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Non-experienced and Experienced Teachers' Attitudes towards Sources of Learners' Demotivation

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Abstract: Background: Motivation is recognized as a crucial component in successful second language learning, yet demotivation remains an under-researched area despite its significant impact on ESL/EFL proficiency. While various studies have explored demotivation factors, the perspectives of non-experienced versus experienced teachers regarding sources of demotivation among EFL learners remain inadequately investigated. **Objective:** This study aimed to explore non-experienced and experienced EFL teachers' attitudes towards sources of demotivation among EFL learners and determine whether significant differences exist between these two groups' perspectives. **Method:** A qualitative research design employing semi-structured interviews was conducted. Forty English language teachers (20 non-experienced with <2 years experience, 20 experienced with >8 years experience) from guidance schools in Tehran were selected through stratified random sampling. The interview protocol was developed following rigorous validation procedures involving expert review and pilot testing. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Face-to-face interviews lasting approximately 15 minutes each were conducted. Data were transcribed and analyzed using content analysis with inter-coder reliability of r=.87. Frequency analysis was employed to summarize findings. **Results:** Five major themes emerged as sources of demotivation: (1) Method of instruction, including teachers' English proficiency and classroom management confidence; (2) Teacher's personality, encompassing friendliness and professional rapport; (3) Peers' characteristics, involving bullying and competitiveness; (4) Speaking anxiety, including fear of negative evaluation and shyness; and (5) Physical environment, relating to inadequate facilities and classroom conditions. No significant differences were found between non-experienced and experienced teachers' attitudes. **Implications:** The convergent perspectives of both teacher groups suggest unified approaches to addressing demotivation factors. Findings contribute to second language acquisition literature by confirming demotivation's multidimensional nature. Pedagogically, results can enhance teachers' awareness of demotivation factors, enabling them to provide better learning opportunities and implement preventive measures in EFL contexts.

Keyword : Demotivation, motivation, experienced teachers, non-experienced teachers

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INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have studied motivation up to now. These researchers (e.g., Busari, 2018; Chen, Kuo, & Kao, 2016; Djaya, Imran, & Sahabuddin, 2018; Lila, 2016;

Pivec, & Bagon, 2016) contend that it is one of the main influential components in an individual's success for learning a second or foreign language. Likewise, Spolsky (1989), and Scarcella and Oxford (1992) believe that it is an important feature for L2 learning due to the fact that it impacts various aspects of L2 learning.

An unsuitable learning context is the greatest determiner to students' demotivation, whereas lack of task value was regarded the least demotivating. Furthermore, low-proficiency students are more probably to be demotivated by internal facets than high-proficiency students, while high-proficient students are more willing to consider their demotivation to internal components (Zhou et al., 2025)

Learners of second language often experience different difficulties on learning English, leading to a reduction in their motivation to learn. It follows that L2 learners are likely to lose motivation when learning the language. Hopefully, some motivational strategies have been determined which make it possible for the learners' adoption of more positive attitudes toward L2 learning. Becoming familiar with the sources of demotivation plus the probable demotivation-alleviating strategies can lead the EFL learners to take suitable measures in solving the matter of demotivation.

In the same way, Demotivation is a crucial factor involved in learning a foreign language and many scholars have investigated it (Hamada, 2008; Han, & Mahzoun, 2018; Hu, 2011; Jafari et al., 2017; Jung, 2011; Kikuchi, 2009, 2011; Kim, 2009; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2000). Furthermore, studies show that it impects ESL/EFL proficiency (e.g., Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010; Falout et al., 2009; Ghafournia, & Farhadian, 2018; Ghanizadeh, & Erfanian, 2017; Hu, 2011; Kim, 2009). Despite these investigations, the nature of this issue is not clear yet since it has not been studied completely. Indeed, demotivation is regarded as a largely new notion in second language (L2) motivation investigation (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010).

A review of current investigations on motivation (e.g., Busari, 2018; Chen, Kuo, & Kao, 2016; Djaya, Imran, & Sahabuddin, 2018; Lila, 2016; Pivec & Bagon, 2016), demotivation (e.g., Han, & Mahzoun, 2018; Jafari et al., 2017) and demotivation from learners' attitudes (e.g., Al-Khairy, 2013; Alavinia & Sehat, 2012) determine that the sources of EFL learners' demotivation as conceived by non-experienced and experienced instructors is still under-researched. This investigation tries to fill this gap. Thus the main purpose of the current study was to find what non-experienced and experienced teachers' attitudes of the sources of demotivation among EFL learners are. To this aim, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: What are non-experienced and experienced teachers' attitudes of the sources of demotivation among EFL learners?

