

Please cite this paper as follows:

Safari, I. (2022). Relationship Between Iranian EFL Teachers' Job Satisfaction, Job Burnout, and Reflective Thinking: Structural Equation Modeling. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 10 (40), 67-84.

Research Paper

## Relationship Between Iranian EFL Teachers' Job Satisfaction, Job Burnout, and Reflective Thinking: Structural Equation Modeling

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### Abstract

This research intended to study the Potential relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' job satisfaction, job burnout, and reflective thinking. One-hundred and eighty-two teachers from different universities, and schools were requested to answer the the Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire, Maslach Burnout Inventory, and reflective thinking scale as the main data collection instruments. Structural Equation Modeling was used to test the hypothesized model of relations. The results represented, there were significant internal correlations between all the latent variables and their sub-scales. Multiple regression analysis showed that job satisfaction positively predicted reflective thinking, with job satisfaction exerting more predictive power in comparison with job burnout. Furthermore, job burnout weakly predicted reflective thinking, with job burnout exerting less predictive power in comparison with job satisfaction. Moreover, there was a negative correlation between job satisfaction and job burnout in which not only these two latent variables but also all their sub-scales were negatively related to each other. Pedagogical implications of the results have been discussed.

**Keywords:** Job Burnout, Job Satisfaction, Reflective Thinking, Structural Equation Modeling

رابطه بین رضایت شغلی، فرسایش شغلی و تفکر تأملی مدرسان زبان انگلیسی: مدل معادلات ساختاری  
هدف این پژوهش، مطالعه رابطه احتمالی بین رضایت شغلی و فرسایش شغلی و تفکر تأملی مدرسان زبان انگلیسی ایران بود. از صد و هشتاد و دو مدرس دانشگاه‌ها و مدارس مختلف خواسته شد تا به پرسشنامه رضایت مینسوتا، پرسشنامه فرسایش شغلی و مقیاس تفکر تأملی به عنوان ابزار اصلی گردآوری اطلاعات پاسخ دهند. مدل معادلات ساختاری به منظور آزمایش مدل فرضی ارتباط‌ها به کار گرفته شد. این مدل پس از کاربرد شاخص‌های تعدیلی پیشنهاد شده توسط نرم‌افزار (Normal Chi-square= 3.6؛ IFI =.96؛ CFI =.96؛ NFI =.96؛ AGFI =.93؛ GFI =.96؛ RMR=.04؛ RMSEA=.05) نشان داد که بین تمام متغیرهای پنهان و زیر مؤلفه‌های آنها همبستگی درونی معنا داری وجود دارد. تحلیل رگرسیون چندگانه نشان داد که رضایت شغلی، تفکر تأملی را به‌طور مثبت پیش‌بینی کرده و رضایت شغلی در مقایسه با فرسایش شغلی، پیش‌بینی قوی تری داشته است. از طرف دیگر، فرسایش شغلی، تفکر تأملی را به‌طور ضعیف پیش‌بینی کرده است و فرسایش شغلی در مقایسه با رضایت شغلی، قدرت پیش‌بینی کمتری داشته است. علاوه بر آن، بین رضایت شغلی و فرسایش شغلی همبستگی منفی وجود داشت که نه تنها این دو متغیر پنهان، بلکه همه زیر مؤلفه‌های آنها با یکدیگر رابطه منفی داشتند. کاربردهای آموزشی این تحقیق مورد بحث و بررسی قرار گرفته است.

**واژگان کلیدی:** فرسایش شغلی، رضایت شغلی، تفکر تأملی، مدل معادلات ساختاری

## Introduction

In accordance with Nguyen (2017), teachers should perform many responsibilities of teaching successfully as long as directing different life problems that might influence their work. Teachers who are often overworked and underpaid, to a greater extent become unconcerned and, in the long run, leave their work following higher-paying and less emotionally challenging jobs. Teachers have progressively become the center of attention in education program because they play a main role in the field of teaching. Conducting research on various factors related to English language teachers can be one of the best ways to improve their success. Among the most significant variables are job satisfaction, job burnout, and reflective thinking.

Job satisfaction is the first characteristic of an efficient teacher. According to Yücel (2012), it is a worthwhile area of study, regarding the fact that it is related to the humanitarian and utilitarian view. Utilitarian view shows that job satisfaction can result in behaviors that affect the efficiency of the organization (Yücel, 2012). As stated by Simatwa (2011), job satisfaction is a feeling of pleasure and an emotional state caused by job performance. Teachers' job satisfaction is crucial at a university or school because this is what teachers' productivity is dependent on. Satisfied teachers are expected to be innovative and creative and have positive changes in their job (Simatwa, 2011).

There is a wide range of studies in organizational psychology in consideration of the strong correlation between the quality of teaching and job satisfaction (Landsman, 2001; Rahman, et al., 2014). In accordance with some studies, job satisfaction is a positive emotional condition which comes from the people's job position and quality (Safari, Davaribina & Khoshnevis 2020; Terason, 2018; Wu, et al., 2016). In recent years, different investigations have been conducted in the areas of job burnout and job satisfaction. According to Brewer and McMahan-Landers (2003, p. 37), "Misfit between demands and abilities induces coping and defense mechanisms, which in turn influence objective and subjective environments". Later, Brewer and McMahan-Landers (2003, p. 126) pointed out, "Stress can occur if there is a mismatch between the reality of the work environment (objective) and an individual's perceptions of the work environment (subjective)". Some of the investigators (Troman & Woods, 2001) argued that those teachers who have stress for a long time may face more burnout.

