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English Language Teachers' Burnout, School Climate, Satisfaction and Efficacy: A Predictive Mediation Model

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ABSTRACT

Research on stress-causing variables in the teaching profession often documents an interplay between teacher burnout and its correlates. This study brings forth concerns about the contribution of teacher/school climate, job satisfaction and self-efficacy as the hypothesized predictors of occupational burnout among EFL teachers. Using multiple regression analyses, a descriptive correlational model was examined against the survey data collected from a sample of 198 Iranian EFL teachers. The results showed significant inverse relations between dimensions of teacher/school climate and dimensions of burnout, showing teacher/school climate as a significant negative predictor of burnout ($p < .05$, $R2 = .20$, $\beta = -.447$). The results also revealed the significant role of teacher satisfaction and teacher self-efficacy in predicting aspects of burnout ($p < .05$). The two variables were also found as mediator of the effect of teaching climate on dimensions of burnout, showing a perspective of interaction between contextual factors and individual resources. Given the effects of teacher/school contextual stressors and their direct or indirect influence on teachers' vulnerability to burnout syndrome, the implications of the findings are discussed in view of teacher training and intervention programs.

KEYWORDS: Teacher/school climate; Job satisfaction; Self-efficacy; Occupational stressors; Burnout

1. Introduction

Research studies have consistently shown that prolonged exposure to emotionally demanding jobs and frequent interactions with service users can significantly increase occupational stress (e.g., Alonso-Tapia & Ruiz-Díaz, 2022; Li, et al., 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2020; Zakariya, 2020). It has been acknowledged that service providers, such as teachers and healthcare workers, are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to various occupational stressors (Maslach et al., 1996; Schaufeli et al., 2009). According to the *work stress theory* (Devereux et al., 2009), job demands and related stressful conditions are significant indicators of increased burnout among employees (Dermouti et al., 2001). That is, burnout has emerged as a psychologically chronic response to the cumulative negative impact of job stressors. This unique type of stress syndrome (Jacquet et al., 2015) and its related issues (e.g., predictors and consequences) once marginal within the broader scope of research is now attracting the attention of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in both educational and non-educational settings alike.

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When applied in teaching profession, burnout is considered a significant possible negative outcome. Teachers face higher levels of perceived stress, distress, turnover, and lower levels of satisfaction in their helping services industry (Evers, et al., 2004; Pizam, 2004). Given such significant difficulties, it is evident that the job of language teaching is particularly stressful due to the demands and peculiarities of language teaching context where teachers are required to have a repertoire of different behavioral strategies, interventions, methodology and additional academic efforts. These stress-causing sources, in turn, pose different social, psychological and educational problems for language teachers. Due to its significance in education, burnout syndrome has been highlighted in recent research (e.g., Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011; Navidinia et al., 2023; Rostami et al., 2015). However, language teacher burnout, together with its contextual and personal precursors, has not been fully addressed in educational research.

Educational burnout, such as teacher burnout, is an important index of psychological, physical, physiological, attitudinal, and psychosocial disorders (Burke & Richardsen, 1993; Pienaar & Willemse, 2008). In other words, burnout dimensions such as the ones originally suggested by Maslach et al. (2001) indicated to be hypothetically true of language teachers, in particular, foreign language teachers who face multitudes of variables at play in the contexts of foreign language teaching. For instance, English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers are candidates of burnout as long as they encounter an array of new and unique stressors such as subject matters, students' low levels of motivations and achievement, negative or neutral attitudes toward language learning; time demands, classroom management problems and students' misbehaviors; and inadequate access to English language teaching and learning facilities (see e.g., Chang et al., 2022; Cheng, 2022, Safari, 2022). The costly consequence of such strains prevailing in teaching contexts, has linked teacher burnout to reduction in job satisfaction, and consequently, to their eroded performance (Burke et al., 1996; Leithwood et al., 1999; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

Empirical evidence indicates a significant negative relation between language teacher burnout and teacher job satisfaction (e.g., Kara, 2020; Safari, 2020), revealing teachers with higher job satisfaction reported lower levels of burnout. Likewise, teacher/school climate dimensions (such as teacher-student relations, student factors, teacher support, and teacher instructional management) have been reported to be negatively related to teacher burnout (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). These findings emphasize the critical role of a supportive and positive environment in lowering teacher burnout. Representative research has thus grown a literature indicating that despite underlying job stressors, some contextual and individual preventives can mitigate the effects of stressors (Garrosa, et al., 2008; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). In this vein, teacher self-efficacy emerges as a key factor. The relevant research evidenced that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy are less likely to experience burnout (Aloe et al., 2014). Self-efficacy also mediates the relationship between contextual variables such as teacher/school climate and burnout (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Similarly, some studies have found a mediating function for teachers' sense of satisfaction (Yurt, 2022).

