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## Detrimental Effects of School Organizational Climate on EFL Teacher Job Motivation in Iran: A Phenomenological Study

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The pivotal role of teachers in delivering quality education is undeniable. However, the influence of the organizational climate on teachers' motivation, which is crucial for educational outcomes, has not been extensively explored. This research delves into the impact of the school organizational climate on teacher job motivation, with a focus on the experiences of EFL teachers in Iran. The study sampled 25 EFL teachers using criterion sampling, including both male and female teachers. Participants engaged in semi-structured interviews, which were audio-recorded and analyzed using a phenomenological approach to elicit their views on the influence of school organizational climate on their motivation. The analysis revealed six salient themes: dysfunctional principal leadership, inequitable salary system and benefits, high teaching load, lack of autonomy, lack of constructive educational relationships, and unsatisfactory school facilities. The findings indicate that a negative school organizational climate significantly undermines EFL teachers' motivation. In conclusion, the study highlights managerial and pedagogical implications for stakeholders in the education sector, emphasizing the need for an improved school organizational climate to bolster teacher motivation.

**Keywords:** EFL teachers, Phenomenological Study, School Organizational Climate, Teacher Job Motivation.

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## 1. Introduction

An education system is fundamentally a bedrock of national development, shaping the minds that will drive a nation's future. It stands to reason, therefore, that the caliber of an education system is profoundly reliant on the quality of its teachers, who are the architects of learning and student success (BijaniSalim & Orabah, 2023; Rezai et al., 2022). Teachers play an instrumental role in delivering quality education; thus, their skill, engagement, and dedication are crucial determinants in the trajectory of educational progress (Fives & Gill, 2015; Selamat et al., 2013). As such, when assessing the robustness of an education system, one must critically examine factors related to teacher motivation, which is at the heart of educational outcomes. The impact of motivated teachers is irrefutable, for without their impassioned participation, attempts to advance the quality of education are likely to falter (Cansoy et al., 2022; Han & Yin, 2016).

In Iran, recent challenges have surfaced with regard to teacher job motivation (TJM), with observable repercussions on job performance and educational efficacy. Despite efforts to fortify their expertise, less consideration has been given to teachers' welfare, as evidenced by the findings of Soodmand Afshar and Doosti (2016). It has been argued that international educational reforms often neglect the needs of teachers, focusing instead on the physical aspects of schooling, such as infrastructure and educational materials (Konold & Cornell, 2015). The lack of adequate incentives—including delayed promotions, unpaid arrears, and transportation issues—has fueled widespread dissatisfaction and diminished job performance among teachers, culminating in nationwide strikes. Addressing this multifaceted dilemma is crucial for elevating the Iranian education system and alleviating the professional concerns of its teachers.

Highlighting the urgency of this issue, Hassanzadeh and Jafari (2018) identified multiple factors eroding EFL teachers' motivation, such as poor compensation, inequitable pay, limited autonomy, lack of recognition, opaque career progression, inadequate performance evaluation criteria, and unengaging teaching materials. It is noteworthy that English language teachers appear particularly affected, experiencing lower levels of motivation. Given the symbiotic relationship between teacher and student motivation—where motivated teachers typically cultivate more engaged and enthusiastic learners—the repercussions of demotivated teachers extend to the detriment of the overall educational quality and student achievement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Patrick et al., 2000; Roth et al., 2007).

This pressing concern is rooted, in part, in the school organizational climate (SOC) and its diverse effects on the teaching staff. Despite this, there is a noticeable gap in qualitative research exploring the specific impact of SOC on the motivation of EFL teachers. Addressing this critical gap, the current

study aims to explore in depth the ways in which the SOC within Iran influences TJM among EFL teachers. This investigation holds significant implications for educational policy and practice, highlighting the need for systemic changes that recognize and foster the motivational drivers of EFL teachers, which is essential for enhancing the vitality and effectiveness of the education system at large. The ensuing research question (RQ) guides this study:

Research Question: In which ways does SOC affect TJM?

