

### Research Article

## Emotional Intelligence, Motivation and Job Satisfaction among EFL English Practitioners

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#### ABSTRACT

The present study aims to explore the relationships between emotional intelligence, motivation, and job satisfaction among Iranian teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Emotional intelligence, which encompasses the skills of recognizing, interpreting, and regulating emotions, significantly impacts teacher' motivation and job satisfaction. Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, serves as a bridge between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, influencing teachers' engagement, persistence, and effectiveness in their roles. Job satisfaction, in turn, reflects teachers' emotional and evaluative attitudes toward their work, impacting their performance and retention. Using a quantitative correlational design, this study collected data from 70 Iranian EFL teachers through three standardized questionnaires: the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), the Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire (TMQ), and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). The analysis of the data involved using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods, notably incorporating Pearson's correlation coefficient. The results revealed significant positive relationships between emotional intelligence and motivation, as well as between motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic) and job satisfaction. Teachers with higher emotional intelligence reported greater motivation, which in turn led to higher job satisfaction. These findings underscore the critical need of fostering emotional intelligence and motivation among EFL teachers to enhance their job satisfaction and overall well-being. The study concludes with practical recommendations for educational institutions, including targeted professional development programs, motivational strategies, and supportive work environments. It also suggests directions for future research, such as longitudinal studies and cross-cultural comparisons, to further explore these relationships in diverse educational contexts.

## Introduction

The interconnectedness of emotional intelligence, motivation, and job satisfaction is a vital topic in educational psychology, particularly for teachers. Emotional intelligence (EI) – the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions – is a key component in effective teaching and fostering a positive classroom atmosphere. It includes emotional awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills, all of which help teachers manage the emotional complexities of their profession. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Iran, EI is not just a theoretical issue – it is essential in managing classroom dynamics, building teacher-student relationships, and enhancing job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction, which is characterized as a positive emotional state stemming from job evaluation (Locke, 1976), significantly influences teacher performance, retention, and well-being. In the Iranian EFL context, job satisfaction is influenced by both intrinsic factors – such as professional development and recognition – and extrinsic factors like salary and working conditions. Satisfied teachers are more engaged, have lower absenteeism, and contribute to improved student outcomes. Theoretical models such as Herzberg et al.'s (1966) Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs support the idea that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators must be addressed to enhance job satisfaction.

Motivation acts as a crucial link between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. According to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), motivation exists in two forms: intrinsic (driven by personal satisfaction and a sense of purpose) and extrinsic (driven by external rewards or pressures). Intrinsic motivation often leads to more sustainable

engagement and higher job satisfaction, whereas extrinsic motivation may lead to less durable commitment. Teachers who are highly motivated, especially through intrinsic means, tend to experience a reinforcing cycle of satisfaction and performance improvement.

The relationship between these three variables – emotional intelligence, motivation, and job satisfaction – is both significant and complex. Teachers who possess high EI are more adept at handling stress, maintaining enthusiasm, and aligning personal values with professional responsibilities. This emotional resilience not only enhances motivation but also leads to higher job satisfaction. Emotionally intelligent teachers also tend to have better interpersonal skills, which fosters a more collaborative and fulfilling work environment. Motivation, in turn, strengthens the influence of EI on job satisfaction by energizing teachers to persist in the face of challenges.

These dynamics are particularly critical for Iranian EFL teachers, who face unique institutional challenges such as limited resources, high turnover, and shifting curricular demands. Understanding how EI impacts motivation and job satisfaction offers practical insights into how these issues can be addressed. Training programs that develop teachers' emotional intelligence can lead to improved retention, reduced burnout, and enhanced teaching quality. Research by Bechtoldt (2008) supports this, highlighting the role of EI in teacher effectiveness and well-being.

Despite their relevance, the combined effects of emotional intelligence, motivation, and job satisfaction have barely been extensively explored in Iranian educational settings. Most prior studies have examined these concepts in isolation. This study aims to

fill that gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of their interrelationships among Iranian EFL teachers. The findings aim to contribute to educational policy and teacher development by offering practical strategies for improving teacher retention, satisfaction, and overall effectiveness.