Job burnout is the second characteristic of the EFL teachers, which has attracted extensive attention in literature. In accordance with the Sitohang (2004), school administrators should be careful about teachers' position on account of they are not only concerned with burnout and teacher job satisfaction but also how to increase the quality of work-life in the university and school. It means that a people's psychological condition like job burnout can have a negative effect that it decreases people's job satisfaction consequently increased their degree of absence and carelessness in the work. As stated by Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001), burnout has three dimensions: (a) emotional exhaustion that refers to feelings of being exhausted of people's emotional and physical resources, because of intense physical, affective and cognitive stress. (b) depersonalization is a condition of disconnection from parents, students, and other teachers that disturbs a teacher's personal and professional life, and (c) a reduced sense of personal accomplishment that is related to people's negative self-evaluation in regard of their job performance.

Few investigations have been conducted to study the relationship between teachers' burnout and reflective thinking (e.g., Mahmoodi & Ghaslani, 2014; Shirazizadeh & Karimpour, 2019). According to Shirazizadeh and Karimpour (2019), reflective teachers are presumably to be less depressed, better decision-makers and more capable in solving educational problems.

Therefore, they are less influenced by feelings of burnout. On a long time, the stress that teachers face can influence teaching quality, so they are in a crucial need of immediate attention (Colomeischi, 2015). Later, Entezari and Ghafournia (2016) argued that burnout may also damage a teacher's mental state. Those teachers who suffer from the syndroms of emotional exhaustion cannot be fully ready to enter the domain of education challenging. Consequently, burnout is likely to prevent the teacher's reflective thinking skills.

Reflective thinking, as the third characteristic of EFL teachers, has a definite role in teachers' quality of teaching. According to Akbari (2007, p.3), reflective thinking "empowers teachers and places them on equal footing with their academic counterparts". He pointed out that reflective thinking can increase teachers' self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and their interpersonal relationship. Reflective thinking initiates teachers to think and analyze their teaching quality to relate theory and practice (Qing, 2009). In a similar research, Kang (2008) stated that teachers can manage teaching performance if they reflect on their teaching. Furthermore, Kang showed that reflective thinking helped teachers to modify their teaching. Reflective thinking is broadly suggested like an answer to decrease teachers' burnout, assist them make better pedagogical decisions and encourage them to solve educational problems. Regardless of the theoretical discussions in praise of reflective thinking, not enough empirical investigations have however studied its effectiveness (Moradkhani & Shirazizadeh, 2017).

Nunan and Lamb (1996) asserted that teachers' reflection on their teaching and on the process, developing knowledge and theories of teaching have a main role in this lifelong process. Reflection practice is also stated as a process that can support teaching, understanding and learning and has a critical role in the teachers' professional development. To that end, Boody (2008) pointed out that teacher reflection can be stated as a thought, critical analysis, and problem-solving. Then, Boody mentioned that teacher reflection can be used to analyze and solve problems before performance. In accordance with Boody (2008), reflective thinking enables teachers to perform constructive operations rather than finding a quick solution for the problems.

As noted above, EFL teachers' quality of teaching is dependent on a number of personal and social features, and if these features face problems, it can negatively affect the educational system. After all, as the best knowledge of the author, not many investigations have been studied to examine the relationship between variables like teachers' job satisfaction, job burnout, and reflective thinking, notably employing structural equation model and a small number of investigations have studied the influence of these variables in isolation. It is important to the concurrent exploration of the complex dependencies among these variables specified by the measurement models and structural models.

### Literature Review

In this part, theoretical aspects of research along with empirical research on three latent variables, namely teachers' job satisfaction, job burnout, and reflective thinking are represented.

#### Job Satisfaction

Because Job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept, it has been defined in different ways according to the social contexts. Job satisfaction is a pleasant sense that derive from the insight that people's job satisfies or allows for the satisfaction of one's remarkable values came from their JOB (Wagner & Hollenbeck, 1992). As a psychological response to peoples' career, Job satisfaction is affected by important psychological, demographic, and contextual factors (Crossman & Harris, 2006).

Castillo and Cano (2004) classified job satisfaction into two kinds: general satisfaction and specific satisfaction. General satisfaction is the comprehensive satisfaction that is expressed like an overall assessment of a person's perception of their job. Specific satisfaction has been expressed like an evaluation of different aspects of the job. In accordance with some of the previously investigated studies (Kara, 2020; Karavasilis, 2019; Kroupis, Kouli & Kourtessis, 2019; Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001; Robinson et al., 2019; Safari, 2020; Sotirios et al., 2019; Torkaman et al. 2017; Wisnu, 2019; Yu-Hsia & Mei-Hsiang, 2019), individuals who have burnout often report low level of job satisfaction, cognitive performance impairment, and physical complaints. Therefore, teachers with a high level of burnout feel dissatisfied at workplace and experience different physical complaints that eventually influence their teaching process.

In one of the similar studies, Nigama et al. (2018) pointed out that there was no significant difference among teachers' satisfaction regardless of their gender. The findings also represented that some of the ways like, organizational support, freedom in work environment, high appreciation and rewards can improve teachers job satisfaction. In another research, Landsman (2001) argued that job satisfaction significantly affected commitment. Findings of the research acknowledged that employee satisfaction significantly predicted their job engagement. So, it was concluded that teachers' job satisfaction increases their commitment.