Positive or negative contribution of individual and contextual factors to burnout have been well addressed in the literature (Green et al., 2014; Navidinia, et al., 2023). However, when joined, they strengthened the relationship between teachers and the whole community (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). There has been paucity of research regarding examining burnout precursors and preventatives in ELT contexts. Research on the interactive role of language teachers' factors and environment serves to help further explore and explain educational burnout among these teachers. Taking this view, the present study was carried out on determinants of burnout among EFL teachers to further understand the most prominent burnout correlates or predictors in their teaching context. The study, therefore, addressed the question of the predicting role of three variables (i.e., *teacher/school climate, job satisfaction*, and *self-efficacy*) as well as the mediating roles of *teacher satisfaction*, and self-*efficacy* between *teaching climate* and *teacher burnout*.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical and empirical studies

Burnout, defined as "…a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding" (Harrison, 1999, p. 25), has been a recurrent research topic since 80s. As an operational definition, given by Leiter and Maslach (2001), burnout can be characterized by three primary constructs of emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and reduced professional accomplishment (PA). Emotional exhaustion envisages depletion of emotional resources of an individual leaving him/her without resources and energy to perform the job. Depersonalization describes a state where individuals hold cynical, negative, callous and uncaring attitudes toward others or toward those to whom they render a service. Finally, reduced personal accomplishment refers to a process whereby perception of job performance and job efficacy diminishes (Leiter & Maslach, 2001; Maslach, et al., 2001). As one of the consequences of professional stress, social service burnout stems from individual's experience of negative psychological state including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced professional accomplishment.

Building on a booming perspective of job-related psychology during the 1970s, there was a substantial interest in job-related burnout (e.g., Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). Job burnout has been well documented to be present in professionals of the assisting services such as social services, education, and health (Agyapong, et al., 2022; Ozdemir, 2006; Patton & Goddard, 2003; Kirk-Brown, 2004; Garrosa, et al, 2008). The existing evidence shows that excessive

emotional demands on personal resources of staff members who experience frequent and lengthy contact with recipients, are the genesis of harmful stress and pathogenic pressure. These strains and stresses, in turn, influence the development and perpetuation of the core element of burnout syndrome, that is symptom of exhaustion. A growing concern with the knowledge of burnout has linked the syndrome to apathy, indifference in personal relationships, detachment and a sense of helplessness and hopelessness (Ozdemir, 2006). Drained energy, developed dehumanization, and diminished personal accomplishment are ramifications which correspond to dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001).

Over the past three decades, a body of research has focused on the negative resultants of burnout among teachers. In early 1990s, Borg et al. (1991) and Capel (1991) indicated that high percentages of teachers are aware of stress in their occupations. In general, symptoms such as headache, fatigue, tension, and cardiovascular symptom have been reported by burned-out teachers (Schonfeld, 2001). In specific, possible negative effects of burnout on the quality of teaching and teacher-student relation, also on managing disruptive students or controlling aversive, antisocial, and oppositional behaviors have also been documented as critical stressors (e.g., Kokkinos, et al., 2005). EFL teaching contexts are not free of these prevalent stressors including, for instance, students' low levels of motivation, attitudes, and subject-specific knowledge; learning standards and expectations; teachers' professional knowledge, and standards imposed on them by the national language learning policies, as few among many (e.g., Cheng, 2022; Safari, 2022). Other variables reported as having an impact on teacher burnout are parental expectations (McCormick, 1997), imposition of measurable goal-achievement standards on teachers (Tatar & Horenczyk, 2003), physical environment issues (Friedman, 1991), teachers' relationships with their colleagues; conflicting values, and teachers' commitments (Coladarci, 1992), and teachers' classroom management problems (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). The severity of these stressful sources in contexts where English is not learned as a native language accelerates language teachers' onset of burnout and the quality of their performance.

Empirical research indicates that teacher burnout is affected by several interconnected and interrelated factors. In an earlier study, for instance, Brouwers and Tomic (1998) found that lower levels of self-efficacy were associated with lower levels of efforts and job performance but higher levels of burnout which, consequently, lead to higher levels of students' disruptive behaviors but lower levels of teacher management. In their later study, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) found teacher efficacy as having a significant positive effect on personal accomplishment and a significant negative effect on emotional exhaustion. These findings are consistent with Tschannen-Moran et al.'s (1998) cyclic model of teacher efficacy which posited a positive association between teacher sources of efficacy and their commitment, persistence and instructional behavior.

