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On the Development of a Model of Political and Socio-Economic Factors Impacting Iranian EFL Learners' Motivation to Learn English

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Abstract
The present study was an attempt to identify a model of the political and socio-economic factors influencing Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English. To achieve this, 20 EFL learners were interviewed about their motivation of learning English and based on these interviews, a questionnaire was designed and piloted among 221 EFL learners. Exploratory factor analysis was then run to identify the underlying factors, and as a result, eight factors proved to have high loadings. Then, the final 26-item questionnaire was distributed among 375 EFL learners, and they were asked to rate the items on a Likert scale. Analyzing responses revealed the most influencing factor as 'emigration' and the least important one as 'attitudes toward English and its utilitarian values'. To confirm the factor structure of the instrument, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used. The goodness of fit measures was utilized to see whether the proposed model fitted the data. The obtained fit indices sustained the initial structure of the EFA with eight factors and 26 items. Consequently, this model can act as a reliable source for future localized motivation research in Iran making up for the lack of such a specific view in this politically unique EFL context.

Keywords: EFL, Motivation, Political factors, Socio-economic status

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is regarded as essential in the accomplishment of any goal. It is a key factor that has a great impact on any educational learning process, most notably in learning a second or foreign language. Rehman, Bilal, Sheikh, Bibi, and Nawaz (2014) define motivation as "an internal process that activates, guides and maintains behavior over time". (p. 345). According to Gardner (1985, p. 10), the pioneer of socio-psychological motivational theory, L2 motivation can be defined as "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity". From Gardner's view, motivation is divided into two categories: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Instrumental motivation refers to a desire to learn a language because it

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would help the learner achieve certain practical goals, such as getting a job, passing an examination, getting a salary bonus, etc., while integrative motivation indicates an internal rationale for learning a foreign language so as to identify oneself with the target group who speak that language and to be able to communicate with them (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). It is noteworthy that this dichotomy of integrative and instrumental motivation accounts for the orientation (i.e. goal) level of motivation and does not explain the core component of motivation (Dörnyei, 1998).

Since the last decade of the twentieth century onward, there has been an agreement among researchers on a call for shifting from the Gardnerian and the social-psychological account of motivation toward a more practical and education-centered approach and in turn, new definitions of motivation have been proposed ever since. Dornyei and Ottó (1998), for instance, define motivation as "dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out." (p. 64). However, this paradigm shift does not necessarily mean an antagonism between these two accounts of motivation. In fact, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013), this change in thinking may be regarded as a kind of peaceful turnover for two reasons. First, it is not intended to renounce the previous works done in the field, but conversely, it aims to broaden their scope by introducing previously untouched factors. Second, the creators of the previous theories contributed to this revolution and had an active role in developing it.

The third wave of motivational theories emerged in the past decades through incorporating new motivational approaches. This mixture is characterized by a concern in motivational change and the association of motivation with concepts of identity and self. The most popular concepts in this characterization are the process-oriented perception of motivation (based mainly on dynamic character and temporal variation of motivation), motivation as an investment, and ideal and ought-to L2 self (Klimova, 2011). The concepts of 'ideal L2 self' and 'ought-to L2 self' have literally brought about a great change in motivation research. These concepts actually constitute the core elements of this study, which is part of a Ph.D. dissertation, along with the concepts of 'imagined communities' and 'international posture' since these latter terms are closely associated with identity and self-based motivation research.

Most of the research carried out on the concept of motivation in Iran addresses the correlations of this construct with some other ones such as L2 anxiety and language achievement and proficiency as well as the Gardnerian dichotomy of integrative and instrumental motivational orientations. Of this kind, one can name Ebrahim Khodadady (2013) and Sanadgol and Abdolmanafi-Rokni (2015).

