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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL EFL TEACHERS' MOTIVATION AND THEIR VIEWS TOWARD STRATEGY-BASED INSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Iranian high school EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction. Motivation and views of the 69 EFL teachers (33 males and 36 females) toward strategy-based instruction were measured through Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire and Teachers' Beliefs on Strategies and Strategies-based Instruction. The collected data were analyzed by three Pearson's correlation analyses and it was found that there was a significant relationship between EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategies-based instruction among male, female and whole participants. The results of the study could help course book designers, educational planners, foreign language institutes, teachers, learners and their parents to provide and use different methods of teaching and learning.

KEY WORDS: Motivation, Strategies-based Instruction, EFL Teaching, EFL Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher's motivation is one of the most influential elements for the success of any educational system. This element is a key factor which affects the moment by moment techniques in the classroom. So, in the new educational system, knowing teachers and their motivation has become dominant and necessary for effective strategies which they use in their classroom. Research on foreign-language teacher motivation has grown toward complexity and sophistication during the last two decades. Psychological factors, especially motivation, is one of the complex areas which affects the way in which EFL teachers teach.

Teachers have a primary role in determining what strategy is needed or what would work best with their students. Findings from researches on teachers' motivation indicate that this factor has noticeable effects on the strategies which they use in the classroom (Groosman, Reynolds, Ringstaff, & Sykes, 1985).

Saha and Dworking (2009) think over teachers and their strategies for learning processes as the main factors at all levels of education system. Today, teachers are not considered as passive figures and only performers of prescribed methods, but are regarded as active and decision-makers with motivation. Most researchers, such as Coburn (2003), Rosenholtz (1991), and Runhaar (2008) believe that teachers' motivation is the key element affecting their teaching.

On the other hand, EFL teachers can benefit from an understanding of what makes learners successful and unsuccessful, and establish in the classroom a milieu to realize successful strategies. Therefore, based on the researches discussed above, there was a need to examine the relationship between teachers' motivation in terms of personal capabilities and strategies-based instruction (SBI).

The problem is that, while the relationship between EFL teachers' motivation and their performance in the classroom and student achievement has been well documented, few studies in the literature have investigated the relationship between teachers' motivation and their views toward strategies-based instruction. Therefore, there is a need for a better understanding of these two important constructs and their relationships, as well as considering these relationships across different genders.

It seems that no similar research has been conducted in an EFL context to look for the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction. So, lack of research in this area provided sufficient reason to conduct this investigation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher motivation has been connected to different personal and contextual variables. Guskey's (1988) examined, among other things, how teachers' motivation influences their attitudes toward applying educational innovation. Guskey's study included 120 elementary and secondary school teachers who attended a staff promotion program which concentrated on mastery of learning instructional strategies and instructional innovations for learners.

When taking the motivation of teachers into account, one may ask why teachers from all lifestyles select to be in the profession they are in. There must be something interesting for teachers to select this job. Many teachers nowadays overwork and are underpaid, which is also the case in many other professions today, nevertheless, it puzzles many for the reason why people do it.

When talking about motivation itself, there are mostly two types: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation originates from a direct relationship between the performer and the task and it is usually self-implemented. These are the self-generated elements, which affect people to behave in a specific way or to move in a specific direction (George & Sabapathy, 2011). This can also be mentioned that it is a person's psychological rewards and is not usually something physical. An instance of this would be someone aiding a child to learn how to ride a bike. The person gets the sole gratification for teaching the child to ride so he gets a sense of joy. Extrinsic motivation is the opposite. People can be motivated through such methods as payments, promotion, praise, etc. Extrinsic motivation stems from the work atmosphere and environment, which are external to the task and is usually applied by others or someone other than the person being motivated (George & Sabapathy, 2011). An instance of this would be a boss telling his employees that if they reach the desired quota for the company, everyone will receive a one-hundred dollar bonus on their next paycheck. There is something tangible the person is earning in return; therefore the source of his motivation is physical. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation motivates everyone in the human race, not just teachers.

Teachers have a very difficult profession and have to handle a ton of stiff tasks. They have to overwork in dealing with a lot of children and adults in their occupation. In the process of working to achieve instructional goals, it may be seen that the teachers' motivation is lower and that their stress levels are higher than those of engaged in other fields (Jesus & Conboy, 2001). If teachers' levels of stress are higher, some would consider the motivation level of teachers low. Nevertheless, the type of stress teachers get can be good as it may force them to work toward their goals. In fact, it can be noted that stress can be a positive motivational factor. Positive motivational factors will increase the teacher's performance level, thus helping her students to exceed as well. According to Henderson-Sparks (1995) and Gokce (2010), the elements that reduce a teacher's performance level are lack of motivation, weariness, and personal crisis. Teachers may spend long hours and work hard as they are full of stress to the point of collapse, but still keep on to teach.