RQ2: Is there statistically any difference between non-experienced and experienced teachers' attitudes towards demotivation?

Literature Review

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) believe that demotivation should be considered as the negative form of motivation; it deals with the special external factors damaging or reducing the motivational elements of a behavioral intention or an ongoing activity. Some researchers disagree with the definition given by Dörnyei and Ushioda (e.g., Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009). They argue that such a definition require to be more inclusive to consider both internal (e.g., low self-confidence, negative attitude, etc.) and external (e.g., classes, teachers, textbook, etc.) components. Trang and Baldauf (2007) contend that demotivation influences learners negatively, depriving them of the given learning results. Given the findings of previous studies on motivation and demotivation (e.g., Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010; Falout et al., 2009; Kim, 2009; Han & Mahzoun, 2018; Jafari et al., 2017; Li, & Zhou, 2017), it appears that demotivation has a crucial function in the learning process. However, this notion has been left out as a research theme until recently.

In an investigation conducted on motivation and demotivation, Chang and Cho (2003) investigated the components involving in demotivation in English language learning among high school students in Taiwan. They found eight factors as the sources of demotivation, which included difficulties in learning, threats to self-worth, boring teaching, weak teacher-student relationship, punishments, general anxiety, language-specific anxiety, lack of self-determination, and weak classroom management. Similarly, Falout and Maruyama (2004) studied the demotivating factors concerning EFL learning as well as their relationship with the demotivating experiences.

Furthermore, Kim, and Zhang (2014) found a positive correlation between motivational and demotivational factors, with the ideal L2-self-perception having a strong relationship with demotivational components. Jafari et al. (2017) investigated the possible differences between demotivated vs. motivated EFL learners' preferences toward teachers' oral error correction. They found that there were no important differences between the two groups without considering their demotivation level toward oral error correction. Moreover, Sun (2018) found that major demotivators were linguistic competence, learning strategy, textbooks, social factor, teachers' moral cultivation, language attitude, self-efficacy and teachers' professional knowledge and ability.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of this study were 40 language teachers, including 20 female and 20 male teachers. The participants were selected from teachers in guidance schools in Tehran. They were selected through convenience sampling based on

availability. Their age ranged from 22 to 48. The textbook used in these schools are produced by education ministry in Iran.

Out of the 40 teachers, 20 were non-experienced and 20 were experienced. Teachers with lower than two years of teaching experience were considered as non-experienced, with an average teaching experience of 1.5 years. And teachers with more than eight years of experience were regarded as experienced teachers, with an average teaching experience of 10.5 years. The teachers were selected based on stratified random sampling procedures.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview to discover the attitudes of Iranian EFL teachers toward the sources of demotivation in guidance schools. This kind of interviews makes it possible for researchers to follow a tentative path based on previous literature and at the same time could give points to interviewees in case they fell short of opinions to express themselves. In order to produce valid interview questions, the following stages, drawing on Auerback and Silverstein (2003), were considered:

1. The literature regarding demotivation was reviewed in an effort to understand any underlying factors related to this construct.
2. The factors recognized were drawn on to produce the first draft of the interview questions.
3. The first draft of this set of questions was administered to five teachers having the same characteristics as the participants of the current study to remove any ambiguities in the wording of the questions.
4. The questions were revised after gaining the comments of the participants in step 3 and the final draft of the questions was developed.
5. The questions were given to two groups of experts (two university professors in applied linguistics and two Ph.D. holders in applied linguistics) to comment on the content of the questions. After collecting the experts' comments, the final revisions were made and were ready for interview sessions.

There were three questions tapping into the factors that make EFL learners less interested in learning English, the relationship between these factors and teachers, learners, textbooks, or others, and the factors which are more important in EFL learners' demotivation for learning English.

