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Review Paper

The Impact of Iranian EFL Teachers' Achievement Value Orientation on Reflective Teaching: The Mediating Role of Job Performance

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Abstract

Teachers who possess an achievement value orientation may concentrate on establishing ambitious objectives for themselves, as well as creating opportunities for pupils to showcase their abilities and attain success. This can increase student motivation and ultimately improve job performance. While previous teachers' reflective studies in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL) have examined a wide range of variables, certain variables, such as EFL teachers' achievement value orientation and job performance related to reflective teaching, have remained under-researched. To this end, this study examined the EFL teachers' achievement value orientation factor, which was identified as having a contributive role in EFL teachers' reflective teaching regarding the mediating role of job performance. The study sample consisted of 237 Iranian EFL teachers aged between 25 and 60. Based on the results of structural equation modeling (SEM), EFL teachers' achievement value orientation directly and significantly influences the counterproductive work behavior (CWB) dimension of their job performance as well as the metacognitive and affective dimensions of their reflective teaching. It was also shown that task performance (TP) has a direct effect on cognitive, contextual performance (CP) on cognitive and critical, and CWB on the metacognitive dimension of reflective teaching. The results also indicated that the CWB dimension of job performance mediates the impact of EFL Teachers' achievement value orientation on the metacognitive dimension of their reflective teaching. Teacher training programs should emphasize the importance of developing an achievement value orientation in teachers, and reflective teaching should be promoted as a key component of teachers' professional development.

Keywords: Achievement value; EFL teachers; Job performance; Reflective teaching; Value orientation

تأثیر جهت گیری ارزشی پیشرفت معلمان زبان انگلیسی ایرانی بر تدریس انعکاسی: نقش میانجی عملکرد شغلی
معلمانی که دارای جهت گیری ارزشی پیشرفت هستند ممکن است بر ایجاد اهداف بلندپروازانه برای خود و همچنین ایجاد فرصت هایی برای دانش آموزان برای نشان دادن توانایی های خود و دستیابی به موفقیت تمرکز کنند. این می تواند انگیزه دانش آموزان را افزایش دهد و در نهایت عملکرد شغلی را بهبود بخشد. در حالی که مطالعات پیشین معلمان در زمینه زبان انگلیسی به عنوان یک زبان خارجی (EFL) طیف وسیعی از متغیرها را مورد بررسی قرار داده است، متغیرهای خاصی مانند جهت گیری ارزشی پیشرفت معلمان زبان انگلیسی و عملکرد شغلی مرتبط با تدریس انعکاسی، مورد بررسی قرار نگرفته است. برای این منظور، این مطالعه عامل جهت گیری ارزشی پیشرفت معلمان زبان انگلیسی را مورد بررسی قرار داد، که به عنوان نقش مؤثری در تدریس بازتابی معلمان زبان انگلیسی در رابطه با نقش میانجی عملکرد شغلی شناسایی شد. نمونه مورد مطالعه شامل 237 معلم زبان انگلیسی بین 25 تا 60 سال بود. بر اساس نتایج مدل سازی معادلات ساختاری (SEM)، جهت گیری ارزشی پیشرفت معلمان زبان انگلیسی مستقیماً بر بعد رفتار کاری معکوس (CWB) عملکرد شغلی آنها تأثیر می گذارد. همچنین ابعاد فراشناختی و عاطفی آموزش تأملی آنها. همچنین نشان داده شد که عملکرد تکلیفی (TP) تأثیر مستقیمی بر شناختی، عملکرد متنی (CP) بر شناختی و انتقادی و CWB بر بعد فراشناختی آموزش تأملی دارد. نتایج همچنین نشان داد که بعد CWB عملکرد شغلی تأثیر جهت گیری ارزشی پیشرفت معلمان زبان انگلیسی بر بعد فراشناختی تدریس بازتابی آنها را واسطه می کند. برنامه های تربیت معلم باید بر اهمیت توسعه جهت گیری ارزشی پیشرفت در معلمان تأکید کند و آموزش انعکاسی باید به عنوان یک جزء کلیدی توسعه حرفه ای معلمان ترویج شود.