Oxford (1990) proposed a fairly detailed list of strategies in her taxonomy. In her classification, strategies are divided into two main classes, direct and indirect, which are further subdivided into six groups. Direct strategies, working with the language itself, consist of memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. Memory strategies are those used for storage of information. Cognitive strategies are the mental strategies learners use to make sense of their learning, and compensation strategies help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue communication. Not directly involved in language learning, indirect strategies include metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies help learners to regulate their learning. Affective strategies are concerned with the learner's emotional requirements, while social strategies lead to increased interaction with the target language. So, it has six main types of strategies which are divided into 19 strategy sets and 62 subsets.

Freeman and Freeman (1994, as cited in Johnson, 2000) argued that the exposure to new opinions, the availability of materials, the quality of coworkers and supervisors in addition to the types of learners they have are the elements that affect language teachers in their professions. In the similar vein, Auerbach (1991) asserted that alienation, as a demotivating state, happens when some language teachers work at more than one job for economic assurance and as a consequence they fail to see themselves as being part of any one institution or group.

In addition, Crookes (1997) discovered that teachers' motivation was affected by the fact that the curriculum and textbooks' choice was chosen from authorities above or outside the institution due to the need to make the students ready for standardized tests. Furthermore, he argued that another element that influenced language teachers' motivation was the possibility of their participation in decision making regarding their own students. In a similar vein,

Barrs (2005) categorized some of the motivational elements recognized by Pakistani teachers as potential dissatisfiers as involving lack of resources to prepare sufficient levels of training and follow up and described potential satisfiers as involving monitoring and accountability systems.

Moreover, Butler (2007) attempted to describe teacher motivation by taking goal orientation theory, which had been implemented earlier to learner motivation as the structure. Butler's study approved that mastery goals anticipated positive perceptions of aid seeking, preferences for receiving independent help, and frequency of help seeking; ability avoidance predicted negative perceptions and aid avoidance; and work avoidance predicted beneficial aid seeking. These results validated the suggested structure and measure of teacher goal orientations.

3. METHODOLOGY

The participants in this study were 69 male and female EFL teachers teaching at the high schools of Fars Province in Iran. In relation to gender, 47.83% were male and 52.17% were female (33 males and 36 females). In terms of professional aspects, teachers in the sample had from 3 to 29 years of teaching experience with a mean of 10.88 years, and ranged in age from 27 to 51, with a mean of 34.28 years. Within this sample, 2.90% held a Ph.D. degree, 68.12% had a master degree, and 28.98% held a bachelor degree. The teachers showed a wide range of variance with respect to their age and teaching experience, as well. All teachers participated voluntarily in answering questionnaires.

To handle the present study, the researcher used two instruments. The first one was the *Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire* which was applied to measure the teachers' beliefs and motivation about their jobs. The self-report test included 25 items in the form of short sentences and took nearly 20 minutes to complete. Teachers' motivation was assessed along a 5-point Likert-scale, with 1 corresponding to 'strongly disagree' and 5 corresponding to 'strongly agree'. The higher scores in the questionnaire were equated with greater motivation on their job. Cronbach's Alpha was also measured for this questionnaire and revealed the acceptable amount of 0.87.

The second instrument was *Teachers' Beliefs on Strategies and Strategies-based Instruction* which was used to elicit the teachers' opinions toward the use of language learning strategies. The scale consisted of 25 items. These behavior-descriptive statements were designed in Likert-scale and ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) which indicate the degree of their agreement with strategy-based instruction. This scale was taken from Lan, Moon, and Oxford (2003). The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured through Cronbach's Alpha which yielded the reliability index of 0.83. As the threshold for acceptable reliability is 0.75 and the amount of Alpha is higher than this threshold level, the provision of the internal consistency of the items within the questionnaire was met.

The participants were ascertained for the secrecy of the data collection procedure. After giving an oral instruction of how to perform on the questionnaires, they were supplied with a package which consisted of two questionnaires, as well as the corresponding answer sheets. Prior to the main study 10 teachers who had the similar conditions to the participants of the main study completed both questionnaires for the purpose of exploring the reliability of the questionnaires.

4. RESULTS

This part presents the descriptive statistics and analysis of the results of the Teachers' Beliefs on Strategies and Strategies-based Instruction (SBI) and Teachers' Motivation Questionnaires as well as the relationship of the scores obtained from these questionnaires.

Reliability Analysis of Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire

The internal consistency of Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire was measured through Cronbach's Alpha. Table 1 displays the result of reliability analysis.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha for Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.874	25

It is indicated in Table 1 that the reliability index of Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire was 0.87. This is considered as an acceptable index of internal consistency.

As mentioned earlier, the internal consistency of Teachers' Beliefs on Strategies and Strategies-based Instruction Questionnaire was measured through Cronbach's Alpha. Table 2 presents the result of reliability analysis.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha for Teachers' Beliefs on Strategies and Strategies-based Instruction Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.831	25

As it can be observed in Table 2, the reliability index of Teachers' Beliefs on Strategies and Strategies-based Instruction Questionnaire was 0.83 which can be regarded as an acceptable index of internal consistency.

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to test the relationship between Iranian male EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction. Table 3 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 3. Pearson's Correlation between Male Teachers' Motivation and their Views toward Strategy-based Instruction

		Male Motivation	Male SBI
Male Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.985**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	33	33
Male SBI	Pearson Correlation	.985**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	33	33

As it is indicated in Table 3, the coefficient value was 0.985 and the p-value observed was 0.000 and this was lower than the level of significance selected for this study ($\alpha=0.05$). Thus, it can be claimed that there was a high positive significant relationship between Iranian male EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction.

The researcher ran Pearson's correlation analysis to explore the relationship between Iranian female EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction, the results of which are presented in Tables 4.

Table 4. Pearson's Correlation between Female Teachers' Motivation and their Views toward Strategy-based Instruction

		Motivation	SBI
Female Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.989**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	36	36
Female SBI	Pearson Correlation	.989**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	36	36

As it is shown in Table 4, the coefficient value and the p-value were 0.989 and 0.000, respectively. As p-value was smaller than the level of significance selected for this study ($\alpha=0.05$), it was concluded that there was a positive significant relationship between Iranian female EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction. It means that lack of a significant relationship between Iranian female EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction was rejected.

To determine the existence of any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction, the researcher did a Pearson's correlation analysis. Table 5 displays the outcome of this correlation analysis.

Table 5. Pearson's Correlation between Teachers' Motivation and their Views toward Strategy-based Instruction

		Motivation	SBI
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.981**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	69	69
SBI	Pearson Correlation	.981**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	69	69

Based on the results presented in Table 5, the coefficient value was 0.981 and the p-value observed was 0.000. The amount of p-value was smaller than the level of significance selected for this study ($\alpha=0.05$). Therefore, it has been revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction. Therefore, it can be said that there is significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategies-based instruction.

5. DISCUSSION

The results emerging from the present study indicated that the teachers' motivation and their views toward strategies-based instruction were highly correlated across both genders. This suggests that the more the teachers are motivated in their works, the better they would be convinced about teaching language learning strategies to their students. The strength of the correlation was similar across both genders. The findings suggest that motivation significantly contributed to positive attitudes towards implementing strategies-based instruction regardless of the teachers' genders.

Findings of the present study were in line with other studies conducted in this field. Although Akbari (2007) conducted the comparison between teachers of two different languages but his results were in the same line with findings of the present study. Similar to findings of the other researchers (e.g. Alizadeh & Mohammadi, 2011; Pajouman, 2013) also confirm the findings of the present study in terms of correlation between teachers' motivation and their views toward strategies-based instruction.

6. CONCLUSION

Everyone in every job tries to do the best and he/she looks for ways of getting the goals in the shortest, the easiest, and the best way. Within the field of education in the last few decades a gradual but significant shift has been taken place, resulting in less emphasis on teachers and teaching, and greater stress on learners and learning. But in the heart of the shift, are the teachers who play a significant role in the area of learning and teaching. Nowadays, one of the prerequisites of being a good teacher is to pay attention to students and to be aware of their ways of learning. The teacher should guide the class in a way that the students believe that they are in the most efficient condition. Therefore, this study intended to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' motivation and their views toward strategy-based instruction.

Teaching English language, on the whole, in Iranian context has suffered certain shortcomings. Teachers need to refine their approaches to the teaching of English to the students. But in so doing, it is better not to ignore two important points. One of them is the findings of recent research studies in the field and the other is the demands of all learners.

Not only recent research findings, including the present enquiry, suggest that teaching learners how to use strategies should be a prime consideration in the language classroom (Barnett, 1988), but also demands in different majors require learners to be strategic and independent.

At the end, it is necessary to remember that gaining mastery of strategic teaching and use of strategy in teaching happens gradually. It is estimated that it takes several years for the students to be strategic readers (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Therefore, students and teachers should not expect too much. This problem cannot be solved overnight.

To assist the English learners to become efficient in learning, teachers have the responsibility of introducing to their students the processes involved in the learning and helping them develop a battery of strategies for successful

comprehension. But, the prerequisite condition of focussing on different types of strategies is determining the students' dominant preferences of strategy use. The results of this study may justify textbook writers to include strategy awareness and use in various course books. Regarding the potentials of the strategy-based instruction discussed in this study, textbook developers are recommended to design and incorporate some motivating materials in accordance with those strategies that showed a significant relationship with reading comprehension in this study. Another significant implication of the results can be for the teacher training programs. To select successful teachers out of a large group of volunteers, an employer, alongside with all professional features, should pay attention to teachers' motivation and their views toward strategies-based instruction

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