Data Collection and Analysis

At first, different guidance schools were chosen through stratified random sampling. Then, 40 English language teachers were contacted. By making suitable arrangements and checking class hour timetable of the teachers, 20 non-experienced and 20 experienced language teachers were interviewed. Interviews were semi-

structured type not only to enhance the data collocation process but better direct the teachers to express their opinions. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes and the interviews were conducted face-to-face. All data collected through semi-structured interviews were transcribed for content analysis. According to Auerback and Silverstein (2003), content analysis is the most common form of analysis when dealing with qualitative data. They further enumerate six stages to report the interview contents. The content analysis was run by the first author and an assistant for inter-coding. The degree of agreement (r=.87) between the two coders determined the reliability of the procedure. Moreover, frequency analysis was also used to summarize and report the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This research tried to determine the non-experienced and experienced EFL teachers' attitudes towards the sources of demotivation among EFL students in guidance schools in Iran. The raw data based on which the questions answered were the teachers' accounts of their experiences in the interview sessions. As said before, content analysis was performed on the data, based on which five themes emerged depicting the overall structure of the sources of demotivation among Iranian EFL high school teachers. These five themes included Method of instruction, Teacher's Personality, Peers' characteristics, Speaking anxiety, and Physical Environment (Table 1). The themes are described below.

Table 1.

Sources of Demotivation and Their Descriptions

Themes	Sub-themes	Description
Method of instruction	• Teachers' English language deficiency • Teachers' confidence to control the class • Teachers' frequent mistakes and flaws • Teacher inability to clearly convey ideas	Referring to the quality of teaching in classroom and students' perception of learning
Teacher's Personality	• Unfriendly teacher • Unsociable teacher • Teacher's lack of interest • Teacher's personality like humorousness, strictness etc.	Referring to the personality characteristic of the teachers and the way students feel comfortable, intimate, or alien to teacher

Peers' characteristics	• Peer bullying • Peer's laughing • Peer's rudeness • Unfriendly peers • Competitiveness of peers	The behaviors of other students in the classroom affecting motivation
Speaking anxiety	• Fear of being negatively evaluated • Shyness • General anxiety of teachers	Referring to the feeling of stress, insecurity, and nervousness while being in the classroom.
Physical Environment	• Poor construction of building • Lack of facilities • Dark and poor ventilated rooms • No buffet	Referring to the all the physical characteristics of the institute, school, etc. including decoration, facilities, laboratory and so forth.

Method of Teaching

Based on the method of teaching, non-experienced teachers mainly put emphasis on the language ability of the teachers and how fluently they can speak in the classroom. They thought that a teacher who can speak flawlessly and fluently can increase students' motivation, as opposed to a teacher who is not fluent, and makes mistakes. Non-experienced teachers also contended that having a large vocabulary size can have positive impact on students' motivation level. Another source of demotivation, as stated by the non-experienced teachers, was associated with teachers' inability to control the class. The teachers mainly declared that a lower level of teachers' confidence contributed to less ability to control the class, which would result in learners' demotivation. They believed that teachers with less previous success are less confident in themselves compared to experienced teachers. A non-experienced teacher's response is as follows:

> *I think that a teacher who is not a good English speaker causes demotivation in learners. Teachers should be strong. They should look confident and be able to control their class. Otherwise, leaners will not take the class seriously and this leads to demotivation.*
> *I suppose if a teacher does not have enough confidence to present the materials, this lack of confidence decreases learners' confidence leads to demotivation. (T13)*

According to Teacher 18's idea, looking confident is a crucial facet that results in motivation or demotivation of students. Put it in another way, this teacher argues that the more confident the instructor appears, the more motivated the students will be.

In Teacher 32's idea, command of English is a significant feature resulting to demotivation. This teacher argues that any sort of defect on the part of the instructors may cause them not to take the lessons seriously.

Table 2 displays the amount of non-experienced and experienced teachers' quotes on each subtheme of method of teaching. As the table shows, teachers' English language deficiency, teachers' confidence to manage the class, teachers' frequent mistakes and defects, and teacher's inability to clearly express ideas have been stated by 93%, 78%, 84%, and 48% of the non-experienced teachers, respectively. The respective amounts for experienced teachers were 95%, 79%, 81%, and 83%.