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1. School Organizational Climate***

School Organizational Climate (SOC) has been extensively studied, providing valuable insights into its influence on educational management (Adeyemi, 2008; Babu & Kumari, 2013; Kifle & Desta, 2012). Schneider and Barbera (2014) define Organizational Climate (OC) as the collective perception of employees regarding their organization's policies, practices, procedures, and decision-making processes. It characterizes the work environment as experienced by the staff (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Rodriguez & Diaz, 2023; Schneider et al., 2013), shaped by individual traits, organizational norms, employee communication, and the overarching organizational culture.

School climate is constituted by both the physical and psychological aspects of a school setting that are pivotal for fostering effective teaching and learning environments (DeWitt & Slade, 2014; Konold & Cornell, 2015). Zahoor (2011) notes that the collective attitudes and emotions of students, teachers, staff, and parents mirror the school's climate, including their feelings towards daily school attendance. Viewing a school as an entity with four subsystems—technological, economic, organizational, and socio-psychological—is instrumental (Tang & Lee, 2021; Zahoor, 2011). The technological subsystem includes teaching methodologies and instructional processes, while the economic one relates to the financial resources allocated for school improvement. The organizational subsystem is concerned with the school's structure and governance. In contrast, the socio-psychological subsystem encompasses factors such as teacher motivation, staff and student interpersonal relationships, and staff cohesion. SOC significantly affects the quality and effectiveness of an educational system, influenced by these interrelated subsystems (Wang & Degol, 2016).

A school's organization profoundly impacts everyone involved, shaping their perspectives, motivation, emotions, adaptability, and educational outcomes (Oliveira et al., 2022). Positive, nurturing school environments motivate teachers, bolster their commitment, and open pathways for

professional development. Beneficial relationships with principals and peers, alongside a collegial rapport with students, are critical for a teacher's success (Lim & Eo, 2014). Furthermore, supportive conditions encourage pedagogical innovation and continuous professional learning. Factors such as sufficient facilities, job security, promotion opportunities, acknowledgment, and respect significantly contribute to teacher contentment (Khan, 2019). When such factors are emphasized by educational leaders, it not only enhances teacher motivation but also culminates in holistic benefits for the institution.

## **2.2. Teacher Job Motivation in L2 Education**

The concept of "motivation" traces back to its Latin root "movere," meaning "to move" (Nevid, 2012, p. 261). Dörnyei (2001) highlights the complexity of motivation, noting that its multifaceted nature defies a singular definition. Although scholars like Evans (1998) and Williams and Burden (1997) have proposed various interpretations, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p. 4) argue that there is a general consensus among most academics that motivation pertains to the "magnitude" and "direction" of human behavior. They define motivation as "the choice of a particular action, persistence in its pursuit, and the extent of effort dedicated to it" (p. 3). Essentially, motivation explains why an individual decides to undertake a task, how long they stay engaged with it, and how much effort they apply (Dörnyei, 2001; Stezycka & Etherington, 2020).

Teacher Job Motivation (TJM) refers to the proclivity towards teaching, much like motivation in any other activity (Dörnyei, 2001). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) suggest that since teaching is a human activity, established motivational theories are applicable to it. Numerous theories, including Expectancy-Value Theory (Atkinson, 1957), Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977), Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), and Goal-Orientation Theory (Ames, 1992), have been identified as relevant to understanding teacher motivation. These theories propose that a teacher's beliefs about their abilities, potential, and objectives, as well as their perceived value and difficulty of the task, profoundly shape their motivational levels (Dörnyei, 2005). While external social and environmental factors undoubtedly influence one's cognition and perceptions, motivation is inherently self-originating (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017).

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) describe two dimensions of TJM: the motivation to teach and the motivation to remain in the teaching profession. They identify four primary elements of TJM: a high degree of intrinsic motivation driven by a passion for teaching, the impact of social and contextual factors on external conditions and constraints, the temporal aspect highlighting a lifelong commitment, and demotivating elements that emerge in response to negative stimuli.

