Navigating Challenges and Unveiling Resilience: A Mixed-Methods Study Among Iranian EFL Teachers

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Article info	Abstract
	Teacher resilience is an important topic in the world of education, especially given the numerous obstacles and the amounts of stress that teachers face daily. The term "resilience" has been used to explain why certain individuals seem to cope well with difficult circumstances. This mixed-methods study aimed to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' resilience and overqualification, and their work alienation and positive organizational behavior. The participants included 199 (96 male and 103 female) Iranian EFL teachers, most of whom had bachelor's and master's degrees and worked for private institutes. To determine the relationship between the variables, a 40-item survey was administered while interviews were conducted to determine the participants' perceptions. The results showed no significant relationship between overqualification and teacher resilience. However, there were significant negative and positive correlations between work alienation and positive organizational behavior with teacher resilience. The findings can improve our understanding of the factors that can enhance teacher resilience and consequently promote positive teaching practices. ***Keywords***: overqualification, positive organizational behavior, teacher resilience, work alienation

1. Introduction

In studies on second language acquisition (SLA), an interest has always been in improving the quality of language learning. Therefore, the unit of analysis in such studies has primarily been language learners. This focus on the language learners has meant that the role of a language teacher has been somewhat neglected. In most cases, the language teacher is seen as only one of the many factors that influence learning success (Hiver, 2018). As a result, the learner-centered movement emerged, recognizing the importance of responding to students' needs and interests. As a result, attention shifted to learners and their needs. The desire in the field to move away from teacher-centered approaches, both pedagogically and empirically, has unintentionally led to too little attention being paid to teachers, both collectively and individually (Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018).

Recently, a growing number of studies have focused on the resilience of teachers. Resilience is a person's ability to overcome adversity, recover from failure and adapt to changing circumstances (Kangas-Dick & O'Shaughnessy, 2020). In education, resilience is the ability of teachers to maintain their performance and health despite the many demands and constraints of their profession (Mercer, 2023).

Teacher resilience plays an important role in teacher education around the world. Teachers as "pillars of society" need to know "what to teach"," and "how to teach" and at the same time "deal with pedagogical adversities and challenges" (Pishghadam et al., 2023, p. 4071). Recognizing the factors that impact teachers' resilience at different levels and then providing them with the tools they need to further develop the skills and competencies under study could be a breakthrough. The value that strong, healthy, resilient teachers have for children, classrooms, schools, the community, and the globe is immeasurable (Zohrabi & Nasirfam, 2024). According to Polat and Ikender (2018), resilience can be a key component in solving the problem of attrition as it is negatively related to burnout. Their findings suggest that teacher resilience is related to feelings of job satisfaction, freedom from job burnout, commitment to the company, and positive evaluation of the workplace.

One of the concerns of teacher education research is teacher resilience and its positive impact on reducing stress and burnout. While the challenges faced by teachers are generally universal, the extent and severity of these issues can vary from country to country and culture to culture. Although several studies have been conducted on the immunity of Iranian teachers (e.g., Dobakhti et al., 2022; Khalili et al., 2024; Rahmati et al., 2019), it seems that the resilience resources of Iranian EFL teachers and the strategies that make them immune to difficulties and challenges that may lead to their burnout have not been sufficiently explored.

The main aim of the research was, therefore, to gain a deeper understanding of what supports teachers in their professional lives. The study examines whether teachers' resilience is influenced by overqualification, work alienation and positive organizational behavior to determine whether these factors contribute positively or negatively to teachers' retention in their profession. The impact of these factors on teacher resilience has not been specifically investigated to date. To this end, the study aims to investigate the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' overqualification, work alienation, and positive organizational behavior, with their Resilience?
2. What are the perceptions and experiences of Iranian EFL teachers regarding the relationship between their overqualification, work alienation, positive organizational behavior, and their resilience?

The study may have significant implications for the education sector. By examining the relationship between these factors and their impact on teacher resilience, the findings may help to better understand the causal effects of these factors and identify possible strategies to improve teacher resilience. They may also provide useful insights and guidance for educators, policymakers, and other education stakeholders to better support teachers and improve their resilience, which may ultimately lead to more effective and engaging teaching.