کلمات کلیدی: ارزشی دستاورد؛ معلمان زبان انگلیسی؛ عملکرد شغلی؛ آموزش تأملی؛ جهت گیری ارزشی

Introduction

Instructors have a vital role in an educational system (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992) and its success (Ashraf & Zolfaghari, 2018). Therefore, improving any education system requires enhancing the efficiency of instructors (Wright et al., 1997). Reflective teaching is a process of education, and teacher education is based on the belief that teachers can improve their teaching and understanding of the profession by critically analyzing their own teaching experiences (Xu, 2009). It involves a methodical analysis of one's methods, fundamental beliefs, and efficiency to improve the quality of teaching (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Numerous factors are thought to shape teachers' reflective engagement, including personal attributes and contextual dynamics (Day, 1999). Value orientation as a significant individual attribute and job performance as a contextual factor are among the aspects understudied in relation to EFL teachers' reflective teaching (Soodmand Afshar et al., 2019).

Specifically, research has overlooked the contributive role that teachers' achievement value orientation, defined as a desire to demonstrate competence and succeed (Schwartz, 1992), may play in reflection. Teachers with a strong achievement value may prioritize goals promoting competence demonstration and student success, impacting engagement and, subsequently, job performance measures like TP and CP (Kasof et al., 2007). Such performance factors, in turn, relate to behaviors influencing the instructional quality and student outcomes (Kyriacou et al., 2003). CWB, another dimension of performance, involves voluntary actions that harm or intend to harm organizations or their beneficiaries (Spector & Fox, 2005). Factors such as stress, personality traits, and work environment have been linked to CWB (Penney & Spector, 2005; Spector & Fox, 2010). So, personal values can be influenced by CWB. Hence, it was worthwhile to investigate the specific role that achievement value orientation may have in the prediction of reflective teaching through the mediating variables of job performance dimensions.

Literature Review

Reflective teaching has been thoroughly investigated, and there is solid evidence that it provides professional benefits to teachers. Reflective teaching entails the methodical examination of teaching practices and belief systems to extract valuable insights that improve education (Day, 1999; Schon, 1983). Extensive research literature provides strong evidence for the professional advantages of reflective practice, such as enhanced teaching quality and student learning outcomes (Akbari et al., 2010; Soodmand Afshar et al., 2019). In Griffiths's view (2000), reflective teachers look at their performance in the classroom attentively, explore ways to promote their practices, and attempt to implement them in practice. Since reflecting teachers appraise their own values and thoughts about education and learning, they are more accountable than other teachers for their classroom performance (Korthagen, 1993). Reflective teaching is a well-studied variable in the Iranian EFL sector (e.g., Ghazalbash & Afghari, 2015; Sanianie & Azad, 2018), but in this study, it was investigated along with the abovementioned variables.

Personal qualities significantly influence reflection. Scholars have emphasized the influence of experiences, values, beliefs, and emotions on reflective engagement (Brookfield, 1995; Larrivee, 2008; Schon, 1983). Values are fundamental principles that have an impact on motivation, discernment, and conduct (Schwartz, 1992). According to Rokeach (1968), internalized values subconsciously determine people's behaviors. As fundamental constructs organizing experiences, values have a substantial influence on variations among individuals and between individuals in different contexts (Schwartz, 1992).

Achievement value orientation is defined as exhibiting competence and succeeding according to social standards (Schwartz, 1992). Pursuing achievement represents an inner motivation to outperform others and validate abilities (Roccas et al., 2017). Teachers who prioritize

achievement may stress setting tough goals and offering opportunities for students to demonstrate their abilities, thereby improving education, engagement, and job performance (Kasof et al., 2007).