Similarly, research studies have been conducted on other interrelated factors such as teacher or school climate (Kalkan, & Dağlı, 2021), and teacher job satisfaction (Smetackova, et al., 2019.) and burnout psychological symptoms. These findings suggest these variables have an impact on teacher burnout. School climate, for instance, plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' experiences and outcomes. A positive teacher/school climate is a negative predictor of burnout. Within this climate, workload, the degree of supervisors and peer support, administration and management problems, conflict with others or students, and opportunity to participate in decision making on the job, exacerbate the levels of teacher burnout (Grayson, 2006). These relationships highlight the importance of addressing factors that contribute to teacher burnout, such as working conditions (e.g., teacher/school climate), workload, satisfaction and support (e.g., job satisfaction), and efficacy values (e.g., self-efficacy) to improve psychological well-being among language teachers (Kalkan & Dağlı, 2021).

Adopting a *sociological* perspective to teacher/school teaching climate, addressing how a teacher's well-being is influenced by the environment surrounding him/her, some researchers found a strong association between EE dimension of burnout with dimensions of teacher/school teaching climate, in particular, with the two dimensions of 'parent/community relations', and 'student/peer relations' (e.g., Grayson, 2006; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008, Sağlam et al., 2023). A significant association was also found between PA and DP dimensions and teacher/school climate components (Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2010). These findings imply that it is the distal hierarchy of school organization factors, such as power and struggles with school administration, feeling of inequity, or the policy pressures, that exert strains on teachers. As a result, teachers' effort to mitigate the job stressors is reduced (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Within the EFL context, EFL teachers often face heavy workloads (e.g., lesson planning, instructional tasks, etc.,), lack of support from their institutions (e.g., insufficient resources), classroom management challenges (e.g., managing classroom with diverse learners), emotional labor (e.g., managing their emotions and providing emotional support to their students), and low salary or job security (Chang et al., 2022, Cheng, 2022). While these factors significantly impact the mental and physical health of EFL teachers, leading to burnout, other factors such as teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction can play a significant role in mitigating burnout by enhancing teachers' confidence in their abilities to manage challenges (see Li, 2023, Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Self-efficacious teachers often experience higher job satisfaction which can buffer against feelings of exhaustion and frustration (Bartosiewicz, 2022).

In the view of the above arguments, this study adopted a conceptual model that includes both individual and contextual stressors of Iranian EFL teachers to (a) investigate the differential predictive roles in affecting burnout syndrome, and (b) explore the mediating role of the factors of teacher satisfaction and efficacy on the relationship between a contextual factor (antecedent) and burnout (outcome). There is now little evidence as to which predictors contribute the most to EFL teachers' psychological outcome (i.e., burnout in this study).

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample

Showing their consent, a total of 198 EFL teachers, from EFL classes in Tehran and Isfahan provinces of Iran, participated in the study, comprising a sample of 148 (74.5%) females and 50 (25.5%) males, respectively. The overall age mean of the participants was 28, ranging from 23 to 56 years old. The mean length of their teaching career was 5 years with time spans between 1 and 28 years. Regarding their academic degrees, 139 teachers had BA., 52 had MA. and 7 held PhD. in TEFL. All teachers were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. These randomly selected participants answered the questions which measured teacher/school climate, teacher job satisfaction, teacher efficacy, and burnout. A total of 220 surveys were dispersed to all participants, and 90% of the surveys were completed and returned. This result is satisfactory when keeping in mind the length of the questionnaires (35-45 minutes to complete). Of note, teachers from all high school grades were included in the present sample.

3.2. Instruments, procedures, and analysis

The data for the study were obtained from a battery of questionnaires including four survey instruments, all have been extensively used in research. Each instrument consisted of structured items covering several constructs and demographic information. They went through piloting process first. Respondents' suggestions and comments on any problematic, ambiguous, or context-irrelevant items were also obtained. Teachers were provided with the researchers' e-mail address and phone numbers to make any contact once they opted for further information.

The following instruments were used in this study:

a) Teacher/school Climate Measure (adapted by Grayson & Alvarez, 2008)

b) Job Satisfaction (adapted by Grayson & Alvarez, 2008)

*c) Teacher Self-efficacy (*Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001)

d) Burnout (Maslach et al., 1996)

In piloting round, the battery was first given to 30 EFL teachers to determine any ambiguity, cultural-irrelevant, or any problem in the instruments' items. The obtained remarked showed favorable instruments. They asked for more clarification on a few items (i.e., item related to music in teacher climate measure, also on two items in burnout instrument). Modifications were done and the outcomes were re-examined by the researchers, indicating no serious problems of misunderstanding

3.2.1. Teacher climate measure (TCM)

In their attempts to assess school environment aspects, Grayson (2006) and two years later Grayson and Alvarez (2008) revised and used the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environment (CASE) instrument. The CASE included two self-report scales: Teacher Climate Measure (TCM) and Teacher Satisfaction Scale (TSS), both were used in the present study.