2. Literature Review

This study initially focused on teacher resilience as a potential solution to the stressful nature of the profession, having identified an initial major problem: teacher attrition, which led to the extensive literature on the challenges of the profession. This initial research idea provided the impetus for a fairly conventional literature review (Timmins & McCabe, 2005) using the buzzwords teacher resilience, overqualification, job alienation and positive organizational behavior to further explore the problem and demystify what the literature was saying about the potential solution.

2.1. Teacher Resilience

The term "resilience" was first used in developmental psychology and psychiatry, where longitudinal studies (e.g., Garmezy et al., 1984; Werner, 1982) found that one-half to two-thirds of children exposed to severe traumatic experiences during adolescence (e.g., poverty, abuse, neglect, and parents who are incarcerated or have poor mental health) develop positively and thrive. The discovery of this phenomenon has led to a multitude of studies to find out what resilience means. A person's ability to be resilient may depend on whether adverse life events have been averted. This emerges from early studies on the

personal characteristics or qualities that may affect resilience (Dobakhti et al., 2022; Garmezy et al., 1984; Pearson, 2021; Werner & Smith, 2001).

Resilience is the ability to recover, or bounce back from difficulties, disagreements, failures or even favorable circumstances such as promotion and increased responsibility (Ismail & Nikoo, 2023). Positive psychology and positive organizational behavior perspectives on resilience differ from traditional conceptualizations in that they view resilience as a learnable skill that can be measured as a state-like quality and developed in even the most ordinary individuals (Luthans et al., 2010; Wagnild & Young, 1993; Zohrabi & Bimesl, 2022). This approach to resilience contrasts with the idea that it is an exceptional talent reserved for extremely rare individuals.

It is beneficial to revisit the history of teacher resilience as an emerging concept and the early research publications in which the term was used, especially as these still serve as a foundation for current research. In the early days, teacher support for student resilience was the focus of research on resilience in education. The study by Johnson and Johnson (2000), for example, emphasized the adaptation of pedagogical strategies to the challenges of distance learning. It should come as no surprise that some of the earliest approaches to teacher resilience were person-centered and based on the theory that the local and larger political classroom environment either supports or hinders the concept (Khalili et al., 2024).

2.2. Overqualification

The term "overqualification" describes a situation in which a person has more education, experience, and skills than are required for their particular field of work (McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011). There are two main categories of overqualification: subjective and objective (Maltarich et al., 2011; Maynard et al., 2006). The idea that an employee's actual aptitude, expertise, and skills fully meet the requirements of their job is referred to as objective overqualification. Subjective overqualification, also known as perceived overqualification, describes employees' belief that their knowledge, skills and talents go beyond what is actually required for their job. Due to the differences in subjective skills, researchers focus more on subjective overqualification and its effects on people and organizations.

Johnson and Johnson (2000) investigated the impact of perceived qualifications on the job satisfaction of about 300 American postal workers. Their results showed a positive relationship between perceived overqualification and psychological well-being. In other words, the higher the perceived qualification, the greater the psychological stress. Bochoridou and Ghorezis (2023) investigated the relationship between perceived overqualification, work-related boredom, and the intention to leave and found that perceived overqualification and the intention to leave were mediated by

work-related boredom. Wassermann et al. (2017) investigated perceived skills and their relationship with job satisfaction among immigrants. Their results indicate that high overqualification is a threat to job satisfaction, while low overqualification has a positive effect on it. While several studies have examined the relationship between perceived skill and different psychological aspects of workers, to the researchers' knowledge, no specific study has looked into the impact on teacher resilience.

2.3. Work Alienation

Several academic fields, including psychology, sociology, political science, and philosophy have explored the concept of work alienation. However, despite its rich history, the construct is characterized by conceptual uncertainty (Kanungo, 1981; Nair & Vohra, 2009). The idea of alienation is that it is a reaction to social and cultural events.