### **Job Burnout**

Johnson et al. (2005) defined burnout as permanent and deep exhaustion with cognitive, emotional, physical, and social symptoms, caused by long term job stress, particularly in occupations with high responsibility for others and endless human interactions. Schwarzer and Hallum (2008, p.154) defined burnout as "a chronic state of exhaustion due to long-term interpersonal stress within human service profession". Maslach and Jackson (1984) pointed out that burnout is a construct consisting of three subscales of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, influencing persons who work with people and are exposed to emotionally-charged social positions. In an educational context, burnout arises when teachers feel emotionally cold, personally detached, and ignorant of students' personal characteristics.

Burnout and job satisfaction have been the matter of intense investigations' interest during the recent decades. In a study, Sotirios et al. (2019) examined the teachers' burnout and job satisfaction in the Minority and Public Sector Schools. The results revealed a negative relationship between burnout and job satisfaction; teachers experienced moderate level of burnout; their job satisfaction level was high. In another similar study, Karavasilis (2019) represented a negative statistical relationship between the variables in which there was a very low degree of burnout syndrome and a high degree of job satisfaction for Greek teachers. In the same vein, Kroupis, Kouli and Kourtessis (2019) indicated that Greek teachers were more satisfied by the job itself and supervision and dissatisfied by promotion and even more by pay while experiencing medium to low burnout. In another study, Košir, et al. (2015) revealed that reflective thinking was not a direct predictor of burnout and stress.

### **Reflective Thinking**

Reflective thinking has a close relationship with metacognitive reasoning, through which people examine their reasoning procedure and recognizes their thinking management. According to Dewey (1933, as cited in Demirel, Derman and Karagedik, 2015), reflective thinking is

'Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends' (p. 2088). Ünver (2003) argued that at the end of reflective thinking, one often turns to creative thinking. Similar to the most of thinking skills, critical thinking is a wide-ranging construct that includes reflective thinking. In other word, when people think critically, they think reflectively, too. What is more, reflective thinking has a significant relationship with metacognitive thinking.

There are various characterizations of reflective thinking, among which Choy and Oo's (2012) scientific classification has been broadly acknowledged. Reflective thinking in this characterization includes four measurements: (1) reflection as retrospective analysis (Ability to self-evaluate); (2) reflection as problem solving (Awareness of how one learns); (3) critical reflection of self (creating nonstop personal development); (4) reflection on beliefs about self-efficacy. Taking these four measurements together, one can assume that reflective teachers are increasingly attentive about the current circumstance and they are increasingly arranged to make a move in critical circumstances, for example, encountering a problematic performance and improving education in the classes.

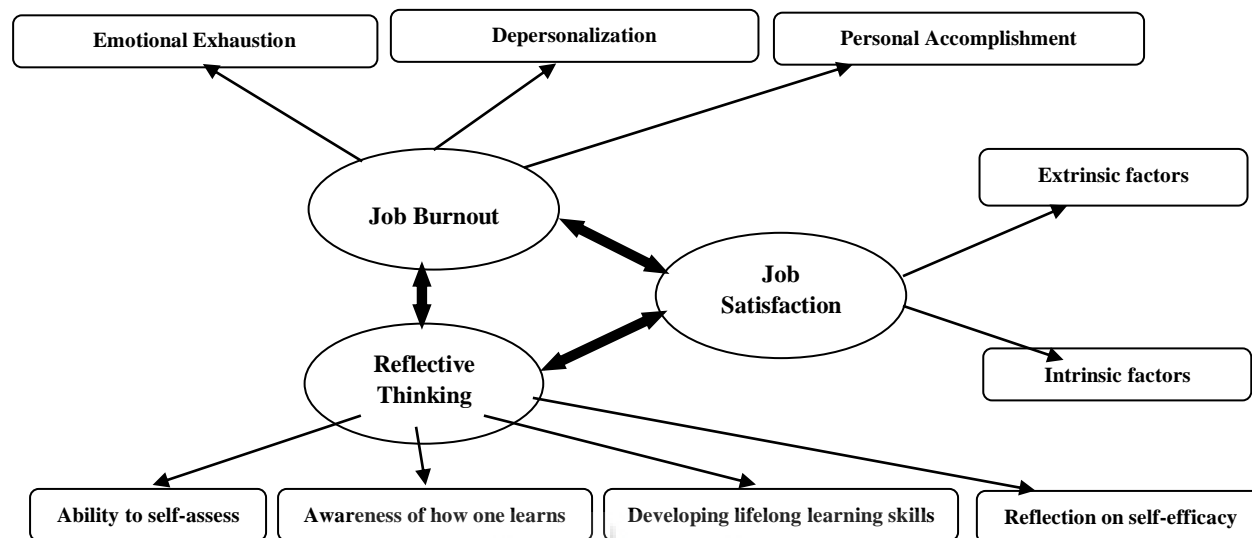
Bilač and Miljković (2017) studied the effect of reflective practice on job satisfaction in the field of classroom management. The participants were chosen from lower elementary teachers. The results did not represent an influence for reflective practice on job satisfaction. In a similar research, Safari, Davaribina and Khoshnevis (2020) intended to study the relationship among EFL teachers' self-efficacy, reflective thinking, and job satisfaction. The findings of multiple regression analysis showed that self-efficacy and reflective thinking positively predicted job satisfaction, with self-efficacy exerting more predictive power in comparison with reflective thinking.