Vaezi (2008) explored the integrative and instrumental motivations of 79 Iranian non-English major undergraduate students toward learning English by applying a 25-item questionnaire. The results showed that Iranian students had very high motivation and positive attitudes toward learning English (mean score=3.47). She concluded that these students were much more instrumentally motivated to learn English. Likewise, the work of Chalak and Kassaian (2010) pertained to the investigation of socio-psychological motivational orientations of 108 university students majoring in English translation. They summed up their research with a different conclusion from that of Vaezi (2008) proposing that their subjects held a high positive attitude toward English with both integrative and instrumental motivations at play. Also, Choubsaz and Choubsaz (2014) maneuvered upon 50 Iranian English literature undergraduate students' instrumental and integrative motivations as well as their attitudes toward the target language and community and similarly came to the conclusion that the subjects of their study were equally instrumentally and integratively-

motivated toward the English language. This disagreement between Vaezi's study and those of Chalak and Kassaian (2010) and Choubsaz and Choubsaz (2014) may be easily attributed to the difference in the subjects of the three studies in that the first used non-English major students many of whom might have never been interested in English and had to study it just because it was a compulsory academic course, so their orientations were more instrumental. However, in the other two studies, the participants were studying English as self-chosen academic subjects which shows their stronger interest in the language itself hence possessing some integrativeness toward the language.

Gender, age, language achievement and proficiency and their relationships with language motivation are also abundant in Iranian motivational studies. Khodadady and Ashrafborji (2013) designed and applied a Motivations Underlying English Language Learning (MUELL) Scale to 493 female EFL learners to test it as a reliable and valid measure of language achievement. Through factor analysis, they uncovered three underlying variables of Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Communicative. Although the researchers concluded that the MUELL was highly reliable, none of the latent variables showed a significant relationship with language achievement. Jannati and Marzban (2014), also, conducted a survey among 100 Iranian EFL learners to find the relationship between learning motivation and the English proficiency level and also that of gender and motivation. For the former relationship, Jannati and Marzban (2014) concluded a positive relationship while for the latter one, the significance was not high enough. Although the previous studies were mainly based on Gardener's dichotomy of integrativeness-instrumentality, a few studies tried to move to the new motivational framework of L2 Motivational Self System proposed by Dörnyei (2005). Azarnoosh and Birjandi (2012) investigated gender differences in the 1462 junior high school students' L2MSS (L2 motivational self-system) and found out that for the ideal L2 self, females acquired a higher mean whereas males had a higher mean on ought-to L2 self. Mahdavy (2013) pursued the same goal as that of Azarnoosh and Birjandi (2012) in high school students but with an opposite conclusion in that in his study, the ideal L2 -self was higher among males. For ought-to L2 self, the same result as in Azarnoosh and Birjandi (2012) was gained. Another application of L2MSS was in the cross-sectional work of Papi and Teimouri (2012) in which the researchers attempted to evaluate the change in the motivational characteristics of 1041 Iranian EFL learners studying at three contexts of secondary school, high school, and university. The results of the ANOVA indicated promotional variables generally improved with age while preventional variables declined with age.

Also, in order to eliminate the deficiency of Iranian research endeavors concerning motivation in addressing the specific conditions in which EFL is being used in Iran with its all political, social, cultural, and economic ups and downs during decades as well as the concept of globalization, some researchers shifted their locus of interest to include more localized factors into motivation research with regard to the latest political and socio-economic fluctuations occurring in Iran.

For instance, Mehrpour and Vojdani (2012) addressed the issue of globalization in an attempt to discover the factors underlying Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English. They administered a survey among 238 EFL learners using a questionnaire designed on the basis of localization of some aspects of globalization with the result that 'technological, sociological and scientific aspects' influenced Iranian EFL learners' language motivation. Recently, Ardavani and Durrant (2015) carried out a qualitative study to investigate the political and social factors that may have contributed to Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English, and came up with the conclusion that migration and contributions to the development of Iran were among the most-reported motivations. This study, however, implied some shortcomings as it was carried out with only five university students. It also oc-

curred in a privileged context, in the capital city of Tehran, where there are abundant language learning opportunities, and most of those participants were of high social backgrounds and studying prestigious majors at the best universities in Iran. These advantages will surely influence the kind of motivation.

The lack of such in-depth qualitative approaches and their limitations was the main incentive for this study in which the researchers aim to investigate the political and socio-economic factors that may contribute to the motivation of language learners in the light of L2 motivational self-system, taking into account the learners' ideal L2 selves, ought to L2 self, international posture, and also imagined communities with the latter two concepts being closely related to the former ones. . In addition, this study aims to identify which political and socio-economic factors had the most and the least effects on the motivation of the subjects as identified by them on the questionnaire. Finally, a model of political and socio-economic factors contributing to motivation in the Iranian context is proposed and validated through confirmatory factor analysis. Consequently, the research questions that are answered in this study include:

Q1. What are the political and socio-economic factors affecting Iranian learners' motivation to learn English?

