

# Adverse Conditions in the Professional Lives of English Instructors: Recommendations to Ameliorate Teacher Resilience

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## Abstract

The present qualitative study strived to examine Iranian English instructors' experiences of adverse conditions in their teaching environments. To yield this purpose, 30 novice language institute English instructors in Tabriz (Iran) were selected as the participants. To triangulate the data, the researchers utilized interview and narrative data collection techniques. Adapting inductive, bottom-up approach to analyzing the themes, three main themes were generated: *teacher factors*, *contextual factors*, and *student factors*. The findings of the study were ascribed to the participants' resilience in their academic settings. The findings can provide the teacher educators and educational psychologists with certain guiding principles regarding teacher resilience.

**Keywords:** adverse conditions, emotional regulation, psychological wellbeing, teacher education, teacher resilience

## Introduction

It is a generally held view that teaching is an exhausting process which is replete with the students' misbehavior, constant pedagogical alternations, and great personal responsibility (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). It is evident that Asian language instructors' negative feelings exceed their positive feelings and they tend to become dissatisfied with their occupation and to suffer from burnout over the course of time (Chen, 2019). Furthermore, teachers' psychological well-being is one of the hotly debated issues in teacher education (Yin, Huang & Wang, 2017).

Competitive conditions of today's world conditions put workers under a lot of stress. It is believed that in any didactic system, a large number of features are dominant in cultivating the subsequent communities of individuals. Instructors constitute the "designers of society" (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017, p. 405). They comprise "significant leaders" (Khani & Mirzaee, 2014, p. 1) who have a profound impact on the learners' education (Maulana, Opdenakker, & Bosker, 2016). The teachers' instructional practices sway the learners' affective and cognitive factors along with their technical information. Consequently, teachers perform a prominent educational role (Skinner & Beers, 2016) in the creation of an efficient society. Positive psychology refers to the scientific examination of circumstances and processes which empower diverse individuals and organization to produce a brilliant performance (Gable & Haidt, 2005).

Evidence has indicated that there is a high frequency of anxiety, tension, psychological problems, and heart illness amongst teachers in comparison to other occupations (Unterbrink, Zimmermann, Pfeifer, Wirsching, Brähler, & Bauer, 2008). Additionally, teachers themselves see their jobs as harmful to their health (Yang, Ge, Hu, & Wang, 2009). The importance of teacher wellbeing is not to be belittled. Besides, Van Petegem, Aelterman, Rosseel, and

Creemers (2006) have found a direct connection between teacher and student wellbeing when they performed a classroom environmental investigation. This direct link says that a negative atmosphere in class set by the teacher because of poor health can affect student performance and behavior, increase dysfunctional interactions with other students, and have an effect on low self-efficacy towards classroom tasks (Christenson, 1989).

Coping with emotions in productive ways as well as indicating them fitly, as introduced by Denham, Bassett, and Zinsser (2012), are two primary capabilities for emotion and feeling control. Moreover, the efficient regulation of feelings comprises taking cognizance, supervising, and adjusting them. They also take advantage of various techniques to organize or handle and control the feelings (e.g., Vimz, & Pina, 2010; Zakiyi, Mohebbi, & Karami, 2010). Furthermore, emotion regulation has been evaluated as the techniques that are accustomed to decrease, arouse, and limit the feeling, and it is believed that regulating the feelings is one of the inborn individual properties (Robertson, Daffern, & Bucks, 2012; Diamond, & Aspinwall, 2003). That is, controlling the feelings is one among the foremost crucial home works for everyone's physical and psychological health (Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Gratz & Gunderson, 2002).

A close scrutiny of the pertinent literature on the concept of resilience (e.g., Castro & Murray, 2010; Reich, Zautra, & Hall, 2012) accentuates the fact that it has been characterized as the individuals' positive acclimatization to adverse, unfavorable, and untoward circumstances. Nuttman-Shwartz and Green (2021) made an endeavor to delineate the diverse aspects of this construct which is regarded to be a coping ability in various situational contexts. As they pointed out, resilience encompasses an individual's capability to recover equilibrium and to restore his/her mental health subsequent to an excruciating and agonizing experience during the course of his/her life. The perusal of this definition underscores the fact that it delimits this psychological construct and restricts it to pathological conditions.