Safari, Davaribina and Khoshnevis (2020) aimed to study the effect of EFL teachers' self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and reflective thinking on their professional development by using Structural Equation Modeling. The results revealed significant internal correlations between all the latent variables as well as their sub-scales. Moreover, multiple regression analysis represented that not only did reflective thinking not predict professional development, but, conversely, it was partly predicted by professional development. Then, Safari and Davaribina (2021) in another study intended to examine the association between Iranian EFL teachers' job satisfaction, reflective thinking, and professional development. The results of multiple regression analysis showed that reflective thinking positively predicted job satisfaction.

As mentioned above, job burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment in which teachers are more susceptible to burnout because of their job nature. Since job satisfaction and reflective thinking are important variables and can affect rate and time of burnout, the relationship among job satisfaction, reflective thinking and job burnout is studied. The current study was an effort to be innovative in two respects. First, it consisted of three latent variables, namely teachers' job satisfaction, job burnout, and reflective thinking simultaneously in a single study. Second, it used structural equation modeling for the data analysis in order to provide a more comprehensive profile of how these three decisive aspects of EFL teacher characteristics interact. To do so, a detailed model (Figure 1) was proposed to show the probable relationship between these characteristics.

**Figure 1**

*The hypothesized model of the relationships between the study variables*



### Research Questions

For the purpose of achieving the above-mentioned research objectives, the following research questions were raised:

- Q1. Is there any statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' job satisfaction and their job burnout?
- Q2. Is there any statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' job satisfaction and their reflective thinking?
- Q3. Is there any statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' job burnout and their reflective thinking?

### Methodology

#### Context and Participants

The participants of this study were 182 EFL teachers (117 males and 65 females) working in different universities and schools from Tehran and Ardabil provinces. It is worth mentioning that two questionnaires were distributed among the original pool of the participants via email, social networks (mainly Whats App), and in paper. As mentioned before, 182 EFL teachers filled out the questionnaires completely without any problems, which formed the main data for the study. These participants were divided into two groups of novice and experienced teachers based on their active working years ranging from 5 to 35. They ranged in age from 25 to 65 with most teachers aging between 26 to 35. The confidentiality of the findings was also declared to the teachers so that they participated more confidently.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the teachers. According to the Table 1., more than half of the participant (64.285 %) were male teachers. Most of the participants aged between 26 and 45 years (71.427 %), representing that majority of the teachers were young, whereas only 8.241 percent of the teachers were between 56 and 65 years.

**Table 1***Demographic Characteristics of the Participants of the Study*

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Gender	Male	117	64.285	64.285
	Female	65	35.714	35.714
Age Group (Year)	26-35	79	43.406	43.406
	36-45	51	28.021	28.021
	46-55	37	20.329	20.329
	56-65	15	8.241	8.241
Year of Teaching gp.	6-15	92	50.549	50.549
	16-25	74	40.659	40.659
	26-35	16	8.791	8.791
Place of Teaching	University	79	43.406	43.406
	School	103	56.593	56.593
Total		182	100.0	100.0

The present study was conducted only on teachers whose experience of teaching has ranged between 6 and 35 years. Considering the fact that the dominant age group was 26-45, it is quite logical that the majority of the participants had a lower teaching experience. In accordance with the Table 1, the highest teaching experience was between 6 to 15 years and 16 to 25 years, whereas only 8.791 percent of the participants had teaching experience between 26 and 35 years.

For the reason that some of the EFL teachers work in different educational settings apart from their work place, this study divided them into universities and schools that teachers themselves noted at the time of filling the questionnaires. In accordance with the Table 1, the higher percentage related to those teachers who work in the schools (56.593 %), and the lower percentage related to those teachers who work in universities (43.406 %).

### **Instrumentation**

For data collection, three questionnaires were administered, namely, (1) Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, (2) Maslach Burnout Inventory, and (3) Reflective Thinking Questionnaire. The researcher took the recommendation of a number of professional colleagues concerning the validity of the questionnaires in order to make sure that the items are suitable for the aimed purposes. Further, they confirmed the construct and content validity of the questionnaires. The reliability of the questionnaire was also calculated through Cronbach Alpha.

### ***Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)***

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, prepared by Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist (1967) was used to examine the teachers' degree of job satisfaction. This measurement scale includes 20 items and two constructs namely intrinsic satisfaction with 14 items and extrinsic satisfaction comprising 6 items. The respondents are expected to answer on a five-point Likert scale from 1= very dissatisfied to 5= very satisfied. The reliability of the questionnaire turned out to be .88.

### **Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)**

To measure the burnout level of Iranian EFL teachers, Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators' Survey (MBI-ES) by Kokkinos (2006) was used. This 22-item measurement scale involves three sub-scales, namely Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP) and Personal Accomplishment (PA). The frequency scale ranged from zero (never) to six (every day). High scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and low scores on personal accomplishment are indicators of burnout. The scoring is as follows: emotional exhaustion: Nine items 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 20, that show feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by job, depersonalization: Five items 5, 10, 11, 15, 22, that describe a doubtful attitude and impersonal response between oneself and service recipients, and personal accomplishment: Eight items: 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, that represent feelings of efficacy and achievement in employee's work with people. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the entire of the questionnaire was calculated as .897. The coefficients for sub-scales were also measured. The coefficient for Exhaustion was .895; .754 for Depersonalization and .815 for Personal accomplishment.