Job performance indicates how effectively an employee works to attain role-specific or company goals (Campbell, 1990). However, this concept needs to include the tangible outcomes of work-related activities. Because job performance is complex, it cannot be determined based on individual activities or the consequences of specific tasks (Campbell, 1990).

Motowildlo (2003) defined job performance as the extent to which a worker's behaviors over time increase the value of an organization. Performance is associated only with behaviors that establish a change in the attainment of organizational goals (Motowildlo, 2003). The notion of performance includes behaviors that may both positively and negatively affect the achievement of organizational goals (Motowildlo, 2003). For any organization, its personnel's performance in achieving goals is crucial. Mount and Barrick (1998) emphasized the importance of understanding how differences among individuals' personalities affect their work performance (as cited in Mitchell & Daniels, 2003).

For teachers, job performance can be defined by how effectively their actions help schools meet their goals (Hwang et al., 2017). According to previous research, one way in which teachers can improve their job performance is by reflecting on their performance (Schon, 1987; Dewey, 1933). Furthermore, Munby and Russell (1990) maintained that teachers' performances tend to improve when they work toward solving problems related to their teaching practice.

Individual job performance is essential in competitive sectors involving various types of unique organizations. In such sectors, an individual's values can affect how well they perform their job since values influence actions (Schwartz, 1999). Furthermore, according to Homer and Kahle (1988), values are highly abstract; they also represent one's adaptability and affect their attitudes and behaviors.

Since values affect people's behaviors and attitudes, they have generated much interest among researchers (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Fritzsche & Oz, 2007; Ismail, 2016; Rokeach, 1973). Regarding personal values and performance, a study by Swenson and Herche (1994) indicated that salespeople's personal values are significantly related to achievement values and performance. Dubinsky et al.'s (1997) research on management in the USA indicated that two specific values (i.e., achievement and self-direction) affected salespeople's performance.

While values' relationship with job performance has already been studied (e.g., Kiradoo, 2018; Bahojb Ghahvechipoor et al., 2024), no study has investigated the achievement value and job performance relationship among EFL teachers. The present research was conducted to fill this knowledge gap.

The literature examining the effect of performance on reflective practice is scarce. In one such study in the management field, Saunila et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between performance management and reflective practice. Their results indicate that performance management influences people's organizational behaviors. Therefore, performance management fosters reflective work practices. In recent research on job performance and reflective teaching relationship, Soodmand Afshar and Hosseini Yar (2019) reported that according to many previous studies on teachers, reflective teaching and job performance are significantly and positively correlated. Furthermore, Dewey (1933) stated that, for teachers, reflection is an intentional attempt to assess how effective one's teaching practice is and how valuable their educational experiences are. Such reflection tends to promote further learning, ultimately enhancing job performance (as cited in Soodmand Afshar & Hosseini Yar, 2019).

Bolton (2010) considered the relationships among values, job performance, and reflection and stated that to reflect, one must evaluate their practice reflectively and reflexively to carefully consider their values and how they affect their everyday behaviors. However, there is no

empirical research on relationships among EFL teachers' values, job performance, and reflexivity. Such complicated relations among values and practices, as well as the kind of reflective teaching that examines these, can all be embraced under the constructivist self-development theory (CSDT) proposed by McCann and Pearlman (1990). The basic principle is largely centered on understanding human behavior in terms of self-constructed systems.

Purpose of the Study

However, the goal of this study was to examine the impact of Iranian EFL teachers' achievement value orientation on their reflective teaching, and the mediating role of job performance by testing the following hypotheses:

H1: Iranian EFL teachers' achievement value orientation has a direct impact on their reflective teaching.

H2: Iranian EFL teachers' job performance has a direct impact on their reflective teaching.

H3: The impact of Iranian EFL teachers' achievement value orientation on their reflective teaching mediated by job performance.