Q2.Which political and socio-economic factors had the most and the least influence on the motivation of the subjects?

Q3. Utilizing the results of the qualitative data, what is the model of political and socio-economic factors contributing to Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English and is it a valid one for future empirical research?

METHODS

This study follows an exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach to investigate the political and socio-economic factors that might impact Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English. The design of the study is that of qualitative-quantitative which starts from collecting data qualitatively and moves toward confirming the gathered data through the quantitative phase. As a result, this study is comprised of three phases: a qualitative phase incorporating semi-structured interviews, a quantitative phase which aims to endorse the qualitative phase through using a researcher-made questionnaire, and the last phase applies a structural equation modeling approach to build a model of political and socio-economic factors influencing the motivation of Iranian EFL learners. The following diagram shows the progression of the design of this study.

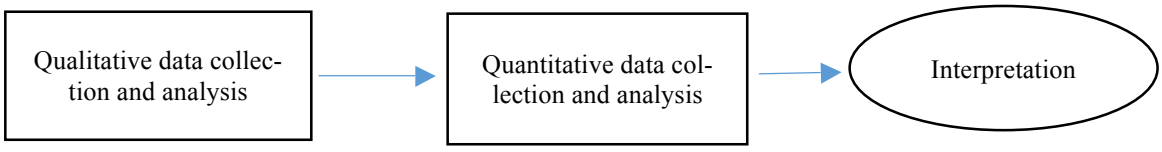

Figure 1. Progression of the design of the study

Participants

The participants of the qualitative phase were 20 English as a foreign language learners (10 males and 10 females) studying at a state-owned, non-profit language institute (Iran Language Institute) in Darab, a southern city in the province of Fars, Iran. These learners were studying at high intermediate levels and all had passed an internal placement test which is applied to any applicant willing to attend this institute. As a result, they were considered homogeneous. All of them had been learning English for at least three years in the adults section of the mentioned institute (ILI) and ten out of twenty claimed that had started learning English in the children and teenager sections of the institute since they finished the first grade of elementary school which means they had studied English for seven years before they

entered the adults section (according to the regulations of the ILI, the adults group includes students with at least fourteen years of age). The age range of these participants was 14 to 32.

For the main part of the study, due to the fact that the sample had to be large, convenience sampling was used. The participants in this phase included 375 English language learners pursuing their studies at different branches of the Iran Language Institute across the Iranian province of Fars. These branches were located in Fasa, Estahban, and Shiraz. The sample included 298 male and 77 female learners who represented 79.5 and 20.5 percent of the sample, respectively. The age range was from 14 to 37.

Instruments

Different instruments were applied in this work. Firstly, to elicit the various political and socio-economic issues which may underlie the EFL learners' motivation to learn English and to satisfy the requirements of the qualitative nature of this phase of the study, semi-structured interviews were designed and conducted with the participants. To prepare the open-ended questions, the researchers surfed the literature on the concept of motivation and its underlying factors to grasp a general knowledge and gradually came up with an interview guide which in turn led to the designing of a number of open-ended questions that pertained to the particular interest of the interview objectives. Then, in order to pilot the interview and prepare the final interview questions, some interviewees, as well as two colleagues who were familiar with the topic, were asked to go over the content of the interview guide and questions. Finally, based on the comments, some questions were deleted and some added to the interview guide.

Utilizing the data gathered through the qualitative phase (the interviews), a 35-item questionnaire was designed as the first draft. However, after a closer scrutiny of the questionnaire items and consulting some colleagues and also the participants in the first phase of the study, it was decided to drop six of the items since some either overlapped with some other items or were not relevant. Finally, 29 items were qualified to be included in the final version of the questionnaire. Each item in the questionnaire was of a 5-point Likert type and participants had to choose among five options of strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire also included a demographic section. Then, the questionnaire went through piloting in which the designed questionnaire was given to 221 learners of English.