### **Reflective Thinking Questionnaire (RTQ)**

Teachers' reflective thinking questionnaire by Choy and Oo (2012), involves four sub-scales of reflective thinking: *Ability to self-express* (12 Items), *awareness of how one learns* (9 Items), *developing lifelong learning skills* (9 Items), and *belief about self and self-efficacy* (3 Items). This questionnaire applies a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 5 (Strongly disagree). Cronbach alpha was used to estimate the reliability of the test and represented a reasonable internal consistency among the items ( $\alpha=.92$ ).

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Applying a paper and pencil method, the questionnaires were piloted with a group of 26 teachers and minor modifications were made in the wordings of some items for the purpose of improving their comprehensibility. Furthermore, the scores obtained from the participants were fed into SPSS version 24 and Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the scales (see instruments section above for details) to make sure the scales were sufficiently reliable.

It is worth mentioning that a group of teachers in Tehran and Ardabil provinces were contacted and requested to distribute the questionnaires among their own colleagues and ask for their cooperation. Because some teachers were from different parts of the country and were unable to visit, a number of questionnaires were sent to them via the internet (social networks and e-mail) and they returned after completion.

The questionnaires were distributed to 105 teachers in person and 151 copies were sent via e-mail or social networks (mainly Telegram and WhatsApp). Overall, out of 251 teachers contacted, 182 teachers answered the questionnaires and returned them. These questionnaires were scored and the obtained data were fed into SPSS. This step was followed by examining and cleaning of the data to make sure there are no errors. It is necessary to note that the negatively worded items were reverse-coded and the necessary preliminary calculations were run to arrange the data for the AMOS and test the hypothesized model at a later stage.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

After data collection procedure, applying three different questionnaires regarding latent variables, SEM analysis was carried out employing SPSS AMOS version 24 to examine these relations in the path model. SEM includes two main stages: exploratory factor analysis and



confirmatory factor analysis. The exploratory factor analysis is applied to examine whether the sub-scales are related to their own latent variables; this involves some statistical procedures such as, KMO-Bartlett test and correlational matrix. Moreover, confirmatory factor analysis aims to confirm the hypothesized model applying goodness of fit indices, and examining all the relationships between the latent variables and their sub-scales.

The six basic steps in SEM, as determined by Kline (2011), were followed: specifying the model, evaluating model identification, selecting the measures, model estimation, model re-specification, and results report. Additionally, the analytic approach in the present study follows what Klein (2011) refers to as the creation of the model (i.e., if the initial model did not fit the data, it was modified). The general SEM model includes two sub-models: a measurement model and a structural model. The measurement sub-models specify the factor loading between indicators and latent variables, accordingly defining the relationships between observed and unobserved variables. The structural sub-model specifies the hypothetical structural relationships between factors and defines relationships between latent variables by specifying the way that the latent variables directly or indirectly influence the changes in some other latent variables.

In accordance with Hoyle and Panter (1995), the following fit indices were applied to evaluate the fitness of the hypothesized model: Normal chi-square, Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the goodness of-fit-index (GFI), the incremental fit index (IFI), and the comparative fit index (CFI). As stated by Hoyle and Panter, the values of GFI, IFI, and CFI range from 0 to 1.0, with closer values to 1.0 generally showing better fitting models. Furthermore, the loading factors represent a high correlation between each latent variable and its sub-scales. To show the model path predictions, two statistical analyses, Spearman bi-variate correlations and multiple regression analysis, were used.

Moreover, SEM may build a coherent approach in which the models are combined to eliminate additional models and create more detailed explanations. In the end, for clearer conceptualization of the theory of associations between constructs, SEM shows the path of each effect and relationship between all variables in a complete image (Kline, 2011). For all these points, SEM is an appropriate approach to analyze the relations between the latent variables of the current study.

## Results

Regarding the previous section, a number of statistical procedures were used to answer the research questions. Descriptive statistics, correlation matrix, KMO and Bartlett's test, SEM, and multiple regression were applied to reach these purposes. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for all the sub-scales of the latent variables. It can be interpreted from Table 2. that the continuous variables are not normally distributed (Skewness and Kurtosis < 2), so Spearman bi-variate correlation was used in place of Pearson product-moment correlation to calculate the relationship between these three variables.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics for all Sub-scales of Latent Variables*

Latent Variables	Sub-scales	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Burnout	Emotional Exhaustion	18 2	3.34	.40	-1.16	2.16
	Depersonalization	18 2	3.27	.43	-.88	1.3

Reflective Thinking	Personal Accomplishment	18 2	3.12	.40	-.60	1.97
	Ability to self-assess	18 2	3.91	.29	-.30	1.98
	Awareness of how one learns	18 2	3.53	.36	.85	2.80
	Developing lifelong learning skills	18 2	3.75	.35	-.15	-.70
	Reflection on self-efficacy	18 2	4.42	.59	-.83	.11
Job Satisfaction	Intrinsic factors	18 2	4.18	.39	-.39	.27
	Extrinsic factors	18 2	3.98	.50	-.59	-.25

Table 3 represents the correlation matrix of the latent variables and their sub-scales. As shown in Table 3, there is a reasonably significant correlation among latent variables with the negative correlation between job satisfaction and job burnout and their sub-scales. Moreover, not only all latent variables are negatively correlated with their sub-scales, but some sub-scales are negatively correlated with other latent variables and sub-scales. It is necessary to note that there was a positive correlation between job satisfaction and reflective thinking compared to the job burnout.