### ***2.3. Connection between Organizational Climate and Teacher Job Motivation***

To form a robust foundation for this study, a critical examination of relevant scholarly literature is vital. Ghanbari and Eskandari (2013) investigated the relationship between OC, job motivation, and organizational citizenship behavior among university staff in Iran, finding a significant positive correlation among these variables. In a similar vein, Haseeb et al. (2016) probed into the connection between OC and employee motivation in the manufacturing sector of Sialkot, uncovering a strong linkage. Sunarsih (2017) analyzed the impact of OC, motivation, and job satisfaction on employee performance at Universitas Terbuka, revealing that motivation significantly affects performance, even though OC and job satisfaction do not have a direct impact; nevertheless, together, these components substantially influence employee performance. Rivai et al. (2019) assessed the effects of organizational culture and OC on the motivation and performance of teachers, noting a positive effect of organizational culture and a negative influence of OC.

Expanding on these works, more recent studies such as that by Nguyen et al. (2020) provide insights into how digital transformation within organizations impacts OC and, subsequently, motivation and performance. Furthermore, a study by Wasserman et al. (2016) elucidated a significant association between the leadership style of school principals and teachers' positive perceptions of their profession. They implied that effective and supportive leadership by principals correlates with an enhanced positive outlook among teachers regarding their occupational roles. Lastly, research by Seknun and Bugis (2022) in the realm of higher education institutions suggests that OC significantly influences not only the motivation of academic staff but also their commitment to institutional goals and objectives. These contemporary works offer a broader and more updated perspective on the intricacies of OC and its multifaceted effects on employee motivation and performance across various sectors.

## **3. Method**

### ***3.1. Participants***

This research engaged 25 EFL high school teachers from Borujerd City, Iran. Selection was via criterion sampling, targeting individuals with key insights relevant to the study's aims (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The selection considered gender, academic specialization, rank, and teaching experience to foster participant diversity and enhance theoretical sensitivity.

Participant recruitment began after engaging with Borujerd City's education office and explaining the study's goals to the Deputy of Education. With approval, the researchers accessed a list of potential teacher participants. They reached out to these individuals, outlining the study's purpose and confirming their willingness to partake. Consent was secured alongside assurances of confidentiality and access to the research findings. The interviews, conducted in a comfortable school setting, were semi-structured to facilitate in-depth discussions.

The research was conducted in Borujerd City, located within the Lorestan province of Iran, where a diverse sample of high school EFL teachers was readily accessible to the researchers. The choice of Borujerd City was primarily driven by the convenience of access to willing participants who fit the criteria for the study. The city's educational institutions vary in socio-economic status and educational performance, presenting an advantageous setting to examine the broad spectrum of experiences regarding SOC and teacher job motivation.

### ***3.2. Instruments and Data Collection Procedures***

The EFL teachers participated in in-person, semi-structured interviews at their respective schools, designed to gather detailed information. The interview questions covered key aspects such as principal leadership, the salary system, teaching workload, autonomy, decision-making processes, interpersonal warmth, intimacy with colleagues, as well as school facilities and services. These elements are widely acknowledged as critical in shaping a positive SOC, as suggested by Horowitz and Zak (1979). The choice of a semi-structured format aimed to allow a deeper, more nuanced exploration of these topics.

Throughout the interviews, an interview guide with open-ended questions provided a consistent structure, enabling a systematic approach to data collection, as recommended by Patton (1990). The format allowed for additional probing questions, facilitating an in-depth investigation into particular areas of interest. This approach was deliberate, giving participants the opportunity to express their views freely and extensively, which aligns with Patton's principles of qualitative inquiry. Prior to the interviews, participants were briefed on SOC and its components to ensure a clear understanding of the study's focus. They were also reassured about the confidentiality of their responses. The interviews, conducted in the participants' native language, Persian, typically lasted around one hour. Key interview questions included:

How has SOC generally affected your TJM?