The Likert-type TCM has items assessing teacher's general perceptions of eight dimensions/factors, including *Teacher-student relations (12 items), student-behavioral values (3 items), instructional management (7 items), administration (6 items), students' academic orientation (4 items), student-peer relationships (3 items), parent and community-school relationships (4 items, and students' activities (4 items).* The multifaceted nature of the instrument together with its content validity was found by some earlier studies (see Halderson et al., 2001). Test-retest reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, ranging from .73 to .91 across the scales, with the coefficient of .88 for all items, have been reported. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha for the subscales generally ranged from .70 to .87, and was .81 for the total items which is a satisfactory index of reliability. For the purpose of this study, and in alignment with Grayson (2006), '*Teacher support'* subscale was formed by calculating the means of the two dimensions/constructs of parent/community school relation, and administrative support constructs. Additionally, four constructs of academic orientation, students-behavioral values, student-peer relations, and students' activities formed the general factor of '*Student factor'*.

3.2.2. Teacher satisfaction scale (TTS)

Teacher Satisfaction Scale (TSS), another Likert scale of the CASE, is a self-report measure defining teachers' levels of satisfaction with a specific situation or condition. Originally developed by the National Association of Secondary Schools Principles and University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1982, the scale was later adapted and reviewed by Grayson (2006) which

finally included items measuring *administration (8 items), student responsibility, and discipline (5 items), co-workers (7 items), parent and community (5 items), compensation (5 items), school buildings (7 items), and communication (7 items)*. Extensive factor analyses assumed to measure multifactor of this 5-point Likert scale (Grayson, 2006). Reliability of the original instrument was reported to be .88, ranging from.80 to .93 for the subscales. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha for the total instrument was .94 which is a satisfactory consistency index. Coefficients ranged from .89 to .93 across the subscales.

3.2.3. Maslach burnout inventory educators survey (MBI: educators survey)

EFL teachers' intensity of burnout was measured by administrating the 22-item MBI which is the most frequently used instrument for assessing professional burnout. MBI instrument has been validated by several researchers (De Beer et al., 2024; Enzman et al., 1998; Schuttle et al., 2000; Wang et al., 2024). The items from the Educators Survey assess teachers' frequency of attitudes and feelings on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by 'Every day' (6) to 'Never' (0). Psychometric analyses run for exploring construct validity of the instrument revealed three dimensions underlying the scale: EE (feeling of over-exhausted: 9 items), DP (unfeeling response toward others: 5 items), and PA (feeling of competence and successful achievement: 8 items). Aluja et al., (2005) reported the 3-factor structure, accounting for 43.4% of the variance. Using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, reliability assessment revealed .90, .79, and .71 for three subscales of EE, DP, and PA respectively. In the present study, alpha coefficient was .70 for total items. Coefficients of the dimensions were found to be .83, .78, and .62 for EE, DP, and PA subscales respectively, as compared to .88, .80. and .64 found in Grayson's study (2006). The total score (0-132) is obtained using a sum of EE, DP, and score reversal of PA. Summed scores greater than or equal to 27 on EE, 14 for PA, and at or below 35 on PA demonstrate high burnout (Maslach et al., 1996).

3.2.4. Teacher efficacy scale (TES)

EFL teachers' perceived efficacy was measured by administrating the 24-item Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) which was originally developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) to assess a broad range of capabilities that are considered important in good teaching. TES includes items with three different distinct dimensions (*engagement, instruction, and management*) on a 9-likert scoring format. The instrument has been subjected to a series of factorial testing and validation processes by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy and the results reveal that the instrument measures: a) *efficacy for students' engagement* (8 items), b) *efficacy for instructional strategies* (8 items), and c) *efficacy for classroom management* (8 items). Specifically, TES is useful to explore both task- and context-specific nature of teachers' beliefs in their efficacy. TES revealed a superb total reliability index (.94). In the present study, the internal consistency indices using *alpha* Cronbach, were found to be .83, .50, and .82 for instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement subscales, and revealed .82 for the total instrument. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy reported a valid 3-dimension instrument, with reliability co-efficient of .91, 90, and .87 for instruction, management and engagement, respectively.

3.3. Data analysis

Prior to main analyses, the assumptions such as descriptive analyses and Inter-correlation of each dependent and independent variable were checked. All data were analyzed through SPSS program, estimating means, standard deviations, correlation and multiple regression analysis.

4. Results

Examination of Table 1 puts forward that EFL teachers perceived their efficacy levels, their work conditions as well as their teaching/school climate as moderately above the average ($\bar{x}$=3.74, 3.62 and 3.62 for TCM, TSS and TES, respectively). The mean score for the MBI scale is the lowest ($\bar{x}$=1.45) among other variables making it clear that teachers perceived degrees of burnout but the lower levels while managing their classroom.