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated through SPSS 22 and the obtained Cronbach's alpha was 0.841. It is worth mentioning that, in the process of item analysis, one of the items had to be dropped since it failed to meet the criterion value for 'corrected item-total correlation'. Moreover, two other items were deleted in the factor analysis process. Eventually, a validated 26-item questionnaire was applied to the participants of the main phase of the study (N=375) and the reliability was calculated again. The resulted Cronbach's alpha reached the value of 0.877 which was a reasonable one. The following table indicates the Cronbach's alpha for each subscale.

Table 1.
The subscale and the whole scale's Cronbach's alpha

Scale	Number of items	Alpha
Significant others	6	0.710
The government's foreign and scientific policy	5	0.750
Emigration	3	0.702
Transfer of religious and cultural ideology	4	0.739
Academic and occupational aspirations	3	0.745
IT advancements and travel orientations	3	0.780
Attitudes and empathy toward global community	2	0.773
Attitudes toward English and its utilitarian values	3	0.711
Scale alpha	0.877	

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

After preparing the final interview guide, 20 participants were contacted for the time of the interview and at the due time, the interview sessions were held individually at the language institute where the participants were studying English. In the beginning of the interview, the researchers explained the purpose and scope of the study to the interviewees as well as assuring them that their personal information would be kept confidential with the researchers. Since the interview needed to be recorded to enable the researchers to analyze the findings later, the interviewees were asked if they were willing to be recorded and only at their will was the recorder turned on. Also, some ice-breaking questions were asked first to make the participants feel at ease. The interviews were carried out in the participants' mother tongue (Persian) and in as a friendly and comfortable atmosphere as possible and the interviewer did not interrupt the interviewees unless it was felt that they were going off the main topic. In order to inculcate a sense of taking part in a dialogue into the participants, every now and then, the interviewer utilized back-channeling signals such as nods, yeah, and uh-huh. Also, the interviewer took notes whenever necessary in the course of running the interview. Finally, the session was concluded by asking the interviewees if they had anything to add to their statements and were appreciated again for their contribution. In order not to put any time pressure on the participants which might have affected their functionality, there was no time limit for the interviews, with the shortest session lasting 15 minutes and the longest one about 25 minutes. Then, the recorded data were transcribed in order to look for common themes and categories.

To codify the data, the researchers first organized the data and got familiar with it, which is the first step in codifying the qualitative data according to Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (2010). Then the transcripts were rendered into English and then imported to a computer software called MAXQDA. This software is designed to help qualitative researchers analyze their data through a fast and manageable procedure. Each imported transcript was assigned a label particular to the site and the person with whom the interview had been carried out. When the datasets were organized, the second stage was coding and reducing the data which consists of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. With the help of the software options, as many codes as possible were defined for each dataset by labeling any important words or phrases, either as in vivo codes or researcher-defined ones. As a result, a considerable number of codes emerged. After this initial coding, this large list of codes was reduced into a smaller list of tentative categories (29 categories) by the constant comparative method. Selective coding, which was the last and concluding section of coding and reducing, was commenced. Here, the researchers had to read between the lines and work out relationships or patterns among categories and combine them into major themes through consulting the related theories and the existing literature. To ascertain the dependability of codings, in addition to the researchers' constantly comparing the data with the assigned codes, the data were independently cross-checked by a colleague who was familiar with the field and compared in terms of stability and consistency upon the given codes. This led to the creation of eight themes which comprised our model of the political and socio-economic factors impacting Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English.

The second phase of the study centered on a quantitative approach which was carried out as an endorsement of the findings gathered through the qualitative phase of the study. As a result of the data analysis in the qualitative phase, the most influencing political and socio-economic factors regarding Iranian EFL learners' motivation in learning English were extracted from the interviewees' responses to the interview questions. In order to check for the extent of the generalizability of the findings of the qualitative phase to a much larger and comparable population, it was decided that based on the factors extracted from this phase, a questionnaire representing all these