Seeman (1975), one of the most important publications on alienation in the 20th century, laid the conceptual foundation for many of the subsequent empirical studies on alienation at work. Powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-alienation are the five qualities that Seeman used in his paper to characterize alienation as a multidimensional concept. Although these five terms are conceptually linked, Seeman wanted to show that they are so unique that they deserve separate examination.

Powerlessness arises from an unequal distribution of power and control within a social system, which in turn results in the individuals of that system experiencing correspondingly alienating socio-psychological effects (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Darder, 2012; Lee & Yin, 2021; McLaren, 1989; Zohrabi & Khalili, 2023). In relation to meaninglessness, Seeman (1975) states that alienation in the context of meaninglessness occurs when a person is unsure of what to think in a given situation or when a person's minimal requirements for decision clarity are not met. The impression of meaninglessness arises when employees believe that their work is neither important nor meaningful, as it serves neither society, their customers nor themselves (Suárez-Mendoza & Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, 2008).

Anomie, or the breakdown or ineffectiveness of societal norms that govern personal behavior, is the third facet of alienation (Seeman, 1975). According to Bernburg (2002), anomie occurs when the cultural aspirations of a group of people exceed the possibilities of institutionalized norms.

2.4. Positive Organizational Behavior (POB)

Given that positive psychology has inspired and promoted several positively oriented approaches in organizational research, including POB, it is important to identify what makes POB so special. The exploration and application of positively oriented psychological talents and human strengths

that can be assessed, developed, and appropriately utilized to enhance productivity in today's workplace was originally defined as POB by Luthans (2002b). In other words, a positive psychological ability must be positive, have a solid theoretical and empirical basis, and be based on reliable measurements in order to be included in the POB. It must also, as already mentioned, be state-like, so that it is suitable for improving performance and can be modified. Positive states that meet the POB definition criteria are primarily researched, generated, monitored, and regulated at the individual and micro levels (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b). The state-like psychological resources of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience and their combination with the basic superordinate core construct PsyCap (Psychological Capital) fulfill the inclusion criteria for POB (Luthans et al., 2007).

Because positive organizational behavior meets the criteria for self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, it offers management researchers and practitioners a promising avenue for exploring and expanding superiority (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). However, recent research and empirical data from a variety of populations suggest that these four positive psychological skills interact and combine to form PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2005). A person's positive psychological developmental state is captured by this PsyCap, which is broadly defined as (1) self-efficacy to engage in challenging endeavors and make the necessary efforts; (2) optimism about success in the present and future; (3) persistence in pursuing goals and, when necessary, diverting paths to goals in order to succeed; and (4) perseverance in the face of difficulty and adversity. When PsyCap is conceptualized, assessed, and developed using this integrated framework, there may be multiple sources of interactive synergy.

In a recent study, Bagheri et al. (2024) examined the mediating role of teacher burnout and school climate in predicting teacher engagement among Iranian high school EFL teachers, using three questionnaires. The results showed that both teacher burnout and school climate can predict teachers' commitment to their profession, with school climate being a stronger predictor of teachers' commitment.

Overall, teacher resilience, overqualification, positive organizational behavior, and work alienation are interrelated concepts that can strongly influence each other. Overqualification can lead to a mismatch between teachers' skills and the demands of the job, which, in turn, can lead to feelings of underutilization, boredom, and dissatisfaction with work. This can lead to lower work engagement and alienation from work, which can indirectly reduce teachers' resilience and their ability to cope with the challenges and pressures of their work. On the other hand, positive organizational behavior can create an inclusive and supportive work environment that reduces alienation from work and improves teachers' resilience. Thus, positive organizational behavior can have a beneficial and indirect impact on teachers' resilience and mitigate

the negative effects of overqualification and alienation. Despite the importance of these factors and their potential impact on teacher resilience, there is still a lack of knowledge about the relationship between these factors and the potential influences. This study aims to provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to teacher resilience and identify strategies to support teachers in their profession.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study used a mixed methods (quantitative-qualitative) approach combining correlational studies and interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding through the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data. This synergy increases the validity and completeness of the findings and avoids the limitations associated with the use of a single method (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). By utilizing a mixed-methods approach, this study sought to expand the information on teachers' motives for staying in the classroom.