Methods

Context and Participants

The study included 237 EFL teachers (132 females and 105 males) who worked in different educational centers (e.g., schools, language institutes, and universities) in Tabriz, Iran. The main instruments of the study in the form of three questionnaires were distributed among the target participants via email and social networks (mainly WhatsApp and Telegram messengers), which were filled out and returned by EFL teachers. These participants consisted of both novice and experienced teachers with active teaching years between 1 and 30. Their age range was from 25 to 60. Before the data collection procedure, all teachers were briefed about the purposes of the study and their contribution to it through participation in the study. They were also ensured of the confidentiality of the findings of the study to have more confidence and concentration in order to provide more reliable information.

Instrumentation

In order to collect the necessary data, three questionnaires were administered: 1) Reflective Teaching Instrument, 2) Portrait Value Questionnaire, and 3) Individual Work Performance Questionnaire. Regarding the validity of the questionnaires and their suitability for the intended purposes, some professional university professors in the field were consulted, and their suggestions were applied to improve the quality of the work. Moreover, these professors also confirmed the content and construct validity of the questionnaires to be applied to the target population. Cronbach Alpha was also calculated to establish the reliability of the instruments of the study.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha for the Subscales of Reflective Teaching Questionnaire

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Metacognitive	.888	6
Practical	.774	5
Critical	.782	6
Cognitive	.842	6
Affective	.759	3

Table 2*Cronbach's Alpha for the Achievement Subscale of Value Orientation Questionnaire*

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Achievement	.719	4

Table 3*Cronbach's Alpha for the Subscales of Job Performance Questionnaire*

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
CP	.723	8
TP	.874	5
CWB	.832	5

Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) consider Alphas greater than 0.7 acceptable. Thus, all subscales of three scales had acceptable reliability indices.

Reflective Teaching Instrument

In the first step, a 29-item questionnaire was adopted, with responses given on a five-point Likert scale, where responses range from 1=never to 5=always (Akbari et al., 2010). The questionnaire items were divided into five categories: Meta-Cognitive, cognitive, affective, critical, and practical. The questionnaire was validated by Akbari et al. (2010) with 300 teachers through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, which enabled the researchers to decrease the items from 42 to 29. However, since the model fit indices were low with the sample of the present study in the CFA, the researchers eliminated three items (i.e., items 4, 21, and 23) after estimating the construct validity of the data to increase the model fit. Hence, 26 items were considered in the present study.

Portrait Value Questionnaire

The participants' value orientations were measured using a shortened version of the Portrait Values Questionnaire (Schwartz et al., 2001) comprising four items. Each portrait presented a person's objectives, aspirations, or hopes to the extent to which they could be regarded as values. Schwartz's Portrait Values Questionnaire comprises the dimensions of universalism, power, security stimulation, achievement, hedonism, self-direction, benevolence, conformity, and tradition. For the current study, only one dimension (i.e., value) of achievement was selected. The corresponding item in the original questionnaire was included in the data collection package, and the data collected by the modified version of the questionnaire were fed into AMOS to run confirmatory CFA.

Individual Work Performance Questionnaire

The Individual Job Performance Questionnaire (Koopmans et al., 2014) was applied to measure teachers' job performance. This questionnaire includes 18 items representing three factors: TP, CP, and CWB. TP and CP have rating scales ranging from 0 (seldom) to 4 (always), and the CWB scale ranges from 0 (never) to 4 (often). To ensure the construct validity and fit of the model with the data collected in the study, the researchers ran a CFA. The results indicated acceptable fit indices to the data.

Methodology

This study employed SEM to examine the proposed relationships based on Schwartz's (1992) value theory and theories emphasizing intrinsic motivation and environmental factors like SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Data was gathered from 237 Iranian EFL teachers using validated

measuring tools for achievement value orientation, reflective teaching, and job performance. The sample of the present study was obtained using a probability sampling technique (namely, stratified sampling). Specifically, we randomly selected Tabriz, Iran language institutes, schools, and universities from which participants were recruited. It is worth noting that statistical power considerations are an important aspect of research design (Baroudi & Orlikowski, 1989).