Ultimately, this study underscores the transformative role of emotional intelligence in the field of education. By providing teachers with the emotional skills necessary to effectively manage their profession, institutions can cultivate a more resilient and motivated workforce. This offers advantages for both teachers and their students. Therefore, the research questions guiding this study are as follows:

- 1- Is there any significant relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and their level of motivation?
- 2- Is there any significant relationship between any subdomains of EFL teachers' motivational attributes and their job satisfaction?

## **Review of the Related Literature**

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Rationality and emotion were traditionally viewed as antagonistic forces, with reason being the better strategy (Brackett et al., 2011). People believed that emotions might be hazardous and distorted, interfering with reasoned decision-making (Humphrey et al., 2007; McPhail, 2004). However, research indicates that emotions can support and increase logic (Brackett et al., 2004; Muramatsu & Hanoch, 2005). Emotionally intelligent people may reason using their emotions, which are key mental building blocks (Hanoch, 2002a, 2002b). The polarization of emotions and cognition has resulted in an undervaluation of emotions in

education (McPhail, 2004), although their importance is recognized in the workplace.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to reason about and use emotions to assist rational thinking, reconciling the traditional divide between intelligence and emotion (Mayer et al., 2008). The concept of emotional intelligence has a long historical background, dating back to 1872 when Darwin published his work on emotional expressiveness. Later academics acknowledged the significance of non-cognitive components of intelligence, which are social and personal intelligences. This resulted in the development of emotional intelligence as a supplement to traditional cognitive intelligence.

Wayne Payne's 1985 PhD dissertation introduced the term, which started the official history of emotional intelligence. Keith Beasley coined the phrase "emotional quotient" in 1987, and Reuven Bar-On used it in his 1988 dissertation. However, the concept gained broad popularity following the publication of Daniel Goleman's (1995; 1998) top-selling books in the mid-1990s, which brought together the hitherto distinct concepts of intelligence and emotion. This revolutionary idea, which was initially proposed in theoretical form a few decades ago, grew significantly in the years that followed.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Teachers' job satisfaction is generally understood as the emotional state resulting from employees' evaluation of their work experiences. It is the degree to which teachers like or feel content with their jobs (Spector, 1997; Sun & Xia, 2018; Won & Chang, 2019). Job satisfaction is a dynamic construct formed by the interaction of several factors (Yuh & Choi, 2017). It has both rational and

emotional components, which reflect teachers' attitudes toward their roles (Borah, 2019; Crisci et al., 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Teachers' job satisfaction is influenced by a number of social, organizational, cognitive, and affective factors (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). These involve both internal and external factors, including characteristics of school and principal. Understanding the complex factors that influence teacher job satisfaction is critical for fostering positive work experiences and outcomes. Job satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that encompasses teachers' feelings about various aspects of their jobs. Spector (1997) defines it as the degree to which people enjoy or detest their work. Dormann and Zapf (2001) regard job satisfaction as an important research topic in organizational psychology, with factors such as responsibility, task variety, and communication mechanisms having a significant impact.

Job satisfaction is influenced by a variety of organizational and individual factors. Organizational factors include job conditions, promotions, and work characteristics; personal factors encompass aspects such as personality traits, self-esteem, motivation, and emotions (Heller, et al., 2002; Dormann & Zapf, 2001). Job satisfaction has also been linked to absenteeism (Shooshtarian et al., 2013). Understanding the complex interplay of these factors is critical to increasing teacher job satisfaction.

Researchers in organizational psychology and management have extensively studied and defined the concept of job satisfaction. Locke (1976) provided one of the earliest and most influential definitions, describing job satisfaction as an enjoyable and affirmative emotional response that arises from an appraisal of an individual's job or experiences

related to their job. This definition emphasizes a person's emotional and evaluative attitudes toward their job.

### **Motivation**

Motivation is a fundamental psychological concept that describes the internal and external factors that drive an individual's behavior, determination, and persistence in achieving a goal or participating in a specific activity. Motivation is divided into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is the desire to participate in an activity for its own inherent satisfaction, interest, or enjoyment, whereas extrinsic motivation is the desire to participate in an activity for a specific goal, such as obtaining a reward or avoiding punishment.