To this end, a quantitative correlational method was used to examine the statistical relationship between teacher resilience and overqualification, positive organizational behavior, and work disengagement. By measuring the variables and calculating correlations, this method provided a clear and objective understanding of the relationship between the variables. Also, semistructured interviews were conducted with some participants to gain insights into their perspectives, opinions, and experiences.

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study, who were selected by random sampling, included 199 Iranian EFL teachers (96 males and 103 females), most of whom had bachelor's and master's degrees (bachelor = 81, master = 87, Ph.D.= 19, others = 12) and taught in private language institutes. Their ages ranged from early 20s to about 50 years, and they had 1 to more than 20 years of teaching experience. Since previous studies have shown that gender and years of experience have no effect on teacher resilience (e.g., Chu & Liu, 2022), these factors were not controlled. Ethical requirements for participation in the study were met, and formal approval for compliance with ethical guidelines was obtained and confirmed.

3.3. Instruments

The data were collected using a 40-item questionnaire compiled from a series of questionnaires, namely multidimensional perceived overqualification (MDPOQ), work alienation, teacher resilience and psychological capital (PsyCap). In addition, a semistructured interview was conducted by email.

3.3.1. Questionnaire

A 40-item questionnaire was administered to the participants who rated the impact of each variable using a Likert scale. The questionnaire was carefully validated through pilot testing.

In terms of overqualification, the merging of the MDPOQ and Maynard et al.'s (2006) perceived overqualification questionnaire assesses the extent to which individuals believe they have more knowledge, skills, or abilities than their role requires, making it more comprehensive and effective than the perceived overqualification questionnaire on its own. The items associated with this term range from item 1 to item number 8 on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). These eight items ask whether teachers believe that their knowledge, experience, training, and skills exceed the requirements of the job. Teachers were also asked if they believe they have more qualities and skills than their colleagues. Poon's (2007) study confirmed the reliability and validity of the MDPOQ. With a score above .8, all subscales of the MDPOQ showed a reasonable degree of internal consistency in terms of reliability.

Regarding the concept of job alienation, Nair and Vohra's (2009) 8-item job alienation questionnaire was used to better determine whether teachers are more likely to withdraw from their work, or whether they are determined to continue their career. It is worth mentioning that this scale has a reasonable convergent validity index as well as a high reliability value (Nair & Vohra, 2009). These 8 items lie between numbers 9 and 16 of the entire questionnaire. They focus on teachers' emotions such as interest, disinterest, boredom, and enjoyment of their job.

Regarding teacher resilience, Daniilidou and Platsidou (2018) developed this measure to focus on teacher resilience and not just general resilience. The Adult Resilience Scale (Friborg et al., 2005) and the well-known Connor-Davidson Resilience (CD-Risc) Scale (Connor & Davidson, 2003) were analyzed to create the scale. To create the Teacher Resilience Scale (TRS), Daniilidou and Platsidou (2018) summarized the most appropriate subscales from each instrument. The TRS scale was the best fit because it aligns with the socio-ecological framework. It is a quick, but effective assessment based on the literature and assesses both internal and external protective factors. According to the Composite Reliability (CR) calculation by Daniilidou and Platsidou (2018), the reliability of the scale item group was found to be adequate. The items associated with this term range from item 17 to item number 28 in the questionnaire.

.Psycap total score is one of the methods by which positive organizational behavior can be measured. The TRS was developed and tested by Luthans et al. (2005). It is worth noting that this scale proves to be the most efficient measure of this notion and aligns seamlessly with the four criteria of positive

organizational behavior. The 24-item Psycap Scale (PCQ-24) consists of 24 items, with 12 items selected for four relevant subscales (i.e., three for each). It assesses a person's positive psychological skills, namely self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. Although the first two factors (i.e., self-efficacy and hope) showed good reliability indices, the last two parameters (optimism and resilience) showed reasonable reliability values. It can, therefore, be concluded that the scale has acceptable reliability (Firestone, 2010).