As to the associations between the main variables of the study, a number of Bivariate correlations were carried out (see Table 2). As Table 2 shows, all variables significantly correlated with burnout ($p<.05$). The table shows significant negative correlations between teacher/school climate (i.e., TCM) and teacher burnout (i.e., MBI). Teacher burnout was also negatively correlated with teacher job satisfaction (i.e., TSS) and teacher efficacy (i.e., TES). These relationships reveal that as teachers' perceptions obtained through TCM and TSS increase, there is a notable increase in TES, and a corresponding decrease in MBI. It was found that TCM, TSS, and TES are significantly and satisfactorily interrelated. As to burnout dimensions, the three subfactors of burnout were significantly related to teacher/school climate, teacher satisfaction and teacher efficacy. The patterns of negative relationship between MBI subscales with TCM, TSS and TES revealed as teachers' perceptions of context climate satisfaction, and beliefs about their competence decrease, all three dimensions of teacher burnout, i.e., EE, DE, and lack of PA increase. Specifically, EE dimension of burnout had highest negative correlation with TSS ($p<.01$).

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and errors for measures

	Scales and subscales/dimensions	N	Means	SD	Skewness
1.	**Teacher Climate Measure (TCM total)**	198	**3.74**	1.14	-1.24
	Teacher-student relations		4.02	0.58	-1.32
	Student factors		3.01	.791	-0.64
	Teacher support		4.01	.902	-1.26
	Instructional management		3.91	.663	-0.593
2.	**Teacher Satisfaction Scale (TSS total)**	198	**3.62**	0.56	-0.79
	Administration		3.84	.84	-1.02
	Student responsibility and discipline		2.67	1.07	.385
	Co-workers		3.51	.839	-.836
	Parents and community		3.93	.69	-.784
	Compensation		4.06	1.51	-.141
	School buildings		3.45	.92	-.779
	communication		3.86	.70	-1.07
3.	**Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)**	198	**3.61**	-1.11	0.756
	Instructional strategies		4.81	1.03	-1.71
	Classroom management		4.86	1.42	3.27
	Student engagement		4.80	1.02	-1.29
4.	**Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)**	198	**1.45**	.087	-0.81
	Emotional Exhaustion (EE)		1.81	1.16	0.90
	Depersonalization (DP)		1.03	0.999	1.47
	(Lack of) Personal Accomplishment (PA)		1.32	1.09	0.88

Table 2: Two-tailed correlations among variables/measures

Scales	TCM	T. Support	T-S relations	S. factors	Instr. Mangt	TSS	MBI	MBI EE	MBI DP	MBI PA
T. Support	.827*									
T-S relations	.767*	.507*								
S. factors	.894*	.675*	.520*							
Instr. Mangt	.691*	.393*	.485*	.550*						
TSS	.719*	.635*	.517*	.645*	.435*					
MBI	-.448*	-.362*	-.371*	-.373*	-.329*	-.518*				
MBI EE	-.346*	-.299*	-.271*	-.319*	-.213*	-.454*	850*			
MBI DP	-.336*	-.251*	-.351*	-.247*	-.267*	-.355*	.730*	.540*		
MBI PA	-.373*	-.298*	-.290*	-.301*	-.312*	-.383*	.840*	.399*	.388*	
TES	.445*	-.268*	.426*	.345*	.437*	.339*	-.432*	-.245*	-.329*	-.462*

Note: T=Teacher; S=Student; Instr. Mangt=Instructional Management

After testing the significant relationships between the variables, multiple regression analysis was run to check the predictive power of the variables on teacher burnout. Separate hierarchical regression analyses were performed to identify the relative contribution of environmental factors, teacher satisfaction, and teacher efficacy to burnout and its dimensions. Prior to this, Bivariate correlation analyses evaluated the prediction of all variables for inclusion in mediation analyses (See Table 2). Subsequently, in the first step of hierarchical multiple regression analysis, teacher/school climate was added to the model explaining 20% (R^2) of the variance in teacher burnout ($p < .01$). This indicated that the global TCM and its constructs significantly predicted burnout scores. The significant correlations between TCM and MBI evidenced that both *student factor* and *teacher-student relations* were negative predictors of the global burnout *(*$p < .01$; r=-.373 and -.371).

Test of mediation was also done to explore TSS as mediator between total TCM factors and burnout relationship. As to this aim, total TCM was entered into the regression equation first and TSS at the next phase. During the second step, TSS was thus added to the model resulting in a significant change in the total effect (ΔR^2=.074; $p < .01$), meaning that the mediator (i.e., TSS) carried parts of the effect of the global TCM to the total MBI (β=-.529; R^2=.273; $p < .01$). Therefore, the two variables

(TCM & TSS), when combined, accounted for 27.3% of the total variance in MBI.