In what ways has principal leadership influenced your TJM?

What impact has the salary system had on your TJM?

How has teaching workload affected your TJM?

How have autonomy and decision-making processes impacted your TJM?

How have warmth and interpersonal relationships with staff influenced your TJM?

What influence have school facilities and services had on your TJM?

Are there any additional insights or information you would like to share?

For accuracy in analysis, all interviews were recorded with the participants' consent, using a voice recorder.

### ***3.3. Research Design***

In this study, a phenomenological design was utilized—a qualitative research methodology distinguished by its commitment to gaining a deep understanding of participants' experiences and views concerning a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). This approach enables researchers to derive conclusions about the phenomenon, which may affirm or challenge their initial understandings, by embracing an insider's perspective.

### ***3.4. Data Analysis Procedures***

Upon concluding the interviews, the research team adopted a phenomenological method outlined by Creswell (2007) for data analysis. This process unfolded systematically. Initially, the lead researcher delved into participant experiences, focusing on the SOC's impact on their teaching motivation. Next, the interview transcripts were meticulously examined to extract significant quotations, which were compiled into an expansive collection of insightful statements. These statements were then grouped into larger, meaningful clusters, known in phenomenological research as "meaning units" or "themes" (Van Manen, 1990), to capture the essence of the explored phenomenon. For each identified theme, the researcher crafted representative statements, utilizing the QDA Miner software to streamline the process. Ultimately, a nuanced depiction of the participants' experiences was constructed, enriched with direct quotes from the interviews.

In evaluating the study's reliability, the data were subjected to independent coding by two experienced analysts, yielding an impressive inter-rater reliability coefficient of 0.84. The validity of the findings was further verified using Creswell's (2007) 'member checking' technique. This involved presenting the emergent themes and pertinent quotations back to a subset of the participants for validation of their accuracy in reflecting the participants' perspectives. This step confirmed the consistency of the research findings, as participants affirmed the authenticity of the results with their intended meanings.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Results

As previously mentioned, the present study delved into an examination of the effects of SOC on the job motivation of EFL teachers. The outcome of the phenomenological analysis has unveiled six salient themes, summarized in Table 1 below:

**Table 1**  
*Themes Frequencies*

Themes	Frequency
Theme 1: Dysfunctional principal leadership	57
Theme 2: Inequitable salary system and benefits	45
Theme 3: High teaching load	39
Theme 4: Lack of autonomy	28
Theme 5: Lack of constructive educational relationships	23
Theme 6: Unsatisfactory school facilities	18

#### 4.1.1. Dysfunctional Principal Leadership

The prevailing issue of ‘dysfunctional principal leadership’ emerged as the most significant theme from the participants’ responses. EFL teachers recognized the crucial role of principals in nurturing a supportive learning environment but expressed concerns about the efficacy of their leaders. One teacher stated:

*The impact of a skilled principal on job motivation is profound, as they value and involve teachers in the decision-making process. Yet, our principal’s lack of insight into our perspectives has led to waning professional motivation.*

This statement was reinforced by another teacher who observed:

*Principals who understand the importance of English language proficiency today could greatly support EFL teachers. However, many do not, resulting in insufficient resources for English education.*

Adding to this, another respondent commented:

*The principal at my school seems to struggle with effective management, possibly due to nepotistic rather than merit-based appointment. A disregard for teacher input suggests a focus on curriculum adherence above the real needs of the school environment.*



*My performance would benefit immensely from a principal who fosters an environment where I can utilize my expertise to meet student needs.*

The feedback from EFL teachers indicated that challenges with principal leadership contribute to a dysfunctional academic atmosphere and diminished motivation. This aligns with Sudarman et al.'s (2021) findings, which linked effective leadership with increased teacher motivation and performance. Similarly, Raza and Arid (2010) found a clear connection between principal leadership behaviors and teacher productivity. Tang and Lee (2021) also confirmed that adept leadership is a crucial determinant of teacher efficacy. In addition, Htut and Khin (2018) found that most teachers viewed their principals as transformational leaders and felt most motivated under this leadership style. They suggested that the leadership style of principals plays a crucial role in the motivation of teachers in the high schools surveyed.