3.3.2. Interview

Thirteen participants who completed the questionnaire were interviewed by email. The participants were selected to represent a diverse sample with different levels of experience and education. First, each participant received a personalized introductory email informing them of the purpose of the study and asking them to voluntarily participate. A consent form was also attached to the introductory email explaining the aims of the study and the measures taken to maintain confidentiality. Only ten of them were willing to answer our questions. Two of them did not respond to our messages, and one sent us an email apologizing for not being able to participate due to her busy schedule. Of these ten, five had bachelor's degrees, three had master's degrees and two had Ph.D. In addition, six of them had 1-10 years of professional experience, three had 10-15 years, and one had more than 15 years of teaching experience.

The questions, which included open-ended questions, focused on four variables intended for the study. Follow-up emails were sent within a week as a gentle reminder to nonrespondents if needed. Finally, upon the completion of the study, participants received a final email thanking them for their participation and providing information on next steps.

3.4. Data analysis

SPSS 26 was used to analyze the results of the questionnaire. In order to determine whether the variables of the study deviated from normality in any way, the normality indices (skewness and kurtosis) were used in a first step (i.e., the first assumption of the Pearson correlation) before further steps were taken. Subsequently, the corresponding reliability indices of the relevant variables were determined using the Cronbach's alpha reliability index. It is worth mentioning that to answer the research question, which was correlational, Pearson correlation was performed to investigate the relationship between the variables considered, so that the last two assumptions, namely linearity and homoscedasticity (i.e., homogeneity of variances), could be implemented, leading to the determination of the relationship between the variables. In addition, the descriptive statistics for each variable were calculated to describe the distribution of the data set and to detect errors and outliers.

To analyze the interviews, a thematic analysis was conducted to examine the participants' perceptions of the teachers. The first step was to carefully read the interviews and identify key points and themes. We, then, categorized the responses based on the different themes and factors raised in the interviews. We also compared the responses with each other and identified similarities and differences between the different interviewees.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which Iranian EFL teachers' resilience is related to overqualification, job alienation, and positive organizational behavior. The research question posed in this study was investigated with the help of the Pearson correlation, which requires three assumptions: normality of the data, linearity of the relationship between the variables, and homoscedasticity (uniformity of the variables). The latter two assumptions, which are examined using scatter plots, are discussed in the presentation of the research question.

Table 1

Skewness and Kurtosis Indices of Normality

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. error
Overqualification	199	-.087	.172	-1.071	.343
Work alienation	199	-.631	.172	-.296	.343
Resilience	199	.389	.172	-.677	.343
Positive organizational Behavior	199	-.087	.172	-1.071	.343

Table 1 shows the indices for skewness and kurtosis of normality. As all indices were within the range of ±2, it was concluded that there was no discernible deviation from normality in the available data. The criteria of ± 2 are suggested by several researchers (e.g., Bachman, 2005; Bae & Bachman, 2010; George & Mallery, 2019).

4.1.1. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Indices

The reliability indices for the variables are shown in Table 2. The results show that the four instruments have the following reliability indices: overqualification (α = .963), job alienation (α = .844), teacher resilience (α = .952), and positive organizational behavior (α = .932).

The reliability indices of the instruments used in this study were appropriate, as stated by Tseng et al. (2006), Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009), and Harrison et al. (2021), who assumed that a Cronbach's alpha value of at least

.70 is considered sufficient for an instrument. A general guideline that works in most circumstances is >. 9 excellent, >. 8 good, > .7 acceptable, >. 6 dubious, >. 5 poor, and less than .5 unacceptable. Based on these criteria, it can be concluded the work alienation had a good reliability index, while the reliability indices for overqualification, teacher resilience, and positive organizational behavior were excellent. The descriptive statistics for the four variables are displayed in Table 3 before turning to the findings.