Nonetheless, as Todt, Weiss, and Hoegl (2018) pointed out, resilience is a fluid concept which is modified due to the characteristics of specific situations and sways every possible aspect of human life. They defined resilience as a personal capability to transmogrify the inevitable challenges in different situational contexts to opportunities to flourish and to thrive in stressful conditions. An examination of this definition highlights the fact that the individuals' perceptions of adverse conditions might ameliorate or exacerbate their resilience. More specifically, while the conception of a challenge as an insurmountable obstacle may have an adverse impact on the individuals' resilience, their characterization of hurdles as chances to thrive is likely to promote their resilience.

Furthermore, the definition shows that resilience does not constitute an inflexible and unalterable personality trait that distinguishes individuals from each other. Instead, as Masten and Reed (2002) noted, it is a psychological state. Likewise, De Terte and Stephens (2014) argued that, as a state, resilience comprises the individuals' diverse cognitive and affective potentialities which are likely to be transformed and redefined due to the peculiarities of various conditions and circumstances. Considering these issues, Castro and Murray (2010) averred that resilience refers to the synchronous, consistent, and unified acclimatization of the mental and physical aspects of the self to various situations owing to the changes which stem from individual development, social conditions, contextual stressors, academic and occupational requirements, and tragic events and situations among others.

Evans and Reid (2014) underpinned the characterization of resilience as a state and noted that resilience is a multifaceted construct during the performance of different tasks. As they noted, resilience delineates the individuals' capacity to: be full of hope, manage tension, relieve stress,

continue to function effectively and properly, recover composure, and transmogrify to a more resourceful and ingenious individual as a result of the development and implementation of stress-management strategies. As they concluded, the notion of resilience as a state is compatible and congruent with the notion of resilience as a process.

Schneider, Lyons, and Khazon (2013) stated that resilience does not constitute a stable trait. In other words, individuals are not endowed with this capacity as an innate characteristic. Instead, resilience constitutes a useful and efficacious psychological instrument which is developed, modified, and redefined over time and as a response to the requirements of specific situations. Likewise, Kamalpour, Watson, and Buys (2020) pointed out that resilience refers to the process of interaction with the pertinent environment in order to relieve the stress which is caused by the contextual stress-inducing factors. They noted that resilience (as a process) empowers the teachers including the language teachers to cope with the multitudinous sources of stress in their workplace.

Reich, Zautra, and Hall (2012) expounded on the concept of teacher resilience in academic settings and associated resilience with coping strategies. They noted that teachers' responses to stressful situations, which emanate from sundry internal and external factors, can be classified into three main and distinct categories comprising: a) aggression; b) concession; and c) adaptation. They explained that novice teachers and the teachers with a dominant neuroticism personality trait tend to respond to the stressors with anger. These teachers enter a befuddled state in which their struggle to exercise control over the stressful situations turns out to be futile. Moreover, according to them, the teachers with low levels of psychological composure are likely to become overwhelmed by the tension and to stop their effective occupational function. These teachers tend to experience burnout and are likely to change their occupation during shorter periods of time in comparison with their peers. Finally, as they pointed out, more experienced teachers and the teachers with a dominant openness to experience personality trait tend to acclimatize themselves to the unusual situations, protect themselves against the contextual stressors, and turn the challenges of the new situations into opportunities for personal growth. As they concluded, resilience is associated with the adaption response category and fulfills a pivotal role in the teachers' psychological well-being and optimum occupational performance in diverse academic settings.