**Table 3**

*Correlation Matrix for the Latent Variables and their Sub-scales*

Variables	Job burnout	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment	Job satisfaction	Intrinsic satisfaction	Extrinsic satisfaction	Reflective thinking	Ability to self-assess	Awareness of how one learns	Developing lifelong learning skills	Reflection on self-efficacy
Job burnout	1											
Emotional Exhaustion	.84	1										
Depersonalization	.83	.50	1									
Personal Accomplishment	.86	.61	.55	1								
Job satisfaction	-.03	-.22	-.12	-.19	1							
Intrinsic satisfaction	-.01	-.23	-.03	-.18	.87	1						
Extrinsic satisfaction	-.16	-.25	-.07	-.23	.93	.61	1					
Reflective thinking	.36	.30	.39	.21	.42	.41	.35	1				

Ability to self-assess	.29	.29	.25	.19	.25	.33	.14	.70	1			
Awareness of how one learns	.08	.13	.15	.02	.10	.03	.13	.49	.24	1		
Developing lifelong learning skills	.24	.29	.20	.12	.33	.33	.27	.64	.43	.26	1	
Reflection on self-efficacy	.28	.20	.27	.27	.35	.34	.30	.72	.33	.05	.18	1

Regarding the one-by-one relationship between sub-scales of the current study, it can be understood that the highest correlation is between “*reflection on self-efficacy*” belonging to reflective thinking and “*intrinsic factors*” under job satisfaction ( $r = .34$ ), considering that the lowest correlation is between “*emotional exhaustion*” belonging to job burnout and “*extrinsic satisfaction*” under job satisfaction ( $r = -.25$ ). Moreover, all the sub-scales of job satisfaction are negatively correlated with job burnout.

In spite of multiple relationships between the latent variables and their sub-scales, simple correlation analysis, due to the measurement errors, cannot be used as a powerful confirmatory measure. So, along with confirming the relations between variables of the hypothesized model, both the exploratory and confirmatory analyses of SEM were employed.

To achieve this goal, Bartlett test was used to estimate whether all of the sub-scales were correlated within themselves and with their own latent variables. It is necessary to mention that Bartlett test result should be significant ( $p < .05$ ). Moreover, KMO test was employed to check the sample adequacy. This test shows the partial correlations to see if each sub-scale sufficiently loads on its related factor. The value of KMO test should be between .5 and .9. A small value for KMO ( $p < .5$ ) indicates a problem in sampling procedure. Therefore, variables with small values should be removed.

**Table 4**  
*KMO and Bartlett's Test*

Latent Variables	Job burnout	Job satisfaction	Reflective thinking
KMO measure of sampling adequacy	.702	.558	.595
Bartlett's test	Approx. Chi-Square	184.233	94.112
	Df	3	2
	Sig.	.000	.000

According to the Table 4., all of the statistics for KMO measure were higher than .5 showing the sampling appropriateness. In addition, confidence level of .00 for Bartlett's test confirms the appropriateness of the factor model for all of the latent variables. In accordance with Jöreskog and Sörbom (1996), the goodness of fit indices for the model was calculated using maximum likelihood estimation approach in AMOS version 24.

More understandable, the following fit indices were used to estimate the fitness of the hypothesized model: Normal Chi-square ( $(\frac{\chi^2}{df}) < 5$ ), Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA  $< .05$ ), Root Mean Squared Residual (RMR  $\geq 0$ ), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI  $> .9$ ), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI  $> .85$ ), Normal Fit Index or Bentler-Bonett Index (NFI  $> .90$ ), Comparative Fit Index (CFI  $> .90$ ) and Incremental Fit Index (IFI  $> .90$ ). The values of

GFI, IFI, and CFI range from 0 to 1.0, with values closer to 1.0, according to Hoyle and Panter (1995), usually representing high fitting models. Eight criteria used to calculate the fit statistics of the model are represented in Table 5.

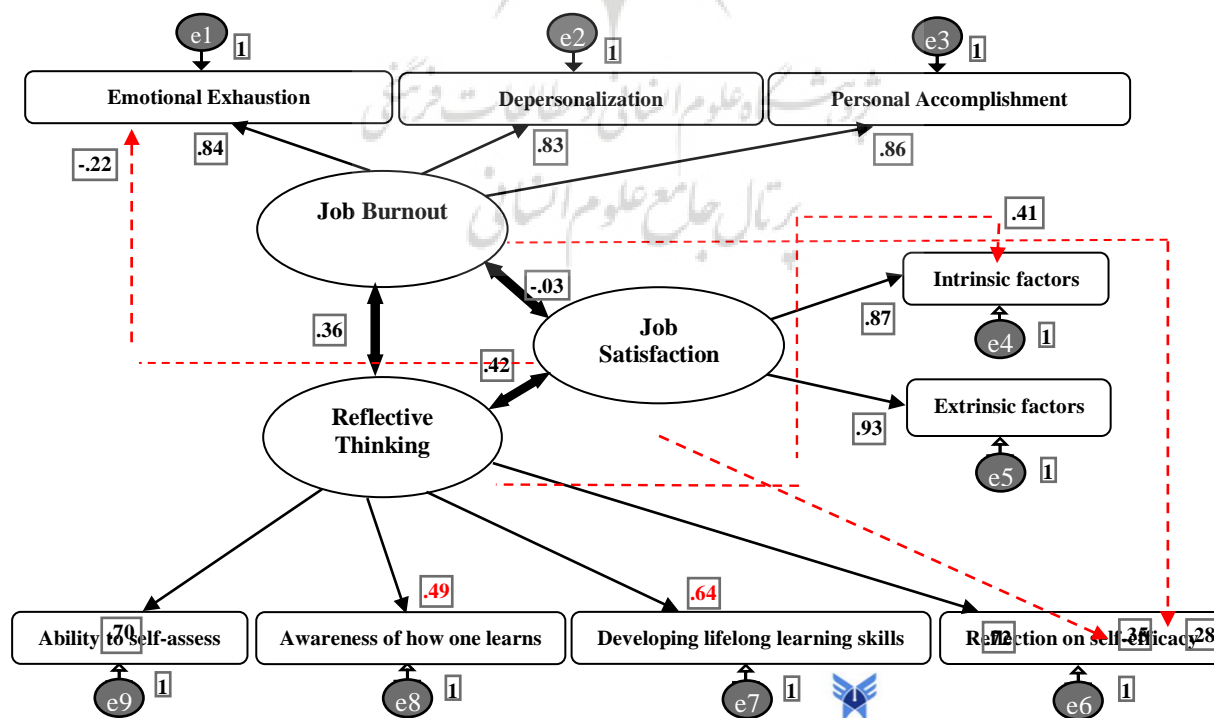
**Table 5**  
*Structural Equation Model: Fit Statistics*