factors be constructed and distributed among other Iranian EFL learners. This self-constructed questionnaire was first piloted among 221 EFL learners and the Cronbach-alpha coefficient for the reliability of this questionnaire was estimated as 0.841. Also, exploratory factor analysis was run in this phase. In the last part of the study, 375 EFL learners from different branches of the Iran Language Institute around the province of Fars received the 26-item questionnaire during the fall and winter semesters of 2016-2017 academic year. Before responding to the questions, the participants were provided with instructions on how to answer the items and were also given the assurance that their answers would be kept confidential with the researchers and that the results of the study were just going to be used for educational purposes. Filling out the questionnaires took almost 20 minutes or so and then the questionnaires were gathered and the responses were coded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program to be later analyzed and interpreted. The means of responses to the eight measures of the instrument were calculated to identify the most and the least influential motivating factors. Then, of course, came the ultimate aim of the study, that is, the presentation of a model of political and socio-economic factors impacting Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English. To achieve this aim, it was decided that Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) be used. This complicated and rigorous statistical procedure is often used to evaluate and define 'latent' variables using a number of observed variables hence introducing a structural model that imputes relationships between latent variables. A statistical software package called LISREL was used to perform SEM analysis in this study.

RESULTS

After the interviews were transcribed and went through coding processes, some primitive concepts emerged from the coding. For instance, many of the participants mentioned the positive influence of their parents, teachers, and peers in their motivation to learn English. They said that they sometimes felt competitive toward those of their classmates who were attending English classes or talked about their willingness to impress their parents and teachers. However, some others mentioned the political milieu, such as Iran's nuclear deal and foreign relations, and also religious and cultural matters as affecting their learning motivation, saying that since the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and Western countries had opened new windows to their country's future and they could travel freely to other countries, they thought they needed to know English.

Moreover, Iran's recent developments and advances in economy, science, and industry were mentioned as factors underlying our country's need to develop relations and cooperate with both developed and developing countries which in turn necessitates nurturing an educated labor force which is familiar with English.

The impact of information technology and traveling orientations were other reasons that the participants thought could have persuaded them to attend English classes to learn it. They believed that in this new age of communication and technology, one cannot alienate English from the world of social networks and the Internet, and this fact has motivated them toward learning English. Among other motivating factors were the key role of English language knowledge in grasping job opportunities and attaining promotions in the present occupation, the other utilities of knowing English, and sympathizing with the people around the world in their happiness and sorrow.

In conclusion, eight major themes forming our rudimentary model of motivating factors were induced as follows:

1. Significant others
2. The government's foreign and scientific policy
3. Transfer of religious and cultural ideology
4. Academic and occupational aspirations
5. Information technology advancements and travel orientations
6. Attitudes and empathy toward the glob-

al community
7. Attitudes toward English and its utilitarian values
8. Emigration

After building the questionnaire based on the above themes, it was piloted to ensure its factor structure. The following are the results of the quantitative section of the study which includes the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses.

First, to find the most and the least influencing factors, the mean scores for each factor was calculated through SPSS. The results of this procedure are presented in the following table.

Table 2.
The eight factors in the order of significance

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. D
Emigration	375	2	5	4.231	0.927
The government's foreign and scientific policy	375	2	5	4.109	0.804
Academic and occupational aspirations	375	2	5	4.049	0.908
Transfer of religious and cultural ideology	375	2	5	4.012	0.780
Significant others	375	2	5	3.859	0.761
IT advancements & travel orientations	375	2	5	3.622	0.855
Attitudes and empathy toward the global community	375	2	5	3.403	1.056
Attitudes toward English and its utilitarian values	375	2	5	3.343	0.981

In order to find the underlying factors in the questionnaire, principal component analysis (PCA) was run in the SPSS 22. The results of the correlation matrix suggested that two of the items had to be eliminated since failing to live up to the requirements (coefficients were less than 0.3). As for the suitability of the items, the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin) was 0.77 and this was indicative the suitability of the data since it should be more than 0.6. Also, Bartlett's test of Sphericity reached statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) confirming the factorability of the correlation matrix. PCA extracted eight factors which had eigenvalues more than 1, explaining 60 percent of the variance. (Table 3)