A close scrutiny of the empirical studies of teacher resilience in Iranian context highlights the fact that the researchers have pursued certain lines of research to the exclusion of others. A group of these studies (e.g., Razmjoo & Ayoobian, 2019) have investigated the relationship between teacher resilience and other teacher factors including teachers' self-efficacy. Other studies (e.g., Ayoobian & Rashidi, 2021) have attempted to determine the impact of teacher reflection on the promotion of EFL teachers' resilience. Finally, a number of studies (e.g., Shirazizadeh, Tajik, & Amanzadeh, 2019) have made an effort to determine the degree to which the components of reflection predict resilience in different academic settings. Notwithstanding, the relevant studies have disregarded the examination of teacher resilience as a factor which is likely to mediate the impacts of stress-inducing factors on the EFL teachers' psychological well-being. Consequently, this issue might constitute a fruitful line of research in the EFL contexts including the context of Iran.

This study intends to examine the negative emotions of Iranian teachers. Among negative emotions, anger and frustration have been widely investigated in the literature (e.g., Hargreaves, 2000; Sutton, 2000). It has been shown that language teachers frequently experience the feeling of rage and suffer from its impact on their mental well-being and academic efficiency. The relevant

studies have highlighted the fact that rage negatively affects these teachers' psychological well-being and accelerates their burnout (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015). Other negative emotions such as anxiety (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1991), feeling helpless (Kelchtermans, 1996), feeling sad (Sutton, 2000) were also examined.

The present study aimed to shed light on the sources of experiencing adverse conditions and negative emotions among Iranian teachers. Additionally, the study strived to shed light on the effects of teachers' experience of negative emotions on their teaching quality. Finally, this study made an endeavor to determine the degree to which the EFL teachers' resilience in the context of the classroom mediated the impacts of the various sources of stress on their psychological well-being and classroom performance. To date, very few studies have examined the reasons behind the teachers' negative emotions both in and out of the classroom. We believe that understanding factors contributing to teachers' lower level of psychological well-being can be of help to teacher educators to take pre-emptive measures as how to find practical strategies to build resilience among teachers and how to enhance teaching quality through raising teachers' psychological well-being. It is a widely attested fact that teaching is demanding and challenging occupation, full of adverse conditions and difficult times. Every scholar agrees that teaching is a cognitive, affective and emotional task. Emotions are important features in all of the mental models of brain. It has also granted that a feeling encompasses a group of mental conditions which comprise intuitive expertise, revealing behavior and secondary physical reactions (Gross & Barret, 2011).

Most of Iranian EFL teachers experience different levels of stress, anxiety, and demotivation in and out of the classrooms. Little is known about Iranian EFL teachers' adverse conditions in the teaching profession and the techniques they use to control their negative feelings. Having these purposes in mind, the present research tried to answer the following research question:

1. What factors contribute to Iranian novice teachers' perceptions of adverse conditions in private institutions?

## **Method**

### **Setting and Participants**

The present study was conducted in Tabriz, Iran. 30 male and female Iranian novice EFL English teachers took part in it. The participant teachers were selected using purposeful sampling from different language institutions across the city. They ranged in age from 22 to 28 and had professional experience ranging from 2 to 10 years.. The researchers chose these instructors since they were available, and agreed to take part in the study. The researchers used Morse's guideline (2015) to determine the appropriate number of required participants. Based on this guideline, the number of participants in qualitative studies can range from thirty to fifty. As far as focus groups were concerned, they were divided into five groups of six participants. In these groups, an interview expedited discussion among their members who were similar to each other in terms of their background knowledge (Packer, 2011).

### **Instruments**

Regarding the in-depth interviews, the 30 novice teacher participants took part in one-on-one sessions with the first author. As Dornyei (2007) maintains, interviews are among the most suitable tools of data collection. Initially, a semi-structured interview was employed to ask the teachers to answer five open-ended questions. The duration of each interview varied between 30-45 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed precisely in Farsi and then they were translated into English again. To ensure validity, the transcribed data was to be shared with the interviewees for verification. The interview questions had to be followed up with new questions

to encourage the interviewees to elaborate themselves and provide them with the autonomy to share what they thought was related to questions. This could make the atmosphere more natural, and minimize Hawthorne effect (Wood & Ross-kerr, 2010). Moreover, the researchers conducted focus group interviews. These interviews involved three groups, each including six members. The other groups comprised five members. Each focus group interview lasted for sixty minutes. Furthermore, the researchers used the instructors' narratives to collect the required data. In this research technique, the participants are considered to be storytellers whose perspectives on the world constitute sources of invaluable data (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study adhered to principled reflections. The participants were informed about the objectives of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their data. Additionally, to safeguard their anonymity, the researchers provided guidelines to ensure that the participants' identities were represented without revealing personal information. Furthermore, the researchers obtained their consent to record their pertinent interviews.