Evaluation	Acceptable level	Current level	Fit statistics
Normal Chi-Square	$\left(\frac{\chi^2}{df} < 5\right)$	3.6	Accept
Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation	RMSEA <.05	.05	Accept
Root Mean Squared Residual	RMR $\geq 0$	.04	Accept
Goodness-of-Fit Index	GFI > .9	.96	Accept
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index	AGFI >.85	.93	Accept
Normal Fit Index or Bentler-Bonett Index	NFI >.90	.95	Accept
Comparative Fit Index	CFI > .90	.96	Accept
Incremental Fit Index	IFI > .90	.96	Accept

As represented in Table 5., all indices are accepted for the job satisfaction, job burnout, and reflective thinking model (Normal Chi-Square = 3.6; RMSEA=.05; RMR =.04; GFI = .96; AGFI =.93; NFI =.95; CFI =.96; IFI =.96). Figure 2 is the schematic representation of the modified and accepted model based on the previously-mentioned criteria. This figure also shows the standardized path correlations between the latent variables along with their sub-scales.

**Figure 2**

*Structural equation modeling in standardized estimates after modification of the hypothesized model*



According to figure 2, there are some positive inter-group correlations, whereas the highest correlation was between job satisfaction and job burnout. The findings of the correlation matrix analyses show different bi-variate correlation between the research measures. Therefore, these bi-variate analyses cannot define the influence of one measure on another. As a consequence, multiple regression analysis is required to specify which independent variable related to which dependent variable(s).

According to Table 6, job satisfaction predicts reflective thinking ( $B=.627$ ,  $t=10.155$ ,  $Sig=.000$ ) more strongly than reflective thinking ( $B=.024$ ,  $t=.691$ ,  $Sig=.458$ ). Regarding the independent variables'  $B$  and  $t$  values, job satisfaction is a positive predictor of reflective thinking in which it has more prediction power as opposed to job burnout.

**Table 6**  
*Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Teachers' Reflective Thinking*

Predictor	B	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.564	3.722	.000
Job satisfaction	.627	10.155	.000
Job burnout	.024	.691	.458

### Discussion

Applying structural equation modeling (SEM), this research intended to concurrently study the interrelationships between three latent variables namely, job satisfaction, job burnout, and reflective thinking. It is worth mentioning that this study expanded the previous related investigations by finding the relationship between these variables simultaneously and applying more specific data analysis methods.

The first research question intended to examine any statistical relationship between EFL teachers' job satisfaction and job burnout. As it was certainly represented in correlation matrix of latent variables and their sub-scales, there was negative correlation between job satisfaction and job burnout ( $r= -.03$ ). Furthermore, not only these two latent variables but also all their sub-scales were negatively correlated with each other in which the lowest correlation was between "emotional exhaustion" under job burnout and "extrinsic satisfaction" belonging to job satisfaction ( $r= -.25$ ). Moreover, SEM results revealed that job satisfaction has lower relationship with job burnout compared to reflective thinking. That is to say, teachers with higher job satisfaction are expected to have less job burnout. The findings of the current research are in line with the findings of the previously investigated studies (Kara, 2020; Karavasilis, 2019; Kroupis, Kouli & Kourtessis, 2019; Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001; Robinson et al., 2019; Safari, 2020; Sotirios et al., 2019; Torkaman et al. 2017; Wisnu, 2019; Yu-Hsia & Mei-Hsiang, 2019), in which indicated that individuals who have job burnout often experience low level of job satisfaction, cognitive performance impairment, especially fatigue, and physical complaints. Accordingly, interventions to reduce stressors and strengthen the resources to control teachers' burnout would be a critical factor of their job satisfaction.