Teacher motivation is a subset of the broader concept of motivation that refers to the internal and external factors that drive a teacher's behavior, determination, and persistence in achieving educational goals or engaging in specific teaching practices (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Teacher motivation is classified into two categories: autonomous and controlled. Autonomous teacher motivation refers to the desire to participate in teaching activities for personal reasons, such as interest, enjoyment, or satisfaction (Dobakhti & Mahdavi Fard, 2025). Autonomously motivated teachers engage in teaching because they find it intrinsically rewarding or meaningful. This type of motivation is linked to more self-directed, volitional, and adaptive teaching practices. Autonomously motivated teachers are more likely to invest in their work, persevere in the face of adversity, and have a genuine passion for their profession. In contrast, controlled teacher motivation refers to the desire to take part in teaching activities to obtain a separable outcome, such as a

reward, recognition, or to avoid punishment (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Controlled motivated teachers participate in teaching as a means to an end, rather than for the activity itself. Controlled motivation can vary in its level of self-determination, ranging from external regulation (behavior driven by external contingencies) to more autonomous forms like identified regulation (behavior aligned with one's personal values). Controlled motivation is often associated with less adaptive teaching behaviors, such as an over-emphasis on extrinsic incentives and a focus on meeting external standards rather than intrinsic growth.

### Teacher Motivation and its Implications

Recent research has explored how teachers' own motivation can influence various educational outcomes. Teacher motivation can be understood through the lens of self-determination theory and achievement goal theory. From the self-determination theory perspective, teachers' motivation can vary in quality, ranging from autonomous (intrinsic and identified regulation) to controlled (external regulation and amotivation) forms of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Research has shown that teachers' autonomous motivation, such as a genuine interest in teaching or aligning their instructional practices with their personal values, leads to beneficial outcomes, including enhanced well-being, job satisfaction, and commitment to the profession. Autonomously motivated teachers are more likely to foster an engaging and supportive learning environment for their students, as they are driven by an inherent desire to help students succeed (Dobakhti & Khalili, 2025).

As outlined in achievement goal theory, teachers can be motivated by a variety of goals,

including developing their own competence as educators (mastery-approach goals) or demonstrating their competence in comparison to their peers (performance-approach goals) (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Dobakhti & Khalili, 2024). According to research, when teachers adopt mastery-approach goals, they tend to engage in more adaptive instructional practices, such as providing more autonomy support and engaging students in challenging tasks, which are linked to better student outcomes. In contrast, teachers' performance-approach goals are linked to less effective teaching behaviors, such as an overemphasis on extrinsic rewards and surface-level learning strategies. Mastery-oriented teachers are more likely to prioritize student learning and growth, while performance-oriented teachers may be more focused on outperforming their colleagues or meeting external benchmarks (Dobakhti, 2021).

The studies reviewed emphasize the vital role emotional intelligence (EI), emotion regulation ability (ERA), and self-efficacy play in teacher job satisfaction, burnout prevention, and classroom management. Mérida-López and Extremera (2021) studied 123 secondary school teachers in the UK and found that higher ERA positively influenced personal accomplishment, job satisfaction, positive affect, and perceived principal support. These factors mediated the link between ERA and job satisfaction, suggesting that strengthening teachers' emotional competencies supports their well-being and classroom effectiveness.

In Pakistan, Ali (2011) investigated job satisfaction among 200 secondary school teachers in the Sahiwal district, selected from 1,500 teachers. Using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), they found that only eight of the twenty job satisfaction

dimensions were rated satisfactory, with gender differences showing males reported greater satisfaction. No significant urban-rural differences were observed. The study highlights the need to address policy, compensation, and working conditions to enhance teacher satisfaction and education quality.

Coombe (2020) emphasized the significance of EI in language teaching in their literature review, "The Importance of Emotional Intelligence Skills for Language Teachers." They advocate for enhancing EI components - self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills - to manage classroom challenges and improve teacher-student interactions. They promote Goleman's EI model, along with a six-dimensional model that includes adaptability and general mood, recommending practices like mindfulness, empathy exercises, and collaborative reflection for EI development.

Hamidi and Amiri (2013) studied 300 high school teachers in Kermanshah, Iran, examining links between EI, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. Their results showed significant positive correlations, with self-efficacy being the strongest predictor of job satisfaction, especially in relation to job nature and relationships. They underscore the importance of self-awareness in creating a positive work environment and call for professional development programs to boost both EI and self-efficacy.