### **Procedure**

30 Iranian high school teachers from novice instructors at private high schools took part in this qualitative study. The researchers used the interview and narrative data collection techniques to gather the required data. A semi structured interview was employed to ask the participant teachers to answer one open-ended question. The participants were among English teachers both male and female from Tabriz, Iran. Thirty teachers participated in the required interviews. The allocated time of the recorded interviews ranged from thirty to forty-five minutes. Moreover, the lead researcher conducted focus group interviews while serving as the moderator. The duration of these recorded interviews ranged from sixty to ninety minutes. Lastly, the lead researcher analyzed the teachers' narratives regarding adverse conditions and their use of emotion regulation strategies. The teachers were provided with the opportunity to use Farsi or English to answer the relevant questions. At this stage, three teachers used English and 27 of them used Farsi in their interviews. The lead researcher transcribed all the recorded sessions and shared the relevant transcriptions with the other researchers. Data coding was performed by all the researchers. Moreover, the researchers collaborated with each other to choose the pertinent quotations, translate them, and obtain the teachers' confirmation of the translated quotations via email. The misunderstandings were corrected with the help of the teachers. After the interviews, the teacher participants' responses were recorded and then transcribed in Farsi. These transcriptions were scored by two raters and later translated into English.

### **Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis, as one type of data analysis in qualitative studies, is extensively employed to analyze the gathered data in the epistemological studies. It involves recognizing, scrutinizing, arranging, illustrating, and stating themes found within an information set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The theme, in the thematic analysis, is characterized as consistent incorporation of the different aspects of data (Sandelowski & Leeman, 2012). Themes comprise the patterns in the participants' responses and enable the researcher to answer the raised questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Moreover, this kind of analysis helps the researchers to produce thematic maps. These maps refer to the presentation of subjects, codes, and their associations, concerning a meticulous report and depiction of each theme, their principle, exemplars and counterexamples, and other similar details. They assist the researchers to organize themes and to identify the unique themes (Ryan & Bernard,

2000; Braun & Clarke, 2006). This type of analysis is mainly used in the qualitative studies which make an effort to interpret the participants' data. It empowers the researcher to determine systematic interconnections among the pertinent themes and to present meaningful findings. What is more, Namey et al. (2008, p. 138) supposed that "thematic moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and concentrates on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas".

### **Rigor in Qualitative Methods**

According to Maxwell (2013), writing the reports of the studies with the help of qualitative techniques depends on the intentional use of strategies which are broadly implemented and acknowledged as necessary for establishing firmness in the relevant studies. These strategies encompass extended engagement, and member checking among others.

#### *Trust-based relationships*

The researchers spent sufficient time with the participants in order to establish and maintain trust-based relationships with them. Furthermore, they endeavored to enhance quality time by assuring the teachers of the consequential role of their narratives in the study. The establishment of the aforementioned relationships enabled the researchers to conduct the interviews in an efficient way (Dale, Grimes, Miller, Ursillo, & Drainoni, 2017).

#### *Sampling adequacy and appropriateness*

Morse (2015) explains that in writing qualitative reports, the sufficiency of the number of participants depends on data saturation. Generalizability does not constitute the spotlight of these studies. Nonetheless, the participants' characteristics should reflect the characteristics of the members of the relevant population (Merriam, 2000).

#### *Debriefing and bias*

Peer review and debriefing constitute tactics which facilitate the supervision of interviewer bias and simplify the specification of the pertinent themes (Mitchell, Boettcher-Sheard, Duque, & Lashewicz, 2018). Peer review enables the researchers to overcome their prejudice when they make an effort to raise the questions of interview protocols.