#### **4.1.2. Inequitable Salary System and Benefits**

The theme of an 'inequitable salary system and benefits' prominently emerged from the data, standing alongside principal leadership as a major concern. Teachers highlighted that the fairness of their compensation significantly impacts their job motivation. One teacher stated:

*The teacher salary structure, as it stands, is both ineffective and unjust. It's insufficient for our basic living costs, which saps our job motivation and contributes to a pervasive sense of struggle within our work environment.*

Elaborating on the financial strains, the same teacher added:

*The constant concern over finances impedes our ability to perform at our best. A better salary would enable me to invest in professional development and more fully support my students. If only the government would address our financial challenges, it would substantially boost my enthusiasm for teaching.*

Echoing these sentiments, another teacher shared:

*After 15 years as an English teacher, it's disheartening that I cannot afford a decent home or car for my family. I've had to take a second job to make ends meet, which has unfortunately detracted from my effectiveness as a teacher and my quality of life.*

The interviews revealed a consensus among EFL teachers that the perceived inequity of the salary system is a key driver of demotivation. This

observation is consistent with Lambert et al. (2001), who highlighted the role of financial considerations in job satisfaction and motivation. Additionally, this study's findings are in agreement with Benjamin's (2010) research, which found that both financial remuneration and recognition are critical motivators. Furthermore, the results of Munizu et al.'s (2023) study revealed a high correlation between teachers' salaries and their motivation. They reported a robust and meaningful link between how much teachers are paid and their motivation to work. Moreover, research by Han and Yin (2016) in the context of Asian educational systems revealed that salary has a direct relationship with teacher motivation.

#### **4.1.3. High Teaching Load**

The issue of a 'high teaching load' was a prominent theme among the EFL teachers' discussions, referring to the extensive responsibilities borne by teachers (Jex, 1998). One teacher voiced his concern:

*I'm tasked with a considerable teaching load. Given the complexities of learning English as a foreign language, students need frequent lessons. Yet, they're allotted merely three hours a week, which hardly suffices. This time constraint forces me to skip parts of the curriculum and often hinders a thorough explanation of concepts, vocabulary practice, and proper assessment of students' learning.*

Expanding on this point, the teacher suggested:

*To truly benefit English language teaching, the number of instructional hours needs to increase. More class time would allow us to cover all aspects of the language and tackle any student difficulties effectively.*

Another EFL teacher emphasized the need for systemic adjustments:

*For an optimal learning experience, several changes are imperative. The duration of English classes should be extended, class sizes reduced, and course materials customized to enhance teaching and learning efficacy.*

The data indicated that Iranian EFL teachers grapple with an overwhelming workload that leads to teacher burnout and lowers their motivation, corroborating the findings of Roohani and Dayer (2019). This often results in a teacher-centered approach, which Tavakoli and Howard (2012) observed as a response to curricular demands, potentially conflicting with recommended pedagogical practices. Accordingly, Solania et al. (2023)

asserted that there is a notable issue within the educational workforce, as evidenced by the moderate to substantial workloads reported by the participants. Globally, Hayes (2019) has highlighted the necessity of adjusting teaching loads to suit both teacher and student needs. Similarly, Rezaei and Sayadian (2015) argued for the critical nature of some changes for effective language instruction.