Table 3.
Factor extraction through PCA

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.186	19.947	19.947
2	2.391	9.195	29.142
3	1.760	6.768	35.910
4	1.566	6.024	41.934
5	1.358	5.221	47.156
6	1.235	4.749	51.904
7	1.120	4.308	56.212
8	1.002	3.853	60.064
9	.942	3.624	63.689
10	.908	3.493	67.182
11	.858	3.301	70.483
12	.805	3.094	73.577
13	.718	2.760	76.338
14	.672	2.586	78.924
15	.635	2.443	81.367
16	.605	2.325	83.692
17	.593	2.281	85.973
18	.531	2.042	88.015
19	.511	1.966	89.981
20	.454	1.744	91.726
21	.428	1.645	93.371
22	.425	1.636	95.007
23	.392	1.507	96.514
24	.343	1.321	97.835
25	.312	1.201	99.036
26	.251	.964	100.000

The results of the PCA also went under Parallel analysis in which the size of eigenvalues was compared with those gained from a randomly generated data set of the same size (Pallant, 2007). The parallel analysis results are presented below. As it is clear from Table 4, the eight factors could be retained.

Table 4.
Actual eigenvalues and their corresponding values from parallel analysis

Component number	Eigenvalue from PCA	Criterion value from PA	Decision
1	5.186	1.2713	Accept
2	2.391	1.1746	Accept
3	1.760	1.0882	Accept
4	1.566	1.0285	Accept
5	1.358	.09690	Accept
6	1.235	.08931	Accept
7	1.120	.08326	Accept
8	1.002	.7428	Accept

The last step was factor rotation in order to find which items had high loadings on which factors. Table 5 shows a summary of the results of factor rotation and item loadings.

Table 5.
Item loadings on eight factors

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
m23	.665							
m24	.653							
m4	.648		.333					
m19	.609							
m2	.478					.420		
m17	.538							
m22		.721						
m25		.669						
m26	.412	.492					-.311	
m14	.388		.672					
m9			.633					
m13			.483			.350		
m15		.355	.451					
m11				.847				
m5				.745				
m12				.640				
m7					.871			
m8					.855			
m10						.732		
m6						.582		
m16		.397				.441		
m18							.761	
m3		.335					.547	
m20							.512	
m1								.824
m21								.750

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

As it is noted in table 5, each of the items had heavy loadings only on one factor hence confirming that the questionnaire in this study along with its scales and items correctly measured what it was supposed to measure.

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) applied on the final sample (N=375) are as follows:

In this study, eight categories were presented which had to be checked in terms of their goodness of fit. LISREL software was applied to run CFA. Figure 2 is a representation of the path diagram for our proposed model.

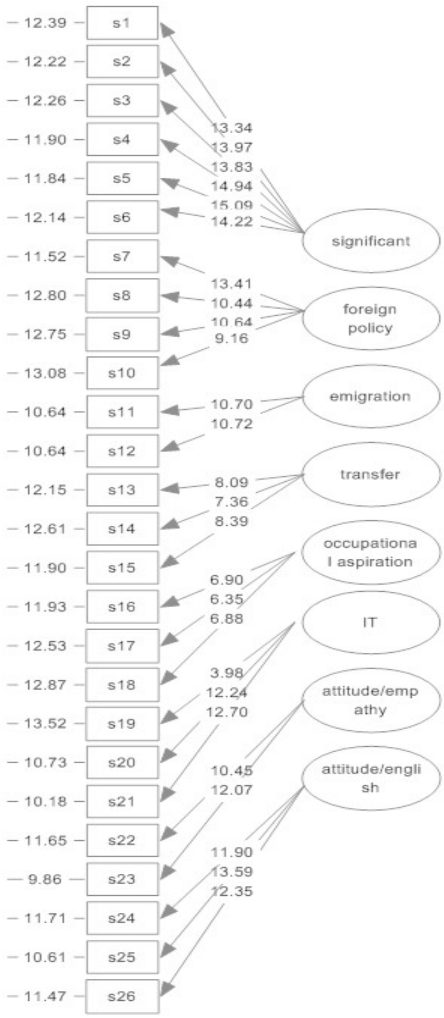

Figure 2. The path diagram for the proposed model

In order to check the fit of the model to the data, many researchers, such as Jaccard and Wan (1996) suggest using fit indices from different classes since this strategy may help overcome the limitations of each index. As a result, the obtained values for fit indices were checked against the least acceptable values (cut-off points) reported in the literature.