#### *Member checking*

This technique is employed to improve the rigor of studies. In this technique, the researchers provide the participants with the transcribed interviews and ask them to confirm their truthfulness (Creswell, 1994). This technique can be employed if the participants agree to collaborate with the researchers to analyze the relevant transcriptions (Sandelowski, 2008). It can be used in the studies which take advantage of the grounded theory method (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016).

#### *Investigator triangulation and inter-coder reliability*

We conducted inter-coder reliability in order to ensure the coding consistency (Hamilton, Sandelowski, et al., 2013). SPSS 24 was used to determine Cohen's kappa. (Burla et al., 2008). The analysis of data showed that this value was satisfactory. The examination of this value facilitates the process of coding. Nonetheless, it may negatively affect the data prosperity (Morse, 2018). Member checking and focus groups interviews can be used to validate the findings (Kruger et al., 2012). Inter-coder reliability is likely to improve the rigor of the small-sample

qualitative studies when one of the researchers is responsible for gathering, coding, and performing the required data analysis (Burla et al., 2008). Nonetheless, it is not an effective technique when the researchers conduct the interviews in exactly the same way (Morse, 2018).

## Analyzing Data

Thematic analysis was used to perform the analysis of the interview and narrative transcriptions... Adapting inductive, bottom-up approach to analyzing the data, three main themes were generated: *teacher factors*, *learner factors*, and *contextual factors*. Furthermore, to answer the research question, the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were employed. In order to perform the data analysis, again thematic analysis was used.

## Results

Table 1 shows three themes including; *teacher factors*; *learner factors*, and *contextual factors* which were extracted during data analysis.

Table 1  
*Codes and Themes in the Data*

Themes	Codes	Key words
Teacher factors	Professionalism	Focusing on teaching Content knowledge
	Personality traits	Self-confidence Self-esteem
Learner factors	Students emotions	Students' demotivation, not doing assignments
	Students' behavior	Using smartphones in class, Students' tardy, rude behavior
Contextual factors	Administrative factors	Curricula interference Classroom interruption Sarcastic remarks
	Collogues	Lack of mutual respect

We provided the participants with the relevant transcriptions using email service to check whether their interviews had correctly been transcribed and translated or not.

### Theme One: Teachers' Factors

Teachers' factors were supported by the following codes: *Professionalism*, *subject matter knowledge*, *knowledge of teaching methodology*, *teachers' personality traits including teachers' self-confidence* and *self-esteem*.

Ahmad, 28, pointed out that:

*One thing that most of the time irritates me is the fact that we haven't had any effective pre-service course on teaching methodology. Now, in my classes, I have problem teaching grammar and writing. When you feel a gap in your knowledge-based either subject matter knowledge or knowledge of teaching methodology, it does harm on your psychological well-being.*

Having the expectations of being treated as a professional, Ahmad feels that he has not acquired the due knowledge essential for effective English instruction. He believes that he must have acquired knowledge of English language as well as knowledge of teaching methodology that are indispensable parts of being a qualified teacher. This highlights the idea that having the feeling of being an effective teacher presumably enhances one's sense of self-efficacy and psychological well-being.

Klara, 29, had the following to say on her perceptions of adverse conditions in her teaching; *It drives me crazy when students ask me not to teach this lesson or teach that lesson instead. it makes me angry since I believe in teacher's self-esteem. I think doing harm on one's self-esteem in the classroom is doing harm on his/her psychological well-being. You are mentally healthful to the extent that you feel self-esteem in the classroom.*

For Klara, self-esteem is tantamount to psychological well-being. Self-esteem is like a shield for her that supports her dignity and personality in the classroom. It should be mentioned that she could let her students have their voices in the classroom, and that her students' attitudes on the teaching materials need not be regarded as damaging teacher's self-esteem or authority. However, she expects her students to be followers instead of independent thinkers and learners. Moreover, she is greatly bothered by being treated in this way.