#### **4.1.4. Lack of Autonomy**

The theme of ‘lack of autonomy’ was a significant point of discussion among the EFL teachers. Teacher autonomy, which refers to the freedom to make independent decisions in teaching, is often limited by various institutional and systemic barriers (Parker, 2015). One teacher described her experience:

*In our school, we're stripped of the autonomy to make decisions or to employ our preferred teaching styles, materials, or methods. We are mandated to follow the PPP methodology, imposed by the authorities.*

Another EFL teacher offered his insight:

*Having little control over the curriculum and assessment methods has stifled my creativity and professional judgment. We are expected to strictly follow a prescribed curriculum without room for adaptation based on our students' unique learning styles and needs. This one-size-fits-all approach overlooks the diversity of our classrooms and undermines our expertise as educators.*

Echoing this sentiment, another teacher said:

*Autonomy has been conspicuously missing from our educational system for a while now. We are expected to comply with the mandates of policymakers, whose decisions often do not resonate with the classroom's realities. This lack of consideration for the teacher's voice leads to ineffective policies and a decline in our motivation to teach.*

Recent studies have delved deeper into the complex relationship between TJM and autonomy, highlighting a significant sociocultural aspect. In this regard, Gay (2018) emphasized the need for culturally responsive teaching, while Greenhow and Lewin (2015) focused on the importance of digital literacy in enhancing pedagogical freedom. These factors, along with societal values and institutional backing, increasingly define the scope of teacher autonomy (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Iyengar & DeVoe, 2003). Further supporting this notion, Pearson and Moomaw's (2005) research on educational

autonomy demonstrated that greater general teacher autonomy correlates with increased empowerment and professionalism. Additionally, Mulyana and Izzati's (2022) study revealed a significant positive correlation between job autonomy and teachers' career commitment, indicating that higher job autonomy is associated with greater commitment to their teaching careers. Conversely, lower job autonomy correlates with reduced career commitment.

#### ***4.1.5. Lack of Constructive Educational Relationships***

The theme of 'lack of constructive educational relationships' was notably prominent in the feedback from EFL teachers. While they valued the warm interpersonal relationships within their schools, they observed a dearth of education-centered dialogue. One teacher commented:

*The rapport with my colleagues is warm and respectful, creating a friendly atmosphere. Our interactions are harmonious, yet our exchanges rarely delve into educational strategies or student learning.*

Expanding on this, the teacher suggested:

*Most of our discussions focus on social matters. It would be invaluable for our professional development to have more educationally focused dialogues. Sharing insights on pedagogical innovations and student challenges could invigorate our teaching.*

Another teacher reflected a similar statement:

*We have a strong support network for personal matters, and while our camaraderie is comforting, I notice a missed opportunity for academic collaboration during our informal chats.*

An additional comment from a different teacher highlighted a unique angle:

*In our school community, there's a noticeable divide in the interaction among teachers of the same subject. For instance, as an English teacher, I find it challenging to engage in productive educational discussions with my colleagues. This lack of effective dialogue limits our ability to share diverse teaching approaches or insights that could be beneficial. It's a missed opportunity for enriching our teaching practices through broader collaboration.*

The sentiments expressed by the teachers highlight the potential for enhanced job motivation through professional engagement with peers. This study's findings resonate with those of Salajegheh and Bigdelimojard (2015),

who emphasized the importance of SOC, perceived organizational support, and relationship closeness in contributing to organizational performance. Additionally, they align with Rani and Rani (2014), who noted a direct link between the closeness of school staff and job performance.

Recent literature emphasizes the importance of professional learning communities within schools. For instance, Tomar and Vashistha's (2023) study illustrated how positive relationships among teachers foster better collaboration, resource sharing, and professional development. Such cooperation allows teachers to pool their skills and efforts to achieve broader goals, such as building and maintaining their educational communities. Likewise, research by Wahyuni et al. (2016) suggested that effective communication among colleagues can greatly enhance their motivation to work, underlining the importance of fostering good communication in the workplace to boost employee motivation.