Saeedi and Pahlavani (2019) explored the relationships between EI, sense of plausibility, and classroom management in 120 Iranian EFL teachers. Using Bar-On's EI Questionnaire, the ABCC Inventory, and the SPLTP scale, they found that a teacher's sense of plausibility - beliefs and attitudes toward teaching - was a stronger predictor of effective

classroom management than EI. Their findings suggest teacher training should prioritize fostering both emotional and cognitive dimensions, including confidence in teaching practices.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the interconnectedness of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and teacher job satisfaction. They advocate for professional development that enhances emotional and cognitive skills, thereby supporting teacher effectiveness, well-being, and student success.

### **Design of the Study**

This study employs a quantitative research design. A correlational method is specifically chosen to identify and analyze the relationships between the three key variables: emotional intelligence, motivation, and job satisfaction. Quantitative methods are ideal for this study because they can objectively measure variables, allowing for statistical analysis of the relationships between them. The study is organized around the following variables: Independent variables include emotional intelligence and motivation. Dependent variable: job satisfaction.

The independent variables (emotional intelligence and motivation) are expected to influence the dependent variable (job satisfaction) in Iranian EFL teachers. The correlational design allows the researchers to determine the extent to which these variables are related. This approach is useful for drawing conclusions about patterns and associations, as it provides data-driven and statistically robust insights.

### **Participants**

This study's target population consists of 70 EFL teachers working at various Iranian language institutes. The participants were

chosen using a purposive and self-selecting non-probability sampling method, with recruitment taking place through social media platforms. This diversity enhances the study's reliability while mitigating potential biases caused by single-institution samples (Dobakhti, 2020). The demographic details of the participants are summarized in the following tables:

**Table 1**  
*Participants' gender distribution*

Gender	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Female	50	71.4
Male	20	28.6
Total	70	100

The study includes a total of 70 participants, with 50 females (71.4%) and 20 males (28.6%). This distribution indicates a significantly higher representation of female teachers compared to males, which reflects the gender composition commonly observed in language teaching professions. The representation of both genders ensures a balanced perspective, although the majority being female may mirror broader trends in the field.

**Table 2**  
*Participants' academic qualifications*

Academic Qualification	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
BA	30	42.9
MA	35	50.0
PhD	5	7.1
Total	70	100

### Instruments and Materials

To examine the study's variables, three standardized questionnaires were utilized, each tailored to measure one of the constructs: emotional intelligence, motivation, and job satisfaction. These instruments were selected

for their reliability, validity, and relevance to the study's objectives.

### The Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire (TMQ)

#### Developer

Nyla Ramzan and Azmat Farooq Ahmad Khurram (2023) developed the Teachers' Motivation Questionnaire (TMQ). Their goal was to develop a tool specifically designed to measure teacher motivation in educational institutions, using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory as the theoretical framework.

#### Structure

The TMQ initially had 44 items divided into two dimensions: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Following expert review and pilot testing, the final version was reduced to 18 items: 10 for intrinsic motivation and 8 for extrinsic motivation.

#### Subscales

Intrinsic motivation items focus on factors such as workplace enthusiasm, creativity, and teaching satisfaction. Extrinsic motivation items assess aspects like respect from superiors, salary satisfaction, and promotional opportunities.

#### Validity

The TMQ underwent rigorous validation processes. Content validity was ensured using Lawshe's (1975) Content Validity Ratio (CVR), while construct validity was evaluated through both convergent and discriminant validity. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.5, confirming strong convergent validity.

### **Reliability**

Reliability testing showed high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability scores exceeding 0.9 for both subscales. This indicates that the TMQ is a reliable tool for assessing teacher motivation.

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

#### **Developer**

Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist created the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) in 1967 at the University of Minnesota's Vocational Psychology Research Unit. It is a comprehensive tool that measures job satisfaction across multiple dimensions.

#### **Structure**

The MSQ has two versions: long-form (100 items) and short-form (20 items). The short-form version assesses job satisfaction on 20 dimensions, including intrinsic and extrinsic variables.