Table 2
Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Overqualification	.963	8
Work Alienation	.844	8
Teacher Resilience	.952	12
Positive Organizational Behavior	.932	12

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Variables

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Overqualification	199	22.37	10.832	117.326
Work alienation	199	25.38	6.620	43.823
Resilience	199	32.69	11.418	130.377
Positive Organizational behavior	199	32.48	10.703	114.544

4.1.2. The Correlations Between Overqualification, Work Alienation, Organizational Behavior, and Teacher Resilience

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the relationships between resilience and overqualification, work alienation, and organizational behaviour of Iranian EFL teachers. This test is an index of effect size, and can be reported using the following criteria: .10 = Low, .30 = Moderate, and .50 = High (Field, 2018; Gray & Kinnear, 2012; Pallant, 2016). Table 4 shows the results of this test.

The results (Table 4) showed that resilience and overqualification of Iranian EFL teachers are not significantly correlated with each other, $r(199) = .060$, indicating a weak effect size, $p > .05$. Morever, the results demonstrated a substantial and negative link between resilience and work alienation experienced by Iranian EFL teachers, $r(197) = -.897$, indicating a large effect size, $p < .05$).

Table 4

Pearson Correlations Between Overqualification, Work Alienation, Positive Organizational Behavior and Teacher Resilience

		Resilience
Overqualification	Pearson Correlation	.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.400
	N	199
Work alienation	Pearson Correlation	-.879**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	199
Positive Organizational Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.902**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	199

Lastly, based on the results, there was a significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' positive organizational behavior and resilience, r (197) = .902, representing a large effect size, $p < .05$). Figure 1 shows these results.

Figure 1

Scatter Plot of the Correlations Between Overqualification, Work Alienation, Positive Organizational Behavior and Teacher Resilience
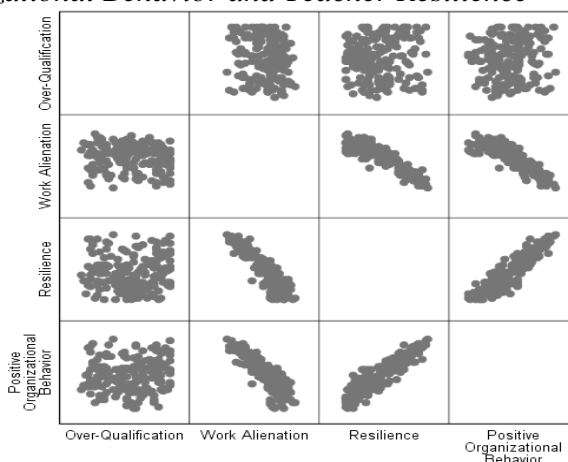
4.1.3. Interview

Ten participants were interviewed to allow the researchers to possess a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the attitudes and opinions of the individuals regarding each variable of the study. With that being said, some of the key themes regarding each variable of the study are going to be demonstrated by the remarks of the participants.

Regarding the question on overqualification, most of the interviewees referred to the objective overqualification and underutilization of knowledge, skills, and experience. They hold the contention that their knowledge, talents, and experiences fell short of their expectations. Several reasons were stated as

causing this issue. They believed that the teacher-training centers/programs are mostly not in line with the truly required set of skills and knowledge levels they are going to teach. This leads to a wide range of problems over time, the most important of which is frustration. It means that they know things that they will never use or be asked to use. In most cases, they have learned difficult subjects by heart, which are never going to be used, for example, curriculum design for teachers at state (public) schools.

They also believed that high subjective/perceived overqualification can impact the process of teaching in both positive and negative manners. It may lead to reduced job satisfaction and teachers feeling underutilized or unchallenged in their roles which might negatively impact the learning environment for students. Also, overqualified teachers may become bored or disengaged when teaching content that is below the level of their expertise which may result in a lack of creativity and innovations in the teaching process and therefore boring sessions for students. As Interviewee 4 stated:

> In my opinion 'overqualification' in teachers' performance is a complex issue with both potential benefits and drawbacks. Striking a balance between qualifications and job requirements is crucial to ensure that teachers are appropriately challenged and motivated while effectively meeting the needs of their students.

According to another participant (Interviewee 3), overqualification can cause a sense of irrelevance which can lead to disappointment:

> A workplace must be where you get the notion of importance; to become the one who serves a purpose, to feel you have an impact on something(s) and/or someone. If you feel irrelevant or powerless, then the job becomes torture. If the time and energy you invest in the work do not pay off financially, then it becomes a chore.