Further analyses were also run for teacher efficacy (TES). Prior to this, Bivariate correlations indicated that TES and all its three dimensions were related to burnout negatively, but positively to TCM and TSS. When TES was hierarchically added to model, the two variables (i.e., TCM & TES) were found to account for 26.5% of the variance in total MBI (R^2=.264; p <.01). This implies that the entered variable (TES) significantly changed the total effect of the main variable (TCM), supporting the significant effect of the mediating variable (ΔR^2=.068; p <.01) on the relationship between TCM and MBI.

In the next phase, additional analyses were run to examine the predictive model for the underlying dimensions/subfactors of MBI too. The results reported TSS as a significant mediator between the relationships of TCM and two of the MBI subscales. Overall, TSS served as a significant mediator between the relationships of TCM and burnout. The most significant change was detected for EE, meaning that the prediction of EE was mediated by TSS. The variables combined accounted for 21% (R^2) of the total variance. An increase in TSS resulted into more increase in EE than DP and PA. However, when TES was concerned, the variable did not significantly account for the most change in β drop (p >.05) in EE dimension of MBI. On such a basis, positive ratings in TCM, related to TES increase, resulted only in a decrease in DP, and reduced PA (ΔR^2=.112; p <.01). Therefore, the two variables (TCM & TES), when combined, accounted for 11.2% of the total variance in PA. (See Tables 4-6).

Table 3. Regression analyses predicting burnout (DV: MBI; IDV: TCM, TSS and TES)

Model	Step	DV: MBI	β	p	R^2	Δ R^2
Model 1	Step 1	TCM	-.447	.000	.199	
	Step 2	TCM-TSS	-.529	.000	.273	.074
Model 2	Step 1	TCM	-.442	.000	.196	.068
	Step 2	TCM-TES	-.513	.000 .000	.264	

Table 4. Regression analyses predicting burnout dimensions

Model	Step	DV: MBI-EE	β	p	R^2	Δ R^2
Model 1	Step 1	TCM	-.346	.000	.120	.087
	Step 2	TCM-TSS	-.454	.000	.207	
Model 2	Step 1	TCM	-.341	.000	.116	.011
	Step 2	TCM-TES	-.356	.145	.127	

Table 5. Regression analyses predicting burnout dimension

Model	Step	DV: MBI-DP	β	p	R^2	Δ R^2
Model 1	Step 1	TCM	-.336	.000	.113	.027
	Step 2	TCM-TSS	-.374	.016	.140	
Model 2	Step 1	TCM	-.333	.000	.111	.039
	Step 2	TCM-TES	-.389	.004	.150	

Table 6. Regression analyses predicting burnout dimension (reduced PA)

Model	Step	DV: MBI-PA	β	p	R^2	Δ R^2
Model 1	Step 1	TCM	-.373	.000	.139	.028
	Step 2	TCM-TSS	-.408	.033	.167	
Model 2	Step 1	TCM	-.369	.000	.133	.112
	Step 2	TCM-	-.495	.001	.245	

5. Discussion

Academic burnout, often viewed as a unique type of stress syndrome, has significantly impacted many teachers in different educational sectors (Einav et al., 2024; Lackritz, 2004; Li, 2023). Understanding and addressing such a syndrome is especially crucial for maintaining the overall health of the education system. Research in this area provides valuable insights that can guide the development of effective support mechanisms for educators. The present study aimed to investigate the phenomenon of burnout through an integrative interrelated framework of predictors (e.g., institutional-level stressors and individual traits) within the EFL context of Iran.

In this study, an interplay of stressors in the teaching occupation (i.e., teacher/school climate, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy) was examined in association with teachers' global burnout. In addition, further analyses were performed to examine the role of the targeted factors in predicting different dimensions of burnout to better understand personal and professional correlates of the syndrome. The regression results revealed significant relations between the predictors and teacher burnout. Teachers who reported a positive teacher/school climate ($\bar{x}$= 3.74), characterized by teacher-student relations, student factors, teacher support and instructional management, reported lower levels of burnout ($\bar{x}$= 1.45, on a scale of 1 to 6). Other strong inverse relationships were also found between teacher job satisfaction and efficacy and burnout. Teachers with higher job satisfaction scores and higher levels of efficacy reported lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The estimated coefficients between job satisfaction, efficacy and burnout were -.52 and .43 ($p < .01$) respectively, indicating significant negative correlations between the variables.