Table 2.
Percent of Non-experienced and Experienced Teachers' Attitudes about Each Subtheme of Method of Teaching

Subtheme	Non-experienced Teachers	Number Non-experienced	Experienced Teachers	Number Experienced
Teachers' English language deficiency	93%	18	95%	16
Teachers' confidence to manage the class	78%	12	79%	10
Teachers' frequent mistakes and defects	84%	19	81%	9
Teacher inability to clearly convey ideas	48%	6	83%	14

Teacher's Personality

The other source of demotivation was teachers' relationship with students. Non-experienced teachers argue that when teachers have good rapport with their students, learners are more motivated to study English. On the other hand, when teachers do not respect students and treat them like clients rather than learners, learners may gradually become demotivated. They contended that when teachers are lively and energetic, learners may show more interest to follow their English studies. Two of the novice teachers' responses are as follows:

> *Students like nice and friendly teachers. If they like their teachers, they are interested to have more English courses with their teachers. (T4)*

I think that personality of teachers matters. A sociable and outgoing teachers can encourage the English learners to take more English courses. (T28)

Teacher 4 and Teacher 28 maintained that teachers' personality, whether they are outgoing and friendly or not, may create demotivation among students. Indeed, they state that it matters how teachers treat in the class and create good relationship with their students. Similarly, experienced teachers, contended that teachers' personality is a source of motivation. They thought that when a teacher cannot create good relationship, students might decrease their motivation. In other words, experienced teachers believed how teachers' caring personality lowers the demotivation level of language learners. Hence, they took into account professionalism in their accounts of teacher's personality.

Table 3 displays the amount of subthemes falling within teacher personality. As the table shows, unfriendly teacher, unsociable teacher, teacher's lack of interest, teacher's personality features like humorousness and strictness, and teacher's kind and caring personality were mentioned by 68%, 80%, 59%, 48%, and 61% of novice teachers, respectively. The respective percentages for experienced teachers were 72%, 75%, 71%, 57%, and 79%, respectively.

Table 3.
The amount of Non-experienced and Experienced Teachers' Attitudes about Each Subtheme of Teacher Personality

Subtheme	Non-experienced Teachers	Number Non-experienced	Experienced Teachers	Number Experienced
Unfriendly teacher	68%	10	72%	27
Unsociable teacher	80%	19	75%	27
Teacher's lack of interest	59%	4	71%	23
Teacher's personality like humorousness, strictness etc	48%	4	57%	6
Kind and caring personality	61%	11	79%	22

Anxiety

As another source of demotivation, anxiety, was the least frequent component considered by non-experienced teachers. Most of the non-experienced teachers put emphasis on students who are afraid of talking or shy student reluctant to speak in

classes. According to them, some students have fear of speaking or participating in discussion although their English is not poor at all. Such fears can gradually prevent them from active participation in class activities and consequently hinder their learning. Two of the novice teachers' statements are as follows:

> *Some shy learners may not continue learning English because they are not comfortable in classroom. They do not voluntarily participate in classroom discussion and when they are asked to give their opinions, they are usually frightened and have shaky voice. (T24)*
> *In some classes, some students do not like talking or discussing. It seems that they are reluctant to speak and have some sort of fear to do any class activities. Such students usually give up learning English sooner or later. (T26)*

As considered by Teacher 26 and Teacher 26, some students who are shy and do not take part in class or group discussions are more prone to stop learning English eventually as a result of demotivation. Like non-experienced teachers, experienced teachers also pointed to anxiety as a source of demotivation. Experienced teachers stated that anxiety would give learners a feeling of insecurity and tension.

Like the non-experienced teachers, the more experienced ones believed that anxiety can play a significant role in learners' demotivation. They foregrounded nervousness and shyness as two determining factors that reduce motivation among learners.

Table 4 shows the amount of non-experienced and experienced teachers' attitudes towards each subtheme of Anxiety. As it is shown, speaking anxiety, fear of being negatively evaluated, shyness, and general anxiety of learners were mentioned by 58%, 70%, 68%, and 47% of non-experienced teachers, respectively. The respective amounts for experienced teachers were 42%, 69%, 47%, and 79%, respectively.