### **Theme Two: Students' Factors**

The following codes were supported by *students' factors: students' emotions, students' demotivation, not doing assignments, using smart-phones in class, students' tardy, rude behavior.* Parla, 31, had the following to say:

*One day I was teaching English to students whose mother tongues were different from my own mother tongue. When I encouraged them to study hard, it has happened that one of students got angry at me and shouted that: it is none of your business why I don't study my lessons. All of my students in the classroom shocked by the incident. I became really angry and demotivated. It really was frustrating for me. It took one week for me to forget about it. However, I managed to control my anger at time and did not treated him in a bad manner.*

As a committed teacher, Parla never expected her student to get angry at her. Being treated in such a manner by her student, Parla experiences adverse and demanding conditions in her class. Her mental health and psychological well-being undergo dramatic change. She employs a coping strategy to get out of the demanding condition. No doubt, she will suffer greatly for it.

### **Theme Three: Contextual Factors**

The theme of *contextual factors* was supported by: *colleagues, administrators containing curriculum interference, and classroom interruption.*

Aila, 30, replied our question in the following way:

*Yes, it has happened to me a lot. Most principals expected us to give the students a good grade, because they pointed out that students pay much fee and they give them the support they expected. It really bothered me and made me angry. I cannot tolerate that institute's administrators push me to do whatever I do not want to do and I think it is against educational objectives.*

Aila is annoyed by the interference of the language institutes managers. This feeling does not let her enjoy her teaching and creates challenging conditions for her. Feelings of anger and



frustration make her demotivated. She observes a lack of harmony and congruence between her educational objectives and the administrators' decisions and expectations. School administrators should pay close and due attention to teachers' mental health, allowing them think and act independently.

### **Discussion**

The present study strived to scrutinize the underlying sources of psychological stress and nervous tension which had a detrimental and deleterious impact on Iranian EFL teachers' performance in private language school settings. The results accentuated the fact that three main categories of factors comprising the *teacher-based*, *contextual*, and *student-based* factors mediated the teachers' performance and exacerbated the problems that they encountered in the context of the classroom.

A close scrutiny of the relevant literature (e.g. , Greeff & Human, 2004; Hartmann, Weiss, Newman, & Hoegl, 2019; Todt, Weiss, & Hoegl, 2018) foregrounds the fact that the obtained results of the study can be ascribed to the concept of *resilience*. More specifically, they can be interpreted and elucidated in light of the EFL teachers' resilience in their vocational settings. First, Rutter (2000) contended that resilience encompasses the individuals' capability to accumulate and ameliorate the psychological assets which empower them to acclimatize themselves to the idiosyncrasies of the novel situational contexts in the course of their life. The present study indicated that the teacher-based factors comprising *professionalism*, *subject matter knowledge*, and *knowledge of teaching methodology* among others swayed the teachers' performance in the classroom. Considering the fact that the participants comprised novice EFL teachers, it can be averred that the EFL teachers' disagreeable perspectives on their professional efficacy emanated from their low level of resilience. More specifically, they were not able to accumulate the requisite psychological assets in order to become attuned to the peculiar and distinct aspects of the context of the classroom. In other words, although they possessed the requisite knowledge of the target language, they were not able to put it into practice due largely to their deficient psychological versatility.

Second, Padesky and Mooney (2012) argued that resilience constitutes the individuals' emotional and mental prowess to put up with and endure the psychological stress and nervous tension which are caused by the other individuals in a variety of situational contexts including the vocational contexts. The findings accentuated the fact that student-based factors had a detrimental effect on the teachers' conceptions of their professional efficacy and performance. Given Padesky and Mooney's (2012) contentions, it can be averred that the adverse, unfavorable, an untoward impact of the students' behavior on the teachers' performance can be attributed to the EFL teachers' low level of resilience. More specifically, the teachers did not have the requisite psychological prowess which was considered as the sine qua non for dealing with the student-induced psychological stress in the context of the classroom.