In the next phase, Multivariate Regression analyses confirmed the significance of the predictors. Teacher/school climate, job satisfaction, and teacher efficacy collectively explained almost 44% of the variance in burnout levels ($p < 0.01$). Though each predictor contributed to the model, teachers' satisfaction, highlighting perceiving a safe environment, appeared as the most substantial contributor to changes in teacher burnout. The beta weight change when teacher efficacy was added to the model (model 2: TCM-TE) was almost near to that of the first model (model 2: TCM-TSS) showing that teacher efficacy emerged as a significant mediator of burnout too. This implies that teachers who believed in their ability to impact student learning positively had lower burnout levels. Findings of the present study corroborate the previous findings that identified burnout as a multidimensional, multifaceted phenomenon. Given such a nature of burnout syndrome, further analyses were performed to examine the associations between the predictors and dimensions or subfactors of burnout (i.e., EE, DP, PA).

As to the components, teacher/school climate factors of *teacher-student relations*, *student factor*, and *teacher support* were significantly related to EE dimension. The correlations of these job aspects with EE support the assertion that *workplace factors* that relate to working with students and environment (Lindblom, et al., 2006) are associated with burnout. The extent to which teachers are overwhelmed by their academic context, including their students' behaviors, students' relationships, the types of activities they engage in, among many, affects teachers' perceptions, attitudes and their subsequent behaviors. Such student- and teaching climate-level stressors are exhausting particularly in demanding climate such as EFL teaching climate where teachers have to assist and guide their students through English language development in a non-English context such as Iran. To respond to students' needs, whether academic or psychological, these teachers often feel role strain. According to Van Dick and Wagner (2001), teachers' too much involvement and workload are critical predictors of stress and tension. It is likely that such a condition would lead to degrees of exhaustion, in particular, when support and administration are poor, a condition which exerts a critical toll on teachers (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Split et al., 2011).

As to the components contributed to DP subscale, *teacher-student relations* was the best predictor. This component is characterized by teachers' efforts and willingness to help learners, understand their goals and values, meet their needs, and treat them fairly. Regarding EFL contexts, extra effort is needed by EFL teachers in establishing positive relationships in their classrooms due to students' varying values, goals, needs, willingness and motivation for learning, often not easily captured by teachers. Consequently, in a bi-directional way, uninterested, unmotivated, disruptive or misbehaving learners may negatively affect teachers (Kokkinos et al, 2005). Teachers with lower levels of motivation for teaching, less support from peers and principals, and reduced sense of community within their school become emotionally detached, uncaring, indifferent toward their students, and depersonalized. Teacher depersonalization can lead to classroom disruptions and negatively impact student behavior. To mitigate DP, it is worthwhile to foster positive relationships between teachers and students which is valuable for reducing DP. The reported depersonalization rate by the present teachers might be attributed to their lack of satisfaction with decisions and degrees of support by school administrators or lack of sense of connectedness.

While EE and DP were explained by TCM and TSS, 11% of PA variance was explained by the second model with a personal factor (i.e., TES) as its important predictive variable. A noteworthy personal factor in explaining the impact of chronic symptom was, therefore, teachers' sense of efficacy. Findings of the present study support the argument that teachers' sense of efficacy can be a significant predictor of burnout outcomes (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Indeed, results reveal that an important amount of variance in burnout can be explained by teacher efficacy with a reverse relationship between EE, DP, and

reduced PA. This aligns with the available studies demonstrating teachers' doubt about their efficacy triggers burnout process (Chwalisz, et al., 1992) and its core elements, EE, DP and reduced PA. One possible explanation for this finding is the *sources* of efficacy beliefs such as teachers' experience, capabilities, and assessment of their classroom management that will likely decrease with job stress and affective arousals. In the same token, EFL teachers' beliefs and confidence in their professional capabilities and classroom management skills can be undermined by a combination of increased job stressors and emotional responses to the stressors.

The results indicated that teacher efficacy, when added to the model, played an important mediating role in explaining PA (see Table 6). One possible explanation about this role comes from the pattern of relation between TCM, TES and PA. PA component of burnout was closely correlated with *instructional management* component of TCM, a finding which aligns with the available literature (e.g., Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). The instructional management dimension was assessed by items determining whether teachers believe in a *clear set of rules in institutions or schools, amount of time spent on activities, and the extent of outside interruptions*. Grayson and Alvarez (2008), for instance, argued that with an increase in the amount of time provided and spent on activities, and any decrease in outside interruptions, teacher-rated performance tend to positively increase. This implies that teachers' judgment of their performance and ability to organize and execute the given types of performance as well as their judgment of the consequences of such performance increase their sense of being efficacious. On the other hand, teachers' doubt in their ability to maintain classroom order or solve classroom problems can lead to decreased levels of confidence and feeling of effectiveness (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). This, in turn, causes teachers to experience feeling of failure in their performance, as a result, their rated feelings of efficacy and PA diminish. In the present study, the participating EFL teachers rated themselves higher in PA. Overall, this finding is in line with the findings by Bardach et al. (2022) and Zee and Koomen (2016) who explained teachers' beliefs in their professional success are linked to lower levels of stress, and higher levels of personal accomplishment.