Table 4.
Percentages of Novice and Experienced Teachers' Beliefs about Each Subtheme of Anxiety

Subtheme	Non-experienced Teachers	Number Non-experienced	Experienced Teachers	Number Experienced
Speaking anxiety	58%	9	42%	5
Fear of being negatively evaluated	70%	11	69%	21
Shyness	68%	15	47%	9
General anxiety of learners	47%	7	79%	16

Discussion

The main objective of the present research was to find non-experienced and experienced EFL guidance school teachers' attitudes towards the sources of demotivation in EFL students. In terms of the qualitative analysis of teachers' responses to the interview questions, sources of demotivation were included. This finding is in agreement with some previous research, such as that of Song (2005) who found that the reasons for demotivating some students are multidimensional and teachers were shown to have an important function in that process. Also, similar components have been suggested by previous scholars as demotivating factors. Generally, the demotivating components determined in the present research are in line with those recognised by Han and Mahzoun (2018), Jafari et al. (2017), Sun (2018), Chang and Cho (2003), Falout and Maruyama (2004), Muhonen (2004), Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), and Qashoa (2006). For example, Sun's (2018) findings showed that the key demotivators for EFL learners were linguistic competence, learning strategy, textbooks, social factor, teachers' moral cultivation, language attitude, self-efficacy, and teachers' professional knowledge and ability. Moreover, Han and Mahzoun (2018) concluded that that the key sources of demotivation were parents, administration, students, and working conditions.

The findings of the current research showed that the sources of demotivation included method of teaching, teachers' personality, and anxiety. Chang and Cho (2003) identified the facets related to demotivating English language learning among high school students in Taiwan. In terms of students' accounts, they determined eight components including (a) difficulties in learning, (b) threats to self-worth, (c) boring teaching, (d) weak teacher-student relationship, (e) punishments, (f) student anxiety, both general and language-specific, (g) lack of self-determination, and (h) weak classroom management. In addition, Falout and Maruyama (2004) recognized six categories of demotivating factor in which Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) came up with a list of five factors of demotivation in high school EFL learners: (a) course content and material, (b) teacher competence and teaching style, (c) inadequate school facilities, (d) lack of intrinsic motivation, and (e) test scores.

This study was in accord with Arai (2004), Kikuchi and Sakai (2007), Tsuchiya (2006), and Zhang (2007) in which the quality of teaching is a demotivating factor. The previous research have also shown that teacher's personality and behaviors are among the factors contributing to demotivation (Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Kojima, 2004). Dönyei (1998) listed nine demotivating factors the first of which included teacher personality. Furthermore, Ikeno (2002) found a similar result and arrived at 13 categories among which one pointed to the character of teachers. Similarly, Dörnyei (1998) and Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) have maintained that the attitudes of learning group members impact the motivation of language learners and any misbehavior or embarrassing action may negatively affect the language

learner's motivation level. On the other hand, language anxiety has also been found as a demotivating factor by researchers (Aida, 1994; Brown, Robson, & Rosenkjar, 2001; Gardner, Day, & MacIntyre, 1992). This result also shows that learners may not be willing to be involved in unpleasant and stressful situations.

In terms of the results of this research, both non-experienced and experienced teachers pointed to similar elements as sources of demotivation. Yet, this result does suggest that there were no differences between non-experienced and experienced teachers in their attitudes towards sources of demotivation. All in all, non-experienced and experienced teachers had similar opinions about the elements making demotivation. The point is how non-experienced and experienced teachers unanimously stated that quality of teaching, teachers' characteristics, anxiety, and students' characteristics were the sources of demotivation. One explanation could be that both non-experienced and experienced teachers were asked to give their opinions about learners' sources of demotivation. It pursues that they were all following the same objectives, i.e. learners' demotivation, rather than teachers' demotivation sources. As a result, regardless of teaching experience, their attitudes converged in many ways.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the recent research declared that both non-experienced and experienced teachers had similar attitudes of sources of demotivation. Both groups suggested that method of teaching, teacher personality, and anxiety have the potential to negatively impact motivation in learners. This finding could be further confirmed by the ealier empirical studies and also theoretical discussion of demotivation in foreign language learners. Such similar attitudes held non-experienced and experienced teachers are likely to lead to integrated preventive measures to decrease the occurrence of demotivation in learners. However, there would be convergence between what non-experienced and experienced teachers perceive as useful methods for lowering the demotivation.

This research has some implications. The first implication is associated with the contribution the findings of the research to the literature on demotivation in second language acquisition. Additionally, the results of the study were in line with previous studies in that demotivation in second language learning is a multi-dimensional construct consisting of different aspects. As for pedagogical implications, teachers can develop an awareness regarding students' perceptions of demotivation factors and can consequently provide learners with better learning opportunities. Moreover, there are some limitations in this study, such as no randomized sampling for the purpose of more manageability. Future studies can select a more randomized sample for more external validity. Therefore, future research can yield better results.

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