The second research question aimed to study any statistical relationship between EFL teachers' job satisfaction and reflective thinking. In accordance with the results of correlation matrix of all latent variables and their sub-scales, EFL teachers' job satisfaction is positively correlated with their reflective thinking. In addition, the obtained findings of the correlation

matrix are confirmed by the structural equation modeling in standardized estimates (.42). Even though the number achieved for the relationship between job satisfaction and reflective thinking has been the lowest in this research, it can still be claimed that this correlation is positive and statistically significant. That is to say, teachers who are satisfied with their job are more presumably to enjoy higher levels of reflective thinking. According to the results of structural equation modeling in standardized estimates, job satisfaction influenced one of the subscales of the reflective thinking namely, “reflection on self-efficacy” (.35). Moreover, reflective thinking influenced one of the sub-scales of the job satisfaction namely, “intrinsic factors” (.41). One possible justification for these results could be that those teachers, who are satisfied with their job, tend to promote lifelong learning skills more than unsatisfied teachers. It could also be presumed that these teachers attempt to reflect on what they perform during their lessons so that this can improve the strategies they employ with new and more effective ones. Furthermore, satisfied teachers prefer to follow orders rather than being innovative because they don’t want to get in difficulty and attempt to look for areas of connectivity between what and how they teach with their life experiences. As reported in results, those teachers who are more satisfied with their job always check the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and have a higher degree of self-efficacy and self-assessment. There are many previously investigated studies that confirmed the findings of the current study (Safari & Davaribina, 2021; Safari, Davaribina & Khoshnevis, 2020). These results are also in contrast with the findings of Bilač and Miljković (2017), whose results did not show any influence for reflective practice on job satisfaction of lower elementary and subject teachers.

The third research question attempted to examine the relationship between EFL teachers’ job burnout and reflective thinking. As reported by the results of correlation matrix of all latent variables and their sub-scales, EFL teachers’ reflective thinking was found to be weakly correlated with their job burnout. Subsequently, results of the correlation matrix were confirmed by the SEM results ( $r=.36$ ). Even though the number achieved for the relationship between job burnout and reflective thinking has been the lowest in the current study, it can still be indicated that this relationship is statistically significant. Thus, it means that those teachers who experience job burnout, more frequently enjoy higher level of reflective thinking. As confirmed by the results of SEM, job burnout influenced one of the sub-scales of the reflective thinking namely, “reflection on self-efficacy” (.28). One possible justification for these results could be that those teachers who have job burnout, presumably to improve lifelong learning skills more than unsatisfied teachers. It could also be mentioned that these teachers intend to reflect on what they do in their classes so that this can develop the strategies they employ with more effective people. Accordingly, those teachers who experience job burnout, always check the weaknesses and strengths of their teaching and have a higher level of self-efficacy and self-assessment. It is worth mentioning that the findings of this study are in contrast with the findings of some studies (Košir, et al., 2015; Mahmoodi & Ghaslani, 2014). As reported by Mahmoodi and Ghaslani (2014), reflective thinking was negatively correlated with burnout level. In another study, Košir, et al. (2015) revealed that reflective thinking was not a direct predictor of job burnout and stress.

### Conclusions and Implications

According to the results of this study, it was achieved that teachers’ job satisfaction and job burnout had a significant relationship with their reflective thinking. It was represented that teachers’ job satisfaction turned out to be a stronger predictor of reflective thinking. As reported previously in the result section, there was a negative correlation between job satisfaction and job

burnout, whereas not only these two latent variables but also all their sub-scales were negatively correlated to each other. That is to say, teachers with high level of job satisfaction are expected to experience lower job burnout. The results also revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' job satisfaction and reflective thinking. The results presented the critical role these variables play in teachers' job satisfaction. In other word, to improve teachers' reflective thinking, it is necessary to take their job satisfaction into account. Moreover, job satisfaction has the highest relationship with reflective thinking compared to job burnout. Put differently, job satisfaction predicted reflective thinking more strongly than job burnout. Therefore, it could be stated that those teachers who have a high degree of reflective thinking are more satisfied with their job. Additionally, the results revealed that although in the hypothesized model, it was predicted that job burnout can influence their reflective thinking, the results reported that this influence was lower than job satisfaction. Hence, it can be concluded that reflective thinking of EFL teachers can be influenced by their job burnout in a small scale. Simultaneously, it was also reported that job satisfaction and job burnout have influences on "reflection on self-efficacy", as one of the sub-scales of reflective thinking.

If the Iranian ELT population gets closer to professionalism by recreating identities of ELT experts more efficiently, improved teachers' job satisfaction and their improved reflectivity would decrease their burnout and stress. Any language stakeholders, like educational policy makers, researchers, and teachers might utilize from the results of the current research. Furthermore, this research can help administrators and educators to better understand the psychological and sociological characteristics of EFL teachers and take measures to promote the achievement of educational purposes and eliminate barriers in this field.

The limitations of research studies may have an effect on the generalizability of the findings. These restrictions usually arise because of design constraints, containing sampling method, measurement problems, or misspecification of expected and observed relationships. First and main limitation of this research with EFL teachers was the dependency on self-report measures alone. Self-report measure relies upon the participants' willingness to participate in accurate and honest response, and to complete each measure in the specified time. As the second limitation, because this study was a quantitative research and data collection instruments were three questionnaires, there was a very low response rate from the EFL teachers who were sent the questionnaires about an accurate experience profile and detailed teaching. As the third and last limitation, some of the participants had up to one week to fill the questionnaires in the specified time and to return the filled questionnaires. Throughout this time, these participants may have been influenced by different circumstances and experiences irrelevant to their work environment. Consequently, a procedural tendency may have affected the results.

Further research may change the model's endogenous variable selection and then examine how job satisfaction, job burnout, and reflective thinking might influence these endogenous variables or they can examine additional latent variables to develop the results of this research. Furthermore, it would be worthwhile to constantly study the model results and model fit using the SEM with various groups of teachers. For instance, model testing might be more informative with teachers of other field of studies. Future investigations may also replicate the comparison process of this study under different circumstances such as teachers of various workplaces.

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