Finally, Dudek, Kaufmann, Lavoie, and Menard (2020) stated that resilience constitutes the mental prowess and capability to remain tranquil and restful and to face crises with thorough equanimity. As they noted, the psychologically resistant individuals have a proclivity to obliterate the traces of the disturbing and excruciating incidents from their memory and are able to prevent these incidents from swaying their optimal course of action in various situational contexts. Based on the findings, contextual factors comprising colleagues, curriculum interference, and classroom

interruption had a deleterious and pernicious impact on the participants' conceptions of their academic competence and genuine performance in their workplace.

Considering Dudek, Kaufmann, Lavoie, and Menard's (2020) contention, it can be averred that in the present study, the novice EFL teachers were adversely influenced by the contextual factors (e.g., their colleagues' derogatory remarks) owing to the fact that they had a low level of resilience and did not possess the prerequisite mental prowess to encounter the contextual stressors with acceptable and satisfactory equanimity. Moreover, the participants were not inclined to eradicate their memory from the traces of the aforementioned psychological stressors. More specifically, their normal course of action and behavior were adversely affected by the impacts of the stress-inducing factors in their pertinent vocational contexts and settings.

The present study endeavored to particularize the underlying sources of Iranian EFL teachers' psychological tension in the private language institute settings. The findings of the study itemized the internal teacher-based and the external context-based and student-based factors as the predominant and overriding stress-inducing factors in these teachers' professional settings. It seems that it is possible to reach some provisional conclusions on the basis of above-mentioned findings.

First, the preponderance of the Iranian EFL teacher education courses, especially in language institute settings, has to be thoroughly redressed, revamped, and overhauled. The teacher educators and the curricula of the teacher education courses have to be the major loci of attention in the overhaul process. The scrutiny of the characteristics of the majority of the pertinent language institute teacher educators underscores the fact that they are experienced teachers who have been awarded with national or international teacher training degrees (e.g., Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults). These educators have been trained to equip the language instructors with requisite strategies and techniques which are likely to ameliorate their professional efficacy and to facilitate the learners' acquisition of the various aspects of the target language. More specifically, the teacher educators are primarily concerned with the practical considerations in the context of the classroom and tend to disregard the state-of-the-art language-based theoretical discussions. As a consequence, the teachers and learners' psychological factors do not constitute their priority in teacher education courses. Considering these issues, it is obvious that the teacher educators have to be re-educated in specific education courses to become cognizant of the consequential role of the teacher factors in the EFL teachers' psychological well-being and performance in academic settings. These courses have to provide the teacher educators with adequate information on teachers' personality traits and resilience. More specifically, they should make the educators aware of the fact that different personality traits are associated with diverse degrees of resilience and have to apprise them of the possibility of developing resilience as an effective instrument which empowers the EFL teachers to safeguard themselves against the multitudinous stress-inducing internal and external factors. Furthermore, the perusal of the content and curricula of teacher education courses indicates that they encompass the practical strategies and techniques which are implemented to teach the four main language skills and the two language aspects (i.e., vocabulary & grammar). In certain cases, the teacher education courses of certain language institutes have been specifically developed to train the prospective language teachers to teach the various sections of the course books of the relevant institutes. These courses treat the course books as their main organizing element. It is clear that the preponderance of the teacher education courses eschews theoretical considerations including teacher factors in favor of the

practical issues in the context of the classroom. Consequently, the teacher education courses have to be redressed to include a theoretical module which familiarizes the language teachers with the underlying learner factors and teacher factors, including teacher resilience, which sway the teachers' psychological well-being. In addition, these courses have to focus on the teachers' reflective practices which are likely to direct the EFL teachers' attention to the consequential role of teacher resilience in the management of debilitating stress and to prompt them to develop resilience as a protective psychological armor to safeguard themselves against the stress-inducing factors.

Second, EFL syllabus designers are recommended to consider the results of the empirical studies, such as the present study, to revise the content of the teacher manuals in order to provide the EFL teachers with sufficient information on the various internal and external sources of psychological tension and the major teacher factors including teacher resilience. These kinds of manuals might prove to be useful to all of the language instructors especially the teachers whose university major is English Language and Literature and English Translation along with the teachers who have majored in the other fields which are not related to English language. The provision of these manuals may have a beneficial effect on the language teachers' capability to deal with the numerous sources of tension which place the teachers under undue stress.