Results

The researchers implemented several modifications to the selected instruments for the data collection in order to make them more appropriate to the study. Moreover, the model fit and factorial validity of the final instruments used in the study were ensured through the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which was used for different instruments of the study. Different model fit indices such as χ^2 , χ^2/df (<3), SRMR (≤ 0.05), GFI (>0.9), AGFI (>0.9), CFI (>0.9), RMSEA (<0.05), and PCLOSE (>0.50) were used for this purpose.

Table 4 displays the indices for the modified instruments of exogenous, endogenous, and mediator variables (based on the full structural model).

Table 4

Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Modified Instruments

Index	χ^2	χ^2/df	SRMR	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Achievement	5.007	2.503	.0131	.989	.946	.996	.047	.709
RT	405.177	1.402	.0355	.965	.940	.948	.041	.941
JP	258.921	1.962	.0349	.987	.954	.931	.034	.626

Based on the indices shown in Table 4, the modified instruments had satisfactory model fits since all the indices fell within the expected ranges. Having ensured the validity of the modified models for data collection, the full structural model was fed into IBM AMOS (v. 24). Table 5 shows the means, standard deviations (SD), and correlations for all of the variables considered in the study.

Table 5

Correlations and Mean Values

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Achievement									
2. Affective	-.105								
3. Cognitive	.043	.119							
4. Critical	-.008	-.167**	-.073						
5. Practical	.098	-.196**	-.031	.312**					
6. Meta-Cognitive	.784**	-.022	.006	-.016	.124				
7. CWB	.542**	.021	-.039	.008	.125	.874**			
8. TP	.006	-.097	-.082	-.081	.035	.034	.034		
9. CP	.048	.147*	.905**	-.116	-.028	.023	-.025	-.025	
Mean	5.71	2.37	3.14	1.07	3.10	3.64	1.86	3.77	1.95
SD	.79	.54	.71	.78	1.37	.57	.68	.62	.67

Note. Likewise N for correlations = 237.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 5 indicates correlations between achievement value orientation and reflective teaching as well as the proposed mediators. Accordingly, further analysis is merited to check the outlined hypotheses. Considering the direct effects of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variables, Table 6 presents the results taken from AMOS.

Table 6

Two-tailed Significance Indices for the Direct Effects of the Exogenous Variables on the Endogenous Variables

	Achievement	TP	CP	CWB
TP	.855	...	...	...
CP	.492	...	...	...
CWB	.002	...	...	...
Critical	.894	.141	.098	.881
Metacognitive	.001	.577	.301	.001
Affective	.006	.186	.026	.091
Cognitive	.660	.005	.002	.354
Practical	.525	.676	.674	.206

The results in Table 6 indicate the direct effects of Achievement on CWB ($p=.002$), Metacognitive ($p=.001$), and Affective ($p=.006$); TP on Cognitive ($p=.005$); CP on Affective ($p=.026$) and Cognitive ($p=.002$); and CWB on Metacognitive ($p=.001$).

In order to examine the total mediating role of job performance in the effect of Achievement value-orientation on reflective teaching, the indirect paths from the exogenous variable to the indigenous variables were considered in the hypothesized model. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 7.

Table 7

Two-tailed Significance Indices for the Total Indirect Effects

	Achievement	TP	CP	CWB
TP	...	...	...	...
CP	...	...	...	...
CWB	...	...	...	...
Critical	.997	...	...	...
Metacognitive	.002	...	...	...
Affective	.076	...	...	...
Cognitive	.635	...	...	...
Practical	.220	...	...	...

As Table 7 indicates, among the five total indirect effects defined in the model, only the indirect path from Achievement value orientation to Metacognitive reflective teaching revealed a significant effect ($p=.002$).