#### **Subscales**

The MSQ measures three dimensions of job satisfaction:

- 1- Intrinsic Satisfaction – Involves satisfaction derived from job-related tasks and responsibilities.
- 2- Extrinsic Satisfaction – Relates to external factors like pay and working conditions.

#### **Validity**

The MSQ has rather excellent validity. Content validity is based on its comprehensive representation of job-related factors, construct validity is confirmed by factor analyses, and concurrent validity is demonstrated by correlations with other measures like the Job Descriptive Index.

### **Reliability**

The short-form MSQ demonstrates high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.84 to 0.91. It also shows strong test-retest reliability, with scores between 0.70 and 0.80, ensuring stability over time.

### **The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test**

#### **Developer**

In 1998, Schutte et al. created the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), also known as the Assessing Emotions Scale (AES). The instrument is based on Salovey and Mayer's (1990) emotional intelligence model, which focuses on perceiving, understanding, managing, and utilizing emotions.

#### **Structure**

The SSEIT includes 33 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, which range from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Scores range from 33 to 165, where higher scores reflect higher level of emotional intelligence.

#### **Subscales**

The SSEIT measures four components:

- 1- Expression of emotions in oneself and others.
- 2- Understanding emotions in various contexts.
- 3- Regulation of emotions in oneself and others.
- 4- Utilization of emotions for problem-solving and decision-making.

#### **Validity**

Schutte et al. (1998) validated the SSEIT through principal-components analysis, yielding a primary factor with strong item

loadings. It was designed to assess a holistic level of emotional intelligence rather than individual components.

### Reliability

The test demonstrated high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90. Factor analysis confirmed its robustness as a tool for evaluating emotional intelligence.

### Data Collection

The process of collecting data was carefully designed to ensure that the participants provided comprehensive and reliable information. Three standardized instruments were utilized to evaluate the core concepts of emotional intelligence, motivation, and job satisfaction. Some 70 Iranian EFL teachers who met the inclusion criteria received these electronically via social media platforms and professional networks. To ensure ease of use, the questionnaires were digitized and distributed via Google Forms. Instructions were provided at the start of the forms to help the participants complete the questionnaires correctly.

### Data Analysis

SPSS software was used to create a robust statistical analysis framework to answer the research questions. The steps were as follows: Emotional intelligence, motivation, and job satisfaction were measured using mean values, standard deviations, and other summary statistics. The normality of each variable's data

distributions was determined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The findings revealed that the data had a normal distribution, which supported the use of parametric tests. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze relationships between the variables:

Emotional intelligence and motivation.

Emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

Motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and job satisfaction.

Statistical significance was established at a p-value of less than 0.05, ensuring rigor in hypothesis testing.

Correlation coefficients were used to assess both the strength and direction of the relationships between variables. Tables and figures were created in order to visualize the findings and improve interpretability.

## Results

### The Results regarding the First Research Question

The first research question sought to determine whether there was significance relationship between any EFL teachers' motivational level and their emotional intelligences. Before finding the relationship, the researchers had to check the normality condition of the scores. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality for teachers' motivation and emotional intelligences are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 3**

*The result of K-S for motivation and emotional intelligences*

		Emotional Intelligence	Motivation
N		70	70
Normal Parameters <sup>ab</sup>	Mean	124.09	50.64
	Std. Deviation	14.155	20.567
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.116	.151
	Positive	.116	.151

		Emotional Intelligence	Motivation
	Negative	-.092	-.117
Test Statistic		.116	.151
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)		.283	.174

As the results presented in Table 3 indicate, the significance level in motivation and emotional intelligences are higher than the p-value of .05 ( $p = .174, .283 > .05$ ) indicating the normal distribution of the scores. As the

normality of the scores was confirmed, the researchers employed Pearson correlation to examine the relationship between the variables in this study.

**Table 4**

*The correlation between motivation and emotional intelligences*

		Motivation	Emotional Intelligence
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.614 <sup>**</sup>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.614 <sup>**</sup>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

According to Table 4, the results of the Pearson correlation revealed a significant positive relationship between motivation and emotional intelligences, ( $r(68) = .614, p = .000$ ). So, if motivation improves, the emotional intelligences will also increase.

between any subdomains of EFL teachers' motivational attributes with their job satisfaction. Before finding the relationship, the researchers had to check the normality condition of the scores. Table 5 shows the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality for teachers' intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction.