Therefore, while highly qualified teachers can bring valuable expertise and enrich the learning experience for students, concerns about disengagement, ineffective instruction, and strained relationships within the school environment also exist. However, as the results of the statistical analysis suggest, it does not seem that overqualification affects teachers' resilience significantly.

Interviewees stressed the negative effect of disconnectedness and separation from work. They believed this could lead to boredom, frustration, lack of motivation, increased stress, and anxiety. Concerning the causes of this alienation, low and unconvincing salaries compared to the mass responsibility of teaching, lack of autonomy and independence, lack of work-life balance, lack of meaningfulness and purpose in their work, lack of recognition and support, and lack of professional development opportunities were mentioned.

When teachers experience these factors, it can lead to the feelings of disconnection and disillusionment towards their job, which can then affect

their engagement and motivation. Interviewee 6 mentioned the low salary and the negative effects it had on his job satisfaction and his coping abilities with the challenges of the job:

> I have been teaching for more than 15 years now. Compared to my academic degree, my experience, and the huge responsibility of teaching, I feel underpaid undervalued and under-appreciated. Recently I have felt more stressed and do not enjoy my job as before. Sometimes I think I should look for another job with less responsibility and more income.

Therefore, creating a more supportive environment for teachers and providing them with resources and opportunities to stay motivated and engaged can increase the efficacy and teaching quality. It seems that organizations must assess and address work alienation because it can have various effects on both individuals and the overall success of the organization.

The interviewees referred to positive organizational behavior as an important factor that can reduce stress, increase efficacy, and lead to high resilience. As Interviewee 5 stated:

> I think it is important that we work in a place that we can trust and feel trusted. It is necessary for us to be patient, respectful, disciplined, and a team worker. It can not only help to improve our performance but also to develop the organization we work for. This positive and friendly environment can help us to positively affect the organization.

Despite the difficulties and the challenges, it seems that a positive work environment and being acknowledged can promote teachers' spirit and help them to cope with the situation. Interviewee 5 had the following to offer:

> Although we have a stressful job, I feel very good when I see that my students appreciate what I do for them. A few weeks ago, the director of the institute called me into his office and thanked me for my dedication and commitment. It was nice and it feels good to be recognized.

It seems that positive organizational behavior can have favorable effects on the teacher's resilience as it supports a secure, supportive, and inclusive work environment, which then allows the teachers to remain focused and motivated in their roles. Positive organizational behavior also helps teachers develop strong coping skills and a positive mindset, which can further support their resilience and ability to manage challenges and pressures.

4.2. Discussion

The research investigated the correlation between the overqualification, work alienation, and positive organizational behavior of Iranian EFL teachers, and teacher resiliency. The relevant relationships were delved into utilizing the Pearson correlation. The findings showed that resilience and the overqualification of Iranian EFL instructors were not significantly correlated while there was a marked and negative between work alienation and teacher

resilience, and a substantial and positive correlation between positive organizational behavior and teacher resilience.

In terms of the overqualification and teacher resilience correlation, this study is somewhat in line with Arvan's (2015). The possibility that objective overqualification may not always lead to poor work attitudes or decreased well-being must be considered as it may account for the lack of a statistically significant correlation between it and the three outcome variables in our relevant study. Or, to put it another way, there may be a "canceling-out" effect, whereby positive results are associated with the percentage of objective overqualification that is unrelated to perceived overqualification, whereas negative results are associated with the proportion of objective overqualification that corresponds with perceived overqualification. In effect, the potential benefits of objective overqualification could outweigh any possible drawbacks, explaining why there were no statistically significant connections between it and the outcome factors in that relevant study.