For RMSEA, according to Steiger (2007), an upper limit of 0.07 seems to be the general consensus among authorities in the area and as it is evident from Table 6 the obtained value in this study is 0.032 which is less than 0.07. The relative chi-square was calculated 1.393 for this model which is less than the upper limit of 2.00 reported in Ullman and Bentler (2003). The goodness of fit index (GFI) is traditionally believed to have an omnibus cut-off point of 0.90; however, simulation studies have shown that when factor loadings and sample sizes are low a

higher cut-off of 0.95 is more appropriate (Shevlin & Miles, 1998). In this study, the obtained GFI was 0.93. As it can be determined from the table of the values of the fit indices, we can conclude that the proposed model does fit the data. Table 6 summarizes the obtained values and the acceptable cut-off points for each index.

Table 6.
The obtained and the acceptable values of the fit indices

Fit indices	RMSEA	Chi-square/df	SRMR	FI	NFI	CFI	IFI	RFI
The obtained Value	0.032	1.393	0.048	0.93	0.95	0.98	0.98	0.94
The acceptable value	≤0.07	≤ 5	≤0.08	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9

DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

The current study was an attempt to identify different political and socio-economic factors influencing Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English through the use of three research questions. The first question pertained to the qualitative phase of the study:

Q1. What are the political and socio-economic factors affecting Iranian learners' motivation to learn English?

Referring to the results of the exploratory factor analysis, we could identify eight underlying factors contributing to the motivation of the Iranian EFL students. These factors were: (1) significant others; (2) the government's foreign and scientific policy; (3) Transfer of religious and cultural ideology; (4) academic and occupational aspirations; (5) information technology advancements and travel orientations; (6) attitudes and empathy toward global community; (7) attitudes toward English and its utilitarian values; and (8) Emigration. In general, the factors that emerged from this phase of the study represent what has been previously stated in different models of motivation. For example, Ushioda (2009) proposed a model of motivation in which the person is realized in relation to context which means learning an L2 is just one part of one's identity and we need to attend to many other factors (significant others, political milieu, cultural factors, and other factors) in order to fully understand the concept of motivation. Or, many of the participants, while interviewing, revealed their pleasure in learning English which is one of the subcomponents of intrinsic motivation suggested by Noels (2001) in his self-determination theory. Emigration, a major factor in the motivation of the participants of this study, can be a reflection of their ideal L2 self which according to Dornyei's L2 motivational self-system model links to the future goals of the L2 learner (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013).

Q2.Which political and socio-economic factors had the most and the least influence on the motivation of the subjects?

By presenting this question, we intended to know which factors, among the eight extracted ones, had the most influence on motivating Iranian learners to learn English. To achieve this aim, we decided to compare the means of responses for each factor. According to Oxford (1990), the mean scores that fall between 1.0 and 2.4 are identified as "low" influence, 2.5 and 3.4 as "medium" influence, and 3.5 and 5.0 as "high" influence. As it is evidenced by Table 2 in the previous section, all factors had a high influence except for "attitudes toward English and its utilitarian values" which had a medium influence.

As it is evidenced from Table 2, emigration enjoyed the label of the most influential factor in motivating EFL learners in Iran to learn English. Living abroad- at least temporarily- was a recurring theme in the interviewees' responses to the questions in the interviews. Many of them, especially the university students, mentioned this somewhere in their statements. Some desired to leave Iran in pursuit of happiness and a high-quality life as soon as they could get the chance and never come back. Some would like to do their higher education in a prestigious country and return to Iran after a while. What was com-

mon among them was the wish to improve their lives and find better jobs either in or outside the country. This bitter fact that many Iranian graduates hope to leave Iran is also mentioned in Ardavani and Durrant (2015), in her search toward finding the socio-political factors influencing university students to study English.

Q3. Utilizing the results of the qualitative data, what is the model of political and socio-economic factors contributing to Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English and is it a valid one for future empirical research?

The postulated model of political and socio-economic factors contributing to Iranian EFL learners' motivation to learn English is illustrated in the following figure.