In addition to the mediatory role of TEE, TSS results also supported the mediator relationship as job satisfaction accounted for a significant relationship between TCM and MBI. Specifically, the combination of the variables accounted for an important portion of variance in EE which is the most sensitive burnout subscale. This finding is similar to the finding by Grayson and Alvarez (2008) who found mediator relationship between TCM and EE. Both TSS and TES were most positively related to instructional management and most negatively to burnout and its dimensions. Their mediation roles can be important particularly when causing intervention and helping teachers to treat the stressors. Although negative school climate increases teachers' stress and burnout, teachers' satisfaction and, in particular, their efficacy can affect the degree they are influenced by increasing negativity. For instance, those EFL teachers who feel confident in their instruction, management, and student engagement, or are interrupted less by outside resources are less vulnerable to negative stressors.

Corroborating the existing literature, findings of the present study provide empirical evidence for the premise that occupational contexts expose teachers to serious stressors as precursors of burnout. Notwithstanding most empirical studies have investigated the effect of contextual stressors of occupations, some other have recently emphasized the effect of personal resources on burnout process (see Zeijen et al., 2024). Even though emphasis remains on contextual factors, susceptibility depends on individual's resources as well (Garrosa et al., 2008). Put in another word, different individuals may react differently to negative stressors in their work climate as they perceive and interpret stressors differently. Given the importance role of perceptions in evaluation of teaching- and learning-related factors (Kiany & ShayesteFar, 2011), it is, therefore, crucial to consider both contextual and individual resources when addressing teacher burnout. Tailored strategies that enhance personal resilience, self-efficacy, and coping mechanisms, while simultaneously improving the work environment, can help mitigate the negative impact of stressors.

6. Conclusion

Over the past two decades, an emerging trend in research on teacher-related factors has focused on exploring the interaction and interrelation of teacher contextual and individual factors. Aligned with this, the present study assessed Iranian EFL teachers' burnout affected by contextual factors, teacher satisfaction and their efficacy beliefs. Since teacher burnout is clearly a major problem which, directly or indirectly, influences the quality and quantity of teacher performance, and subsequently, the quality and quantity of the education students receive, a close examination of the syndrome and its predictors is of specific importance in academia. Insights from identifying and understanding the syndrome predictors can not only contribute to academic discourse but also inform policy-makers to develop targeted interventions which can support teachers, foster a healthier and more resilient teaching workforce, and ultimately enhance a sustainable and productive teaching profession. This process, in turn, can lead to improvement of teacher retention and enhancement of student outcome.

Understanding the underlying factors or predictors such as teaching contextualized climate (showing a significant predictive role in this study, for instance) has implications for developing effective strategies to increase positive environment and reduce the stressors negative influence. On the basis of the present results, it is important to develop intervention programs that reduce the pressure and demands in teaching/school climate. We need teachers who maintain positive feelings about themselves, their students, and their jobs (Schwab, 2001). To this aim, intervention programs can be centered at increasing the

contextual resources of the professionals. Initiations must be, therefore, done on a macrosocial level to improve working conditions, and reduce the pressure and stress in teaching climate.

Likewise, the findings have implications in informing policy-making that targets enhancing individual factors such as positive perceptions and appraisals of self-efficacy through intervention policies. In other words, because of the propensity for a positive change through feelings of self-efficacy, not only the direct effects but indirect effects of workplace factors on burnout (through mediators) are especially considered when setting the policies for intervention plans. According to the present findings, the mediating function of teacher efficacy can trigger more intervention initiatives. As to the interplay of institutional and individual factors, implementing intervention plans with the aim of increasing positive climate and enhancing relationships (through targeting student factors, teacher-student factors, and teacher support) will contribute to reduced burnout through individual factors such as teacher efficacy. For instance, to prevent exacerbation of burnout among EFL teachers, it is valuable to foster supportive climate, reduce student-driven or teacher-student driven stressors, and prompt the implementing of classroom management strategies. Due to its mediating function, any intervention strategies that empower teachers to assess their effectiveness in managing classroom positively will lead to higher personal accomplishment (PA), and lower levels of emotional disturbance and affective arousals among EFL teachers. Much work is, however, needed to develop and evaluate the interventions in teacher education policy and implementation programs. Further studies may focus on qualitative approaches to explore the experiences and challenges faced by teachers in enhancing their efficacy within diverse educational settings.

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