However, in terms of indirect effects, due to the existence of multiple mediator variables, determining the specific indirect effects is not possible in the AMOS program. Thus, a set of user-defined estimands was set in AMOS to estimate the specific indirect effects in each causal sequence. For this purpose, all direct paths (i.e., single-headed arrows) were named, and the indirect effects were calculated by multiplying path coefficients. Since presenting the complete AMOS output for all specific indirect effects is not possible here due to the lack of space, only the specific significant indirect effects are presented in Table 5.

Table 8*Two-tailed Significance Indices for the Specific Indirect Effects*

Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P-value
Achievement to TP to Practical	.000	-.012	.019	.822
Achievement to TP to Cognitive	.000	-.008	.005	.808
Achievement to TP to Affective	.000	-.012	.007	.709
Achievement to TP to Metacognitive	.000	-.001	.003	.726
Achievement to TP to Critical	-.001	-.015	.008	.643
Achievement to CP to Practical	-.002	-.035	.011	.467
Achievement to CP to Cognitive	.039	-.079	.137	.504
Achievement to CP to Affective	.005	-.008	.025	.354
Achievement to CP to Metacognitive	.001	-.001	.005	.351
Achievement to CP to Critical	-.006	-.030	.008	.317
Achievement to CWB to Practical	.092	-.053	.234	.210
Achievement to CWB to Cognitive	-.010	-.038	.014	.386
Achievement to CWB to Affective	.047	-.007	.097	.094
Achievement to CWB to Metacognitive	.251	.204	.317	.002
Achievement to CWB to Critical	.007	-.087	.090	.879

As Table 8 indicates, from among 15 specific indirect effects defined in the model, only the indirect path from Achievement value-orientation to CWB to Metacognitive reflective teaching revealed a significant effect. It means that CWB as a dimension of job performance mediated the causal relationship between Achievement as a dimension of value-orientation and Metacognitive ($p=.002$) dimension of reflective teaching.

Discussion and Conclusion

As Zlatković and Petrović (2011) asserted, teachers play a significant role in educational contexts and improve the quality of personal and social resources. The quality of education is determined by the teacher's competency and value orientation (Cohen et al., 2013; Sallis, 2014). Therefore, it is important to consider how teachers' value orientation affects their way of thinking and acting. Therefore, the current research employed SEM to explore the association between achievement value orientation and EFL teachers' reflective teaching practice by considering job performance as a mediating factor. The data were collected through three questionnaires on EFL teachers' reflective teaching, achievement value orientation, and job performance. The following discussion situates the key findings in the context of prior literature.

The scholarship makes a theoretical connection between values and conduct. Values are suggested to have an impact on decisions and behavior as individuals strive to align their activities with their values (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). The study findings confirm the

validity of the value theory by demonstrating the direct effects of achievement value on the metacognitive and affective dimensions of reflective practice.

The findings of the present study confirmed the relationship between TP and cognitive, CP and cognitive and critical, as well as CWB and metacognitive. Associations between performance factors and reflection were in line with perspectives correlating behaviors and capabilities (Soodmand Afshar & Hosseini Yar, 2019).

It was also shown that CWB as a dimension of job performance mediated the causal relationship between achievement value and the metacognitive dimension of reflective teaching. The mediation of relationships by job performance dimensions corroborated theoretical reasoning by considering contextual dynamics (Bolton, 2010; McCann & Pearlman, 1990).

Findings validated value theory proposing value-behavior linkages (Schwartz, 1992) and the conceptual framework integrating motivational, developmental, and contextual elements shaping reflection (Deci & Ryan, 1985; McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Insights lent empirical support to perspectives emphasizing individual attributes and contextual dynamics, molding reflective engagement (Day, 1999). Results carry implications for empowering reflective capacities through targeted interventions cultivating achievement orientation and optimizing contextual supports like performance. Limitations concerned generalizability and call for mixed methods, broader samples investigating additional constructs over time. In conclusion, the study provided a novel understanding of EFL teachers' reflective teaching determinants meriting consideration by key stakeholders.

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