EFL teachers may make them more vulnerable to stress and lead to the feeling of helplessness when their external goals are not

accomplished. In contrast, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation (two forms of autonomous motivation) positively contributed to personal accomplishment, suggesting that behaving with a full sense of volition, willingness, and choice on the part of EFL teachers could reduce burnout experience.

Conclusion

This mixed-methods study explored burnout and motivation profiles among a sample of Iranian EFL teachers. The present research can be promising in that it approached towards EFL teachers' motivation to teach through applying the SDT framework. It also examined the relationship between burnout and motivation, and the extent to which the autonomous and controlled forms of motivation could contribute to the presence of burnout. In essence, the results in the quantitative part of the current study demonstrated that the level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were generally low in the sample. The participants did not demonstrate the risk profile of burnout through high emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. In general, we might conclude that most of them have an emotional or cognitive involvement with their work. Moreover, the majority of the EFL teachers were autonomously motivated. Nevertheless, their personal accomplishment level was almost in the moderate range of burnout, indicating that some teacher participants had the feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity in teaching. Also, subsequent qualitative data analysis revealed several job- and person-related factors, such as the lack of job security, low payment, and excessive workload, as the possible causes of burnout among the Iranian EFL teachers. Besides, those teachers with low intrinsic motivation pointed out factors such as payment and financial issues for their low motivation to teach.

Furthermore, correlational analysis revealed a negative relationship between the EFL teachers' autonomous motivation with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and a positive relationship between autonomous motivation and personal accomplishment. Unlike autonomous motivation, the controlled forms of motivation showed a positive relationship with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. It is concluded that autonomous motivation can play a buffering role in the development of burnout among EFL teachers. That is to say, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation (two forms of autonomous motivation) can positively contribute to EFL teachers' personal accomplishment. However, the predictive power of motivational factors should not be the overarching criterion for explaining teacher burnout.

Pedagogical implications and suggestions for Further Research

The findings provide empirical evidence for the importance of motivation to teach in tackling burnout among EFL teachers. By implication, through understanding the work- and person-related factors which cause emotional and attitudinal exhaustion towards teaching, it is possible to develop motivational strategies to prevent teacher burnout. The findings also suggest that the effect of organizational factors can be detrimental when EFL teachers perceive that their self-determination and efficacy are threatened in the workplace. Therefore, EFL teachers' job expectation should be taken into account by language directors and policymakers to avoid teacher burnout.

Also, the results revealed that the EFL teachers' autonomous motivation was an important correlate of burnout. This indicates that EFL teachers who perceive themselves as less autonomously motivated in accomplishing their classroom tasks are more likely to be emotionally exhausted. By implication, EFL decision-makers should address EFL teachers' need for

autonomy by listening to their concerns and empowering them to make their own decisions regarding the curriculum activities. Moreover, the results imply that externally motivated L2 teachers are more likely unable to overcome stressful situations in their job in the long run. Indeed, the results of the current study should be read with some caution due to limitations in its cross-sectional design and the use of a small sample size. Hence, the participants' views might not represent a full picture of the burnout experience by all Iranian EFL teachers.

Future research is required to confirm the results of the study and investigate the role of controlled motivation as a risk factor for the development of burnout. It is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to explore the role of different types of motivation in burnout experience and uncover the causal relationship between motivation to teach and burnout in the field of L2 teaching. This way, it becomes clear which group of EFL teachers is more liable to lose interest and enthusiasm in their work. Additionally, some other psychological variable such as teachers' personality can be investigated with respect to motivation to teach and teacher burnout. Future studies in the context of the present research can also be carried out to see whether demographic variables can moderate the relationship between motivation to teach and teacher burnout.

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APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A
MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY-EDUCATORS SURVEY (MBI-ES)

Instruction: Please indicate your answer to each item by choosing the appropriate choice on the 7-point scale below.

Items	Never	A Few Times	Once a Month or Less	A Few Times a Month	Once a Week	A Few Times a Week	Every Day
1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.							
2. I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.							
3. I can easily understand how my students feel about things.							
4. I feel used up at the end of the workday.							
5. I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.							
6. I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.							
7. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.							
8. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.							
9. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.							
10. Working with people all day is really a strain for me.							
11. I don't really care what happens to some students.							
12. I feel very energetic.							
13. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.							
14. I feel students blame me for some of their problems.							
15. I feel burned out from my work.							
16. I feel frustrated by my job.							
17. I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.							
18. I feel I'm working too hard on my job.							
19. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.							
20. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.							
21. In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.							
22. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.							

APPENDIX B
MOTIVATION TO TEACH QUESTIONNAIRE (MTQ)

1	2	3	4		5
Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree		Completely Agree

I am motivated to teach well because …

1.	I am very interested in teaching	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Teaching helps me to learn new things	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I think this is very valuable to me as a person	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I want others to think I am a good teacher	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Teaching is fun	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am supposed to do so	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Others (colleagues, school principal, …) pressure me to do so	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I find teaching enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Otherwise I would feel guilty	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I am obliged to do so by others (colleagues, school principal)	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Otherwise I would be disappointed with myself	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I want to give the impression to others that I am a good teacher	1	2	3	4	5
13.	This is a personally important choice to me	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I find teaching a pleasant activity	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I am expected to do so	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I think this is an important life goal	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever used up at the end of a workday? Explain why (What problems caused this situation?)
2. Have you ever felt frustrating or fatigued in teaching English? If yes, what issue(s) do you think make you and other teachers feel frustrated?
3. What have you accomplished in your job (as an EFL teacher) so far? Can you elaborate on it/them?
4. Do you think teaching English can help you learn more? How?
5. Will you become disappointed if you don't teach? Why?
6. Why do you teach (English)? Any reason?
7. Do you think teaching (English) can help you to learn new things? How?
8. Do you consider teaching (English) as an important goal in your life? Why?
9. Is it important what others think about your teaching? Why?
10. Are you obliged to teach? Why?