#### ***4.1.6. Unsatisfactory School Facilities***

The theme of 'unsatisfactory school facilities' significantly resonated with the EFL teachers, underscoring that the current amenities were insufficient for optimal job performance. One teacher expressed:

*Our school's facilities are substandard. The lack of essential equipment and the uninviting classroom environment are impediments to carrying out our duties effectively.*

She further elaborated:

*The school's organizational climate, heavily influenced by physical resources, is pivotal to teachers' job motivation. The absence of basic tools like video players hampers our ability to teach effectively.*

Another teacher shared a similar view:

*While our classrooms adhere to basic standards, they lack advanced amenities such as video projectors and climate control systems. Improved facilities would undoubtedly contribute to better teaching outcomes.*

Reflecting further on the theme, another teacher lamented:

*The state of our school's infrastructure, from the aging buildings to the overcrowded classrooms, directly impacts our teaching. We are expected to inspire and engage, yet we lack the space and technology*

*that could transform our educational delivery. The disparity between our environment and those of more modern institutions is disheartening and hinders our ability to attract and retain students who seek a contemporary educational experience.*

These observations align with academic research indicating that the quality of school facilities has a profound effect on teacher morale and efficiency. Earthman (2004) established a connection between well-furnished classrooms and teacher productivity. Woolner et al. (2007) discovered that upgrades in school infrastructure, including technological enhancements and comfortable furniture, have a positive impact on teacher contentment and the quality of instruction. Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) highlighted those subpar facilities are associated with decreased teacher morale and heightened attrition, suggesting that first-rate amenities are vital for peak teaching performance. Additionally, Maxwell (2016) contended that sufficient resources and facilities not only enhance teachers' sense of value but also directly affect their motivation and job satisfaction.

Furthermore, Cohen and Mehta (2017) discussed the effectiveness of educational reforms - changes made to improve schools. They asserted that infrastructure development is needed for these reforms to be implemented effectively in schools. Moreover, Susanti and Lian (2021) concluded that the quality and adequacy of school infrastructure exert a strong influence on the academic performance and achievements of students.

#### **4.2. Discussion**

The research supports the notion that effective leadership, particularly by school principals, is critical in shaping a SOC conducive to achieving educational objectives. This aligns with DeWitt and Slade (2014), who highlight the principal's role as a pivotal agent of change. However, the study suggests that this leadership role extends beyond mere facilitation; it is also about cultivating an ethos of innovation and support that is imperative for enhancing TJM. Yet, this study reveals that the current state of leadership often falls short of these ideals, signaling a gap that requires urgent attention.

Moreover, the study echoes Morris (2004) on the positive correlation between the quality of the teacher-principal relationship and job satisfaction, suggesting that an emphasis on these relationships could enhance TJM among EFL teachers. While the importance of this relationship is recognized, the findings indicate that it may not be leveraged effectively in practice, pointing to a potential area for development within educational leadership training programs.

The diminished TJM, attributed to financial constraints faced by EFL teachers, underscores the urgency for policy interventions by the Iranian Ministry of Education. This issue is not isolated to the Iranian context—as Waskiewicz (1999) notes, salary dissatisfaction is a universal demotivator with far-reaching implications for retention and performance. Nonetheless, the study's findings suggest a pronounced impact of financial dissatisfaction on TJM, potentially eclipsing other motivational factors, which warrants a reevaluation of compensation strategies within the broader educational policy framework.

In light of Moorhead and Griffen (2013), who emphasize equitable compensation, this study critically reflects on the adequacy of the current salary system for EFL teachers in Iran. The findings indicate a disconnect between teachers' contributions and their remuneration, resonating with Robbins et al. (2003), who posit that perceived equity in compensation is crucial for job performance. Hence, there is a pressing need for a more nuanced understanding of equity in teacher pay scales that considers the unique challenges and contributions of EFL teachers.

Task significance is another factor highlighted by this research, which, as Sharma and Bhaskar (1991) and Luthans (1998) have previously discussed, plays a substantial role in job motivation. The study indicates that while EFL teachers are often assigned tasks that align with these theories, there may be an underestimation of the complexities involved in teaching EFL that affect motivation. This misalignment calls for a reassessment of task assignment and recognition within the EFL teaching context.