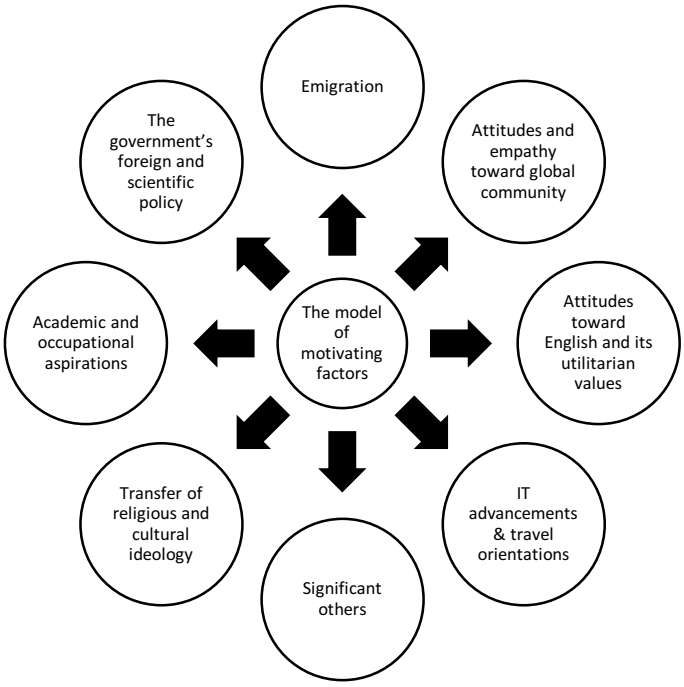

Figure 3. The postulated model of motivational factors

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis and the acceptability of fit indices confirm the suitability and validity of the proposed model for future empirical research suggesting that the model of the political and socio-economic factors impacting on the motivation of Iranian EFL learners postulated through this research endeavor can be a reliable source for those Iranian researchers who are looking for a valid localized model of motivation in the context of Iran.

However, like any other research endeavor, this study suffers from some shortcomings. First, this study was carried out in two phases. In the qualitative phase, the participants were selected through convenient sampling mostly from among the author's own classes at the Iran language institute as there was no other appropriate sample available in Darab which is a small city. This small sample may affect the generalizability of the results and does not generate all the underlying motivational factors. Second, in the quantitative phase, due to a large sample collected throughout different settings in Iran, many of the questionnaires were distributed not by the researchers but by other instructors at different institutes; consequently, this may have had some effects on the performance of the participants on the questionnaire. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of this work that was due to time limitations might have affected its results since motivation is a construct which may change in the course of time and as a result, in order to obtain more reliable results, a longitudinal study seems more convincing. To account for these shortcom-

ings, future research can adopt longitudinal case studies since these types of research allow checking for any changes in the motives of learners to study English. Other research attempts may be carried out to explore if the proposed model would be able to predict language performance in English inaccuracy or error or even reaction time in behavioral tasks. It is also noteworthy to further scrutinize the older participants than the ones in this study to check for any differences, for the political knowledge may be more advanced in the older learners.

CONCLUSION

According to the results, the most dominant socio-political factor that motivates Iranian EFL learners to learn English is 'emigration' followed by 'the government's foreign and scientific policy'. This indicates that the number of Iranian students who desire to leave the country is increasing. They are seeking better job opportunities and believe that the job market abroad is more suitable to their aspirations. This is actually a bitter fact which is leading to the phenomenon of brain draining. Therefore, the government is expected to provide the young generation with rich educational opportunities that instill in them the hope of a prosperous future career. Also, the least influencing factor is 'attitudes toward English and its utilitarian values'. This low rank in terms of 'attitudes toward English' has also been reported in Weger (2013), where he certifies that international English learners are less stimulated by the positive attitudes toward the English community and more motivated by a sense of personal pride in learning and using English.

Also, in terms of the postulated model, it can be concluded that the data obtained through qualitative interviews and the questionnaire consistently fit the hypothesized model and consequently the proposed model of the political and socio-economic factors motivating Iranian learners can be used as a valid model for future investigation. The results of this study can shed light on the issue of motivation in foreign contexts and how it might be different from that of English- as- a-second- language contexts. There might be more than just instrumental or integrative motivation working on and contributing to motivation and this is what needs more research and investigation, especially in a country like Iran. Politicians and policymakers also could benefit from the results of this study indirectly since it is implying that more and more elite are leaving Iran with various goals and whatever they are, this brain drain has and will have unprecedented negative outcomes for the future and development of this country.

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