Third, the language institute managers have to pay more attention to theoretical considerations in their language institutes. The majority of the managers are cognizant of the utility of the relevant courses. Notwithstanding, they have a proclivity to overlook the fact that the theoretical considerations underlie the practical issues of the aforementioned courses. Consequently, providing the EFL instructors with information on the relevant theoretical discussions including the teacher factors is the sine qua non of efficient language programs. In this regard, the managers may take advantage of erudite applied linguists' assistance in regular and recurrent conferences in which the language teachers become aware of the consequential role of the teacher factors including teacher resilience during the process of instruction and become motivated to develop teacher resilience as a psychological shield which protects them against stress-inducing factors.

Finally, the onus is on the EFL teachers to ameliorate their psychological well-being by means of the development of teacher resilience. A large number of EFL teachers, especially in language institute settings, are obsessed by their personal problems and disregard their continuing professional development. Indeed, these teachers are oblivious of the importance of the knowledge about their own characteristics. Considering these issues, the EFL teachers are recommended to obtain adequate information on the major teacher factors, including teacher resilience, which have a profound effect on their psychological well-being. Teachers have to take cognizance of the fact that resilience is a cumulative process and should implement specific resilience development strategies in order to turn the undue stress of their workplace into opportunities of personal growth. In addition, the language institute EFL teachers can create specific forums using social media software in which each of the teachers is provided with the opportunity to express his/her perspectives on the diverse stress-inducing factors and to take advantage of his/her peers' advice on the resilience development strategies.

A myriad of factors is likely to affect the language teachers' perspectives on the sources of psychological tension and stress-inducing factors in diverse academic settings and language learning contexts. Furthermore, the inclusion of language teachers from various genders, age groups, experience levels, mother tongue backgrounds, nationalities, academic education levels, and training levels in the studies may produce different results. Consequently, caution must be

exercised in regard to the generalization of the obtained findings of the present study to similar settings and contexts.

The present study delimited itself to the private language institute settings. The future studies have to deal with the sources of psychological tension and the efficacy of teacher resilience as the EFL teachers' psychological shield against undue stress in the other academic settings including school and university settings. Furthermore, the relevant studies should take notice of the fact that the availability of a local teacher resilience instrument is a prerequisite to the painstaking resilience research in the EFL contexts including the Iranian EFL context. Consequently, the development and validation of an EFL teacher resilience questionnaire has to be the researchers' main priority in the EFL contexts. Lastly, the future studies are recommended to expound on the effective ways of developing and implementing resilience-building strategies in both second and foreign language learning contexts.

**Declaration of interest:** none

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### Biodata

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شرایط نامطلوب در زندگی حرفه ای معلم های زبان انگلیسی: توصیه هایی برای بهبود انعطاف پذیری معلم ها



مطالعه کیفی حاضر تجربیات معلم های زبان انگلیسی ایرانی در مورد شرایط نامطلوب محیط آموزشی را بررسی کرد. برای دستیابی به این هدف، ۳۰ معلم زبان انگلیسی تازه کار در تبریز (ایران) به عنوان شرکت کنندگان انتخاب شدند. برای مثلث سازی داده‌ها، از تکنیک‌های مصاحبه و جمع‌آوری داده‌های روایتی استفاده شد. با تطبیق رویکرد استقرایی، از پایین به بالا برای تحلیل مضامین، سه مضمون اصلی مشخص شد که شامل عوامل معلم، عوامل زمینه‌ای و عوامل دانش‌آموز بودند. یافته‌های این مطالعه به تاب‌آوری شرکت کنندگان در محیط‌های تحصیلی نسبت داده شد. یافته‌ها می‌تواند اصول راهنمای معینی را در رابطه با تاب‌آوری معلم در اختیار مربیان معلم‌ها و روانشناسان تربیتی قرار دهد.

**کلمات کلیدی:** شرایط نامطلوب، تنظیم هیجانی، بهزیستی روان‌شناختی، تربیت معلم، تاب‌آوری معلم