Autonomy and flexibility emerged as significant motivators for EFL teachers, supporting Katz and Shahar's (2015) findings. However, the study suggests that the current level of autonomy may not be sufficient, highlighting an area for educational leaders to facilitate greater teacher involvement in decision-making to enhance TJM, as suggested by Slemple et al. (2020).

Interpersonal relationships within the workplace were also found to be key to teacher motivation, aligning with Praver and Oga-Baldwin (2008). Yet, this study critically notes that while camaraderie among colleagues is valued, there may be systemic barriers preventing such relationships from flourishing, which could be addressed through team-building initiatives and organizational culture development.

Lastly, the findings reiterate the importance of the physical work environment on teacher job performance, as discussed by Kennedy (2001) and Malik (2009). The research suggests that while the impact of school facilities on teacher motivation is recognized, there remains a substantial deficit in the

resources allocated to this end, pointing to the need for strategic investments in educational infrastructure.

In conclusion, while the study's findings corroborate existing literature on factors affecting TJM, they also critically unveil systemic shortcomings in the educational system's ability to support EFL teachers fully. These insights not only validate established theories but also call for a more strategic approach to educational leadership, compensation policies, task design, teacher autonomy, workplace relationships, and infrastructure development.

### **5. Conclusion and Implications**

This investigation explored the SOC perceptions of Iranian EFL teachers and its extension beyond the physical school environment, particularly focusing on its influence on TJM. Through a phenomenological analysis, the study revealed six salient themes: ineffective leadership by principals, unfair remuneration and benefits, overwhelming teaching loads, restricted autonomy, lack of supportive educational relationships, and subpar school facilities. These insights collectively suggest that an unfavorable SOC negatively affects TJM, with the current working conditions proving insufficient for motivating EFL teachers to fulfill their duties effectively.

For educational stakeholders, the findings signify an urgent call for action, particularly for the Ministry of Education to prioritize improving the SOC. This includes undertaking comprehensive assessments and targeting key areas for enhancement. School leadership practices should be revisited, advocating for training that equips principals with the skills necessary to nurture a positive SOC. Selection and promotion criteria for principals should focus on educational and managerial expertise rather than political affiliations.

A profound pedagogical implication lies in addressing the unjust payment system that undercuts motivation and performance. A fair compensation strategy that rewards EFL teachers proportionately for their expertise and contributions is recommended. This approach should not only reflect an appreciation of the teachers' efforts but also align with the institution's objectives.

Policy adjustments are also needed regarding the status of English as a global language, recognizing its critical role in connecting individuals to modern science and commerce. Hence, increasing the time allocated for English instruction and providing quality resources for teachers and learners are essential. Moreover, teacher education programs should incorporate these findings, emphasizing the need for resilience and adaptation strategies to



overcome the challenges of a negative SOC. While teacher preparation is crucial, without a supportive SOC, the effectiveness of training and resources may be compromised.

Future research should broaden the scope, examining the interaction between various leadership styles, organizational commitment across genders, job involvement, and resilience in shaping a healthy SOC. The link between reward systems and teacher job motivation in different educational settings also warrants investigation. A longitudinal approach would capture the long-term effects of SOC on TJM, and expanding the focus to include student outcomes could provide a holistic view of SOC's impact on the educational ecosystem.

Interpreting these findings necessitates an understanding of the study's constraints. Alternative organizational climate theories may present divergent factors; hence caution is advised in generalizing these results. The sample size of 25 EFL teachers limits broader applicability, and the focus on EFL teachers means these conclusions may not be transferable to other teaching contexts or academic levels within Iran's educational system. Finally, despite efforts to mitigate bias, the possibility of such influences on the study's outcomes should be acknowledged, as is the case with any research endeavor.

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