### The Results Regarding the Second Research Question

The second research question asked whether there was significance relationship

**Table 5**

*The result of K-S for intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction*

		Job Satisfaction	Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic Motivation
N		70	70	70
Normal Parameters <sup>ab</sup>	Mean	82.40	23.59	27.20
	Std. Deviation	8.450	10.244	10.316
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.123	.148	.157
	Positive	.123	.148	.157
	Negative	-.062	-.130	-.117
Test Statistic		.123	.148	.157
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)		.222	.186	.157

As the results in Table 5 indicate, the significance level in intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction are higher than the p-value of .05 ( $p = .186, .157, .222 > .05$ ) indicating the normal distribution

of the scores. Following the confirmation of score normality, the researchers employed Pearson correlation as the statistical method to explore the relationship between the variables.

**Table 6**

*The correlation between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction*

		Job Satisfaction	Intrinsic Motivation
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.880**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Intrinsic Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.880**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

According to Table 6, the Pearson correlation results indicated a significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and

job satisfaction, ( $r(68) = .880, p = .000$ ). So, if intrinsic motivation improves, the job satisfaction will also increase.

**Table 7**

*The correlation between extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction*

		Job Satisfaction	Extrinsic Motivation
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.884**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Extrinsic Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.884**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

Table 7 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, ( $r(68) = .884, p = .000$ ). So, if extrinsic motivation improves, the job satisfaction will also increase.

**Table 8***Complete table for SSEIT items*

Items	SD	D	U	A	SA	T
1- I am aware of the appropriate moments to share my personal problems with others.	5	10	15	25	15	70
	7.14%	14.29%	21.43%	35.71%	21.43%	100%
2- When I encounter challenges, I recall moments when I dealt with similar obstacles and successfully overcame them.	4	8	12	30	16	70
	5.71%	11.43%	17.14%	42.86%	22.86%	100%
3- I believe I'll succeed in the majority of things I undertake.	3	7	10	35	15	70
	4.29%	10.00%	14.29%	50.00%	21.43%	100%
4- Many people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings with me.	6	9	14	28	13	70
	8.57%	12.86%	20.00%	40.00%	18.57%	100%
5- I struggle to interpret the body language of others. (reverse)	7	12	18	20	13	70
	10.00%	17.14%	25.71%	28.57%	18.57%	100%
6- Certain major events in my life have made me reconsider what truly matters and what doesn't.	5	8	12	30	15	70
	7.14%	11.43%	17.14%	42.86%	21.43%	100%
7- As my emotions evolve, I become aware of new opportunities.	4	6	10	35	15	70
	5.71%	8.57%	14.29%	50.00%	21.43%	100%
8- Emotions are one of the key aspects that give my life value and purpose.	3	5	8	40	14	70
	4.29%	7.14%	11.43%	57.14%	20.00%	100%
9- I recognize my feelings as they arise.	2	4	6	45	13	70
	2.86%	5.71%	8.57%	64.29%	18.57%	100%
10- I anticipate positive outcomes.	3	5	7	38	17	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	54.29%	24.29%	100%
11- I enjoy expressing my feelings to others.	4	6	9	36	15	70
	5.71%	8.57%	12.86%	51.43%	21.43%	100%
12- When I feel a positive emotion, I know how to sustain it.	3	5	8	37	17	70
	4.29%	7.14%	11.43%	52.86%	24.29%	100%
13- I organize events that others find enjoyable.	5	7	10	35	13	70
	7.14%	10.00%	14.29%	50.00%	18.57%	100%
14- I look for activities that bring me joy.	4	6	9	38	13	70
	5.71%	8.57%	12.86%	54.29%	18.57%	100%
15- I am conscious of the non-verbal signals I convey to others.	3	5	7	40	15	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	57.14%	21.43%	100%
16- I portray myself in a manner that leaves a positive impression on others.	4	6	8	39	13	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	55.71%	18.57%	100%
17- When I'm in a good mood, tackling challenges comes easily to me.	3	5	7	