The findings are also in agreement with Meyer's (2020) who found that the relationship between perceived overqualification and work attitudes (emotional commitment and careerist sentiments) and actions (ineffective workplace habits) would be moderated by psychological empowerment. It was anticipated that there would be less of a correlation between perceived overqualification and certain workplace attitudes and behaviors among individuals who had greater levels of psychological empowerment than those who had lower levels. The association between perceived overqualification and unproductive behaviors was the only one that psychological empowerment mitigated, according to the findings of a self-report study of 138 employed people. This very study is compatible with our study, in that although those who are deemed overqualified may, from time to time, be affectionately impacted and experience alterations in terms of their attitude toward their working environment, they overcome this barrier by efficaciously going through the ups and downs of these challenges and manage to somehow competently undertake their tasks. On balance, it could be stated that in this case psychological resilience was not markedly influenced by the overqualification factor.

With regard to the relationship between work alienation and the resiliency of teachers, the results, indeed, aligned with the research conducted by Wang and Wang (2019). According to their findings, the association between perceived overqualification and work alienation is tempered by psychological resiliency. Individuals with high psychological resilience are less prone to experiencing the negative effects of overqualification on work alienation. Conversely, those with low psychological resilience are more likely to experience the positive benefits of overqualification on work alienation. Thus, that is to say, psychological resiliency significantly and adversely contributes

to work alienation. The findings are also supported by Santas et al. (2016) research. They studied the effect of loneliness at work, the effect of work stress on work alienation, and the effect of work alienation on employee performance. It was determined that performance was negatively and statistically significantly impacted by work alienation. Employees' performances suffered as their level of workplace alienation increased.

Regarding the correlation between positive organizational behavior and teacher resilience, the current research confirms De Waal's (2011) study, which demonstrated a positive correlation between the overall POB and engagement score as well as the aggregate engagement and POB scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that it overlaps with our study since there is a robust correlation between the variables. In another study conducted by Jafari et al. (2021), the results demonstrated that the components of structural empowerment with positive organizational behavior and psychological empowerment with positive organizational behavior have important and direct links. Furthermore, Youssef and Luthans's study (2007) illustrated the findings confirmed the positive substantial relationship among the distinctive contributions that resilience, optimism, and hope make to job satisfaction and workplace contentment.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The results of the study indicate a correlation between teacher resilience and overqualification, although this is not significant. Teacher resilience and job alienation were negatively significant. The relationship between teacher resilience and positive organizational behavior was also significant. Notwithstanding the shortcomings, this investigation has improved our comprehension of the connections between teacher resilience and the previously described elements, which have barely received any attention within this field.

The findings can be beneficial to educational institutions. They should integrate resilience training into teacher development programs to equip educators with coping mechanisms and skills to navigate challenges effectively. This can promote positive teaching practices. To combat work alienation, schools should focus on creating a sense of belonging and meaningful engagement. Teacher professional development should cover subject expertise, resilience, and positive attitudes. It should also include training sessions to manage stress and challenges. Studies by Ismail and Nikpoo (2023) and Ranjbari et al. (2021) highlight the importance of pre-service and in-service training programs for language teachers, showing their positive impact on mental health and emphasizing the need for promoting and organizing such programs.

Enhancing resilience among Iranian EFL teachers benefits both individuals and the educational system. Resilient teachers handle challenges in the EFL teaching context well, leading to improved student outcomes. Creating a supportive environment using the strategies outlined in this study can benefit teachers, students, and the educational community. Evaluation frameworks for teachers should consider resilience and positive organizational behavior to assess teaching effectiveness comprehensively. Overall, a comprehensive approach is needed to develop resilient and well-supported EFL teachers.

For future studies, it would be beneficial to expand the existing findings by closely looking at each resilience aspect. The data might be filtered by relationship type to determine if one of those relationships establishes a meaningful relationship or predicts resilience by incorporating many items about each type of relationship. A fuller picture of how the many interactions interact with resilience would be provided by this knowledge, which would also be more detailed and helpful in establishing more comprehensive relationships with other pertinent phenomena.

Since the current study did not consider the factors of age, gender, and experience in the analysis of the resilience levels of Iranian EFL teachers concerning overqualification, work alienation, and positive organizational behavior, more research would be required to examine the link between these constructs and teacher resilience across different age groups, genders, and teacher with different teaching experiences within the Iranian EFL system.

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