

IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF BURNOUT CAUSES AND SOURCES OF PREVENTION

Farzaneh Sabokrouh¹

PhD candidate in TEFL, Qeshm Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qeshm, Iran

Seyyed Ayatollah Razmjoo²

Associate Prof., Dept. of Foreign Languages & Linguistics, Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran

Farzaneh Dehghan³

Assistant Prof., Amirkabir University of Technology, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the Iranian language teachers' perceptions of burnout causes and sources of prevention. Participants of the study consisted of 76 male and female language teachers with 2-10 years of teaching experience in Tehran. Selection of the participants was performed according to convenience sampling from a famous language school in Tehran. A sequential mixed approach was used, in which 20 teachers participated in interviews and the remaining participants completed the burnout prevention survey that was designed based on the qualitative data collected from the interviews. Then the burnout prevention questionnaire was developed using the results of the interviews and administered to the remaining participants. In the next step, analysis of the collected data was performed through factor analysis to identify the components of burnout prevention. According to the results of the content analysis of the interview data, Iranian EFL teachers viewed work and life balance, organized working conditions, healthy classroom context and vital as well as growing working environment as the sources which could prevent burnout. Based on the results of factor analysis, work and life balance and vital as well as growing working conditions constituted one component of the burnout prevention, organized working environment made up the next component, and healthy classroom environment comprised the last component of the burnout prevention.

Keywords: Burnout, burnout prevention, sources of burnout prevention, EFL teachers.

1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers are one of the major factors with a critical role in the success or failure of educational systems (Kuntz, Näswall & Bockett, 2013; Rashtchi & Mashoor, 2019); thus it is of vital importance to investigate those variables which can impact teachers' performance.

¹ Email: farzanehsabokrouh@yahoo.com

² Email: arazmjoo@shirazu.ac.ir

³ Email: fdehghan175@gmail.com

There is significant evidence that teachers, during their careers, experience a great deal of stress (e.g., Byrne, 1999; Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003). When demand increases, responsibilities become more sophisticated, and knowledge construction continues, many teachers face professional stress and burnout, experience difficulties to address students as they used to do earlier partially because, according to several researchers (e.g., Wagner & French, 2010; Belias & Koustelios, 2014; Fiorilli, Albanese, Gabola & Pepe, 2017), they require the support and capacity to create a positive learning context. The experience of stressors at work usually leads to depression, feeling exhausted, weak performance, as well as attitude and personality changes (Cherniss, 1985). The term burnout has been applied to this phenomenon and has been defined as a long-term enduring state of stress which is the direct result of working with people (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008).

Several research works particularly considering 'Teacher Burnout' have indicated that this issue is worth attention in terms of research and applications in administrative as well as educational systems. Undoubtedly, burnout is a devastating and harsh experience for teachers (Maslach and Leiter, 2010), and may lead to frustrating outcomes for both teachers and learners in the teaching and learning process. Because of such unfavorable outcomes, many teachers leave the profession in a short period of time (Boreen, Niday, & Johnson, 2003). The related literature also indicates significant increase in the number of teachers with a job-related anxiety in the last decades (Gregorian, 2001).

A review of the previous empirical research indicates that none of the previous studies has investigated how burnout can be prevented from EFL teachers' perspectives. Language teachers, with their critical role in developing students' competence and success in second or foreign teaching contexts, have not received sufficient attention (Brown & Lee, 2015). Thus, it seems necessary to take into account different factors which can influence teacher quality in L2 contexts. Similar other educational contexts, teachers involved in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) have to face new challenges and difficult situations which can affect the quality of their teaching and put them at high risk of emotional drainage (Byram, 2013; Cook, 2013). There is actually a concern regarding the problems which may arise from the mismatch between language teachers' expectations in their career and their real experience (Reeve & Su, 2014). As a result, the level of stress (Travers & Cooper, 1996) may increase and result in several psychological problems, including ineffectiveness, exhaustion, physical complaints, anxiety, and depression (Maslach, 2015). Thus this research sets out to determine Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of the burnout causes and prevention. Accordingly, in line with the objectives of the present study and based on what was claimed before, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: What are the Iranian teachers' perceptions of the sources which can prevent teachers' burnout?

RQ2: What are the components of the teachers' burnout prevention from the Iranian EFL teachers' perspectives?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

It is important to understand that burnout was not developed as a scholarly construct, but rather a social problem. This makes the conceptualization of burnout somewhat unique because it has a pragmatic foundation instead of scholarly one. In the

early 1980s researchers developed various measures of burnout, of which the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) became the most broadly accepted. By the mid-1980s the MBI was modified to create an instrument specific to teacher burnout. During the 1980s the MBI implementation expanded. The MBI has been translated into different languages and is applied to measure burnout and particularly teacher burnout across the world (Maslach, 1999). According to Maslach, burnout is an individual stress experience that is included in a context of social relationships, and therefore consists of the person's conception of both individual and others (Maslach, 1999, p. 215).

The concept of teacher burnout has attracted a lot of attention in the area of education since its first emergence in the area of psychology. Many educational researchers have focused on the phenomenon at macro level such as governmental regulations, the financial state of the profession (e.g., Moaiivaziri and Razmjoo, 2015) and the societal value given to the job (e.g., Briones et al., 2010; Nguyen, 2013; Fiorilli, Albanese, Gabola and Pepe, 2017). Others have scrutinized the issue at a more micro level such as institutional applications, influence of work hours or student pressure and so forth (e.g., Kazerouni and Sadighi, 2014; Soodmand Afshar and Doosti, 2015).

However, probing the teacher burnout literature conducted in the context of Iran leads to substantial methodological and conceptual weaknesses, most important of all, a lack of theoretical frameworks to unify and guide empirical works. Moreover, most studies administered in the Iranian context include a mass of cross-sectional and retrospective research designs and frequent use of measures with unknown psychometric properties, most of which are either borrowed from or developed by foreign researchers to be applied for their targeted contexts (Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009). The teacher stress, job satisfaction, and burnout research has frequently relied on quantitative procedures to measure the related constructs, including highly structured rating scales with fixed response options (Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011). Open-ended methods that allow teachers to elaborate on the meaning and phenomena of a construct from their perspective have rarely been used, but have the ability of providing a deeper conception of their experience of the constructs referred to. Therefore, understanding the sources and impact of Iranian EFL teacher burnout, which can be considered as a greatly neglected area in the research literature to date, is the first important step toward developing effective intervention and prevention programs targeting the strongest predictors of stress-related work impairment. In the following paragraphs, some of the most recent works carried out at the local context are mentioned.

Rast and Tourani (2012) chose 200 teachers from 3 private institutes to investigate the level of job satisfaction and the effect of gender on the level of job satisfaction. The results showed that both male and female were satisfied with their work because of supervisors and the nature of the work, but actually, they were less satisfied because of opportunities for promotion and present pay.

Moiivaziri and Razmjoo (2015) conducted a study based on the grounded theory in Shiraz, Iran to investigate challenges that English candidates faced as future teachers. They extracted 6 major problems that made English candidates depressed such as problem with teachers, personal and social problems, problem with peers, and lack of educational facilities, financial problems, and problem in educational planning and curriculum development. The candidates were dissatisfied because there weren't enough classes and good situation to be a nice English teacher in future. Also, they added that classes are not really knowledgeable to make a powerful teacher.

Salehi and Taghavi (2015) had a study in Iran to examine the level of EFL teachers' satisfaction and effect on their behaviors and attitudes toward learners' feeling. According to the findings, teachers' satisfaction was high and they said different reasons why they had chosen English teaching, some of which were more important, including interest in teaching, ability in teaching, getting familiar with different people in this job and having a part time job. In comparison, they were a little dissatisfied with the environment and low payment. They also talked about different factors that influenced on students' attitude, including positive relationship, spending more time and energy in the classroom, having knowledge in English and knowledge in making students and the classroom happy and satisfied.

Soodmand Afshar and Doosti (2015) examined the effect of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction on performance of secondary school English teachers in Iran. The researchers analyzed qualitative data and compared teachers and students' answers. Through this analysis, learning boosters, teaching booster, teaching method development, lack of classroom aids, material, paying attention to each individual in the classroom, problems in relationships, and demotivated students were some factors caused dissatisfaction, and poor performance in English teaching. Actually, using semi-structured interviews, researchers found that teachers were dissatisfied because of lack of attention, relationship problems, lack of professional commitment, and other factors that caused demotivation.

Esfandiari and Kamali (2016) studied the association of job satisfaction, teachers' burnout and their autonomy. Their results showed a weak negative relationship between job satisfaction and teacher burnout, while teacher autonomy correlated negatively with job satisfaction. Besides, there was no association between teachers' autonomy and their burnout.

Rashtchi and Mashhoor (2019) carried out a study on the extravert and introvert EFL teachers and raised the question that how reflective teaching and burnout associated. The results of the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient indicated that reflective teaching and burnout had a negative correlation regardless of the personality type of the teachers. Also, the results of the independent samples t-test indicated that introvert teachers were more reflective than extravert teachers, while extravert teachers were less prone to burnout.

Roohani and Dayeri (2019) performed a study on the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' burnout and motivation using a mixed methods study for (a) identification of some Iranian EFL teachers' burnout and motivation features, (b) examination of the relationship between their burnout and motivation to teach, and (c) investigation of motivational factors predicting teacher burnout. According to descriptive statistics, the EFL teachers had low levels of burnout and had autonomous motivation in teaching. Correlation analysis also indicated negative association of autonomous forms of motivation and burnout. Also, multiple regression analysis indicated that the autonomous forms of motivation and external regulation could predict EFL teachers' burnout better.

To summarize, it needs to be stated that teacher burnout is very close to teacher dissatisfaction. Teacher burnout depends on the presence or absence of some factors. According to the aforementioned theories, this study aims to explore the factors affecting the level of teacher burnout. Teachers known as a central part of every educational setting need to be paid enough attention and they need to be provided with some opportunities to promote themselves in their work place.

3 METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of the study were 76 male and female English language teachers in Tehran, Iran. These teachers were teaching at various levels of language proficiencies starting from elementary to advanced levels. They had teaching experience between 2 to 10 years and were teaching English full time and were selected from three branches of a well-known language institute in Tehran. One branch situated in the north of the city which is considered the affluent part of the city, the other one at the center of the city where people from various parts of the city come for studying English, and the last branch was in the south of the city where most of the people come from middle class communities. The teachers participated voluntarily after being briefed about the purpose and process of the study. Out of 76 teachers, 20 participated in the interviews and 51 completed the burnout prevention survey for the data collection phase of the study.

Instruments and Materials

Interviews

In order to have access to teacher's perceptions of burnout prevention sources, interviews were scheduled with 20 EFL teachers individually based on a preplanned schedule. The interviews were conducted over a period of seven days and teachers answered questions about their perceptions of burnout and the ways to prevent them. The interview questions targeted the areas that would potentially make them experience burnout. These questions were formulated based on an extensive literature review and the researcher then appealed to expert opinion to assure that they were appropriate for the context of the study. All the interviews were recorded for subsequent analysis.

Burnout Prevention Questionnaire

Based on the information obtained from the interviews with teachers, a burnout prevention survey was developed. Accordingly, each source of prevention that was identified in interviews was reflected in preventive measure statements and respondents were required to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the preventive measures through one of the options *strongly agree*, *agree*, *no idea*, *disagree* and *strongly disagree*. This survey was reviewed several times by two experts in the field of second language education and subsequently, necessary modifications of content and wording were made. The final draft was prepared in the form of a questionnaire that employed Likert type of scaling to extract respondents' opinions about sources of teachers' burnout prevention. This final draft consisted of 20 items that were piloted on 30 EFL teachers and the results of Cronbach's alpha showed a reliability index of 0.81 which is satisfactory. The participants for the piloting phase were the teachers teaching at the same language institute and had characteristics similar to the main sample. These participants were chosen based on convenient sampling.

Procedure

The theoretical part of the present study is based on articles published in national and international journals. Articles were searched using Persian and Latin keywords including job burnout, EFL teachers' burnout, prevention of burnout, and sources and symptoms of burnout, separately or together at SID, ERIC, Noormags, Magiran, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, PubMed databases without time limitation. Inclusion criteria for the study consisted of keywords in the title and abstract of articles and exclusion criteria were research content unrelated to the purpose of this study, articles that included EFL teachers but had not included job burnout, or articles that had investigated job burnout in other professions.

Regarding the collection of field data, the collected data were in the form of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data included teachers' statements about the measures for preventing burnout and quantitative data were teachers' responses to the burnout prevention survey. As for collecting the qualitative data, interviews were conducted with the EFL teachers. To this end, an interview schedule was prepared and accordingly, interviews were conducted with individual teachers. Each interview lasted for about 40 minutes and interviews were done over a period of one week. The researcher used Persian to conduct the interviews as teachers felt more comfortable with their mother tongue. Teachers were required to talk about their own burnout experiences and possible causes of burnout. As the discussion was continuing about the burnout and causes of burnout, teachers were also encouraged to give their ideas about the sources of burnout prevention. All the discussions were recorded using the voice recording function of a cell phone for subsequent analysis. In order to analyze the interview data, the recorded data were first transcribed and then content analyzed.

After analyzing the qualitative data and finding out the sources of burnout prevention, a survey for burnout prevention was designed. To this end, the results of interviews and teachers' statements about the sources of burnout prevention were fully reviewed. Next, a list of statements that reflected the sources of burnout prevention was prepared. Due consideration was given to the wording and accuracy of the statements in reflecting the sources of burnout prevention. Two experts in second language education were also invited to help with the preparation of the list of burnout prevention statements. Their comments on the content and wording of the list of the statements were also taken into account and the final list was drafted. In the final draft, each item (statement) of the list was coupled with a five point Likert type scale that included *strongly agree, agree, no idea, disagree* and *strongly disagree*.

The survey was given to the remaining 51 EFL teachers to give their ideas about sources of burnout prevention by choosing one of the options strongly agree, agree, no idea, disagree and strongly disagree. The data obtained from the survey were factor analyzed to empirically identify the components of the sources of burnout prevention.

4 RESULTS

Results for the First Question

The first research question intended to disclose the Iranian teachers' perceptions of the sources that prevent teachers' burnout. The analysis of the interview data

indicated that Iranian EFL teachers believe in four sources of burnout prevention.

Teachers thought of *work and life balance, organized working environment, healthy classroom environment* and *vital and growing working environment* as the main sources of burnout prevention. With regard to work and life balance, respondents believed that sometimes work constituted the main part of the life and this provided no space for other social and leisure activities. The continuous pressure of work for making a living would cause burnout while balancing the work and life could decrease the pressure of work and prevent the burnout experience. Teachers stated that having more time for pursuing personal interest, having more time to spend with family and friends, and having adequate income were among the sources of burnout prevention. For example, one of the teachers stated that:

“As a housewife I don’t have enough time to make a balance between my job and house chores, especially in summers. It’s better at school time because most students go to school and we usually don’t have a lot of classes in the mornings. Only some special levels such as younger children or those who have finished their school attend in the morning classes. But there is a lot of pressure on us in summers. The institute sometimes fills all our time and we don’t have even time to rest. I become really tired in summer and just look forward to school time, because I can manage my works better and I have also time to recover and refresh”.

Based on the content analyses from the teacher respondents, another source of burnout prevention was organized working environment. In other words, teachers believed that organized and clean working environment, clear job description, having good relationship with colleagues, and having enough instructional facilities are among the sources of burnout prevention. A messy environment in which teachers are confused about their duties and their relationship with other colleagues would cause stress and burnout while a working environment that is clean and neat and teachers know what to do and how to relate with other teachers prevent stress and burnout. One of the teachers stated in this regard that:

“The good thing is that everything here is in order. The shelves are always neat and the books are organized very well. Totally the hall and the classes are well-equipped and colored in beautiful bright colors which give you energy and make you happy. Moreover, the posters and other educational items which are put on the walls give a fresh teaching atmosphere to the place. Totally I don’t feel bored with the place, since I think they have tried to provide everything we need as teachers, while they have also paid attention to expectations of the students.”

Healthy classroom environment was another source of burnout prevention. Based on the information from teachers, it was found that challenges in the classroom are another source of burnout. Challenges were described as problems in dealing with students’ misbehaviors, issues in motivating students to like the lessons and do their assignments, and finding a way to suite the levels and topics of the lessons to the students’ levels. Accordingly, teachers believed that having a stress free classroom in which teachers do not need to deal with many challenges is a source of burnout prevention. As one of the teachers expressed:

“One of the problems that can be usually observed is the mismatch between the students and their level. Unfortunately, I seen several times that some friends want to be in the same class and insist on their request and the supervisor or the head teacher put them in one class, while they may be at different levels of English proficiency. This makes our work hard, because on one hand we should concentrate on those who are in the right place

and on the other hand, parents and institute expect us to have the highest output. Personally, I find it very challenging to cope with such conditions, because most of the time the weaker students ask many questions and complain that they don't get the point. I think if they want better performance, they shouldn't just think about their benefits."

Finally, teachers participating in this study maintained that promotion in work is also a source of burnout prevention. They talked about monotonous working environment as a burnout factor. In other words, doing the same teaching career with the same amount of income and with no changes in the educational structure of the language school was counted as a source of boredom, demotivation and finally burnout. Teachers thought that promotion in teaching positions along with increase in income can prevent burnout. Additionally, changes in the educational system such as changes in syllabus, topics, course books, and physical conditions of the language institutes were considered as sources of burnout prevention. As an example, one of the teachers said about the job conditions that:

"I worked somewhere else before, but I didn't like it at all. You know the rooms were gloomy and made me feel bored. There was a kind of heavy atmosphere and you couldn't feel relaxed even at your break. I preferred to spend my time speaking with students at the break or going through some works. But here is somehow different. At least there is a refreshing atmosphere with acceptable physical conditions."

Another teacher spoke about the money issues as follows:

"I have to do this work, because I can't find any other jobs! Who likes to work with such a low income? We have to deal with different students at different ages for almost nothing. I have had some crowded classes with the same pay as the classes which were less crowded. When I told to them that it takes more of my energy, they simply replied you should teach to every number of students! But it's unfair in my opinion".

Results for the Second Question

The second research question was about the components of teachers' burnout prevention from the Iranian EFL teachers' perspectives. To explore the components of burnout components, a survey was designed and administered to a larger number of EFL teachers. The data obtained from the survey underwent exploratory factor analysis for extraction of burnout prevention components. To make sure that the obtained data were suitable for factor analysis, Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett 1954), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser 1970, 1974) were checked.

KMO value was found 0.79 and Bartlett's Test was significant ($P \leq 0.05$) that indicates data were suitable for factor analysis. In order to identify the components, eigenvalues, and eigenvalues scree plot and component matrix were consulted. Based on the eigenvalues, it was found that three factors (components) had eigenvalues greater than 1. Accordingly, a three factor (component) model was the best solution to describe the burnout prevention.

However, based on the factor loadings, the items in the survey did not converge into the four components discovered in the qualitative analysis (*work and life balance, organized working environment, healthy classroom environment and vital and growing working environment*). In other words, the four main themes emerged in qualitative analysis as the sources of burnout prevention did not lead into four components of burnout prevention. After factor analysis, it was found that *work and life balance* and

vital and growing working environment converged into one component while *organized working environment* and *healthy classroom environment* constituted two separate factors. In other words, the items related to *work and life balance* and *vital and growing working environment* loaded on factor three, items related to *organized working environment* loaded on factor 1 and items related to *healthy classroom environment* loaded on factor 2. Accordingly, it was decided to look at burnout prevention as a three component model.

5 DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions about burnout causes and prevention. The study employed a sequential mixed method design to find the answers to the research questions of the study. Based on the qualitative phase of the study, it was found that Iranian EFL teachers believed that *work and life balance*, *organized working environment*, *healthy classroom environment* and *vital and growing working environment* are the main sources of burnout prevention. These findings are consistent with the findings of Chen (2010), Nadeem et al (2011), Atmaca (2017) in the local context and Salehi & Taghavi (2015) and Moivaziri & Razmjoo (2015) in the local context, all of whom have referred to working conditions or environment as a source of teachers' dissatisfaction and burnout.

Based on the obtained results, it seems that sources of burnout prevention as perceived by Iranian teachers are in close association with working environment conditions. In all the aspects of burnout prevention, the trace of work influences such as the effects of students, colleagues, work place, and income are evident. It can be inferred that Iranian teachers thought of working environment as the main burnout factor and accordingly, they sought the burnout prevention in the manipulation of working environment. Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) and Larrivee (2012) have also pointed out that negative attitudes toward colleagues and work in general contribute to burnout.

In the *work and life balance*, teachers thought that the over shadow of work and work related issues on other aspects of life are disappointing and stressful. Such work pressures would cause burnout while having a balance between work and other aspects of life can prevent burnout or at least may lower the impact of burnout or postpone the burnout experience. These results are consistent with the results obtained by Nadeem et al (2011) who have referred to the responsibilities at home as one of the problems teachers have to deal with.

Healthy classroom environment was found another source of burnout prevention which is again related to working environment. In this category, teachers pointed to the challenges of dealing with students' learning and control. Previous literature has also highlighted the role of classroom challenges in teachers' burnout. Ratcliff, Jones, Costner, Savage-Davis, and Hunt (2010) have pointed to students' misbehavior as a source of anxiety and burnout and Aloe, Amo, and Shanahan (2014) reported that teachers have to deal with many discipline related issues for providing a better learning situation. Based on teachers' accounts in the current study, it was revealed that students' misbehaviors and their lack of motivation were considered sources of burnout. Teachers' stated that when students' do not act properly in classroom and students are not interested in following their lessons, teachers have to deal with these issues to increase the productivity of the classroom. Such pressure for controlling the students' behaviors and encouraging them to be interested in their lessons can be among the

burnout factors. These findings are in line with the findings of Soodmand Afshar and Doosti (2015), referring to demotivated students as one of the sources of teachers' dissatisfaction. Similarly, Ghenghesh (2013) has considered students' interest as an influencing factor which is consistent with the findings of the present study.

The final source of burnout prevention was *vital and growing working environment* which dealt mainly with job and salary promotion plus positive change in the working environment. Again this source of burnout was associated with work environment because promotion and changes in the work place are directly related to work environment. Based on the teachers' statements, getting promotion in teaching positions and higher salary provide a feeling of vitality and progress that would help them gain the energy for overcoming the teaching workload and pressures. Additionally, bringing positive changes in the working environment such as changes in the decorations and syllabuses and using occasional gatherings for fun and relaxation would further help them to overcome the teaching pressures. Therefore, teachers believed that getting promotion and having fun are the sources of burnout prevention. In literature the inadequate resources and lack of support from administration and colleagues to deal with work related stressors have been mentioned as sources of burnout (Marzano & Heflebower, 2012; Mendler, 2014). These results are consistent with the findings of Chen (2010), Nadeem (2011), Ghenghesh (2013), Kazerouni & Sadighi (2014), Salehi & Taghavi (2015), all of whom have referred to salary as an important influencing factor. Regarding promotion, the findings of the present study are in line with the findings of Chen (2010), Demirel & Cephe (2015), Rast and Tourani (2012), and Pishghadam (2014), all of whom have mentioned personal accomplishment or the opportunity to promote or develop as an important influencing factor on teachers' dissatisfaction and burnout. Similarly, Jabbar Pour (2016) has referred to reduced personal accomplishment as a result of teachers' job burnout. Also, in the study of Akhavanattar and Ahmadi (2017) and Fisher (2011), job satisfaction could predict personal accomplishment, which is in line with the results of the present study. Finally, although Esfandiari and Kamali (2016) came to the conclusion that job satisfaction and burnout were associated, they found a weak negative relationship between job satisfaction and burnout.

6 CONCLUSION

The present study set out to investigate the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of burnout causes and prevention. The teacher participants of the study included 76 male and female language teachers who had between 2 to 10 years of teaching experience. The study employed a sequential mixed method design in which 20 teachers participated in interviews and the remaining participants in completed the burnout prevention surveys that were designed based on the qualitative data collected from the teachers' interviews. The burnout prevention questionnaire was developed for teachers using the results of the interviews and administered to the remaining participants and the collected data were factor analyzed to identify the components of burnout prevention construct.

The results of the content analysis on the interview data indicated that Iranian EFL teachers thought of work and life balance, organized working environment, healthy classroom environment and vital and growing working environment as the sources of burnout prevention. The results of factor analysis on survey data indicated that a three

component model best depicts the component structure of burnout prevention construct. Work and life balance and vital and growing working environment constituted one component of the burnout prevention, organized working environment formed the next component, and healthy classroom environment comprised the last component of the burnout prevention.

Burnout and the factors contributing to burnout is not a new topic, but there is evidence that burnout rate is increasing (Jacobson, 2016). Therefore, the current study makes unique contribution to the educationalists' understanding regarding burnout prevention in Iranian context of the foreign language teaching. The present study dealt with sources of burnout prevention which is a little bit different from studies on factors contributing to burnout. Although factors contributing to burnout can be seen as clues to burnout prevention, it still needs further clarification that factors contributing to burnout can be considered for burnout prevention. However, the present study specifically attended to burnout prevention sources that can directly inform the ELT practitioners and decision makers about measures that can be used for preventing burnout.

7 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study has some implications for those who are involved in educational planning as well as teaching. Accordingly, due to the fact burnout has negative effects on teaching performance, it is recommended that teachers' support, less stressful situations, and job satisfaction as sources of burnout prevention are given adequate attention in Iranian foreign language institutions. Due attention in this regard should be paid by teacher educators and administrators. Although it cannot be claimed that these sources of burnout prevention are the most comprehensive ones, they are some of the most directly related sources of burnout prevention to Iranian context of foreign language teaching.

Teachers may benefit from the results of the present study. The findings inform them of the key role their emotions and feelings may play, how they interact with each other, and the extent to which these emotions affect their performance. This knowledge helps teachers apply appropriate procedures and strategies in order to minimize their feeling of burnout and maximize the sense of satisfaction they get from their job.

Besides, the results of the study might be beneficial to policy makers and authorities as they are notified of the significance of teacher emotions, job satisfaction, and teacher burnout. By implication, through understanding the work- and person-related factors which cause emotional and attitudinal exhaustion towards teaching, it is possible to develop motivational strategies to prevent teacher burnout. Therefore, they are required to regard these concepts as aims of teacher training courses and provide teachers with the desired independence and satisfaction.

At more global level, the findings of the study highlight the role of teachers' educational and emotional support, providing constructive and healthy working place, and adequate income as ways for prevention of burnout in foreign language teachers. Although in different foreign language contexts worldwide, different factors might contribute to burnout prevention, it should be kept in mind that the sources of burnout prevention found in the current study are mainly related to burnout factors in global literature on burnout. Therefore, all actors in the area of education, particularly in the field of EFL are recommended to take the influencing factors in teachers' satisfaction

and dissatisfaction into account and think of effective ways to deal with the issue. Cooperation of all levels and groups will certainly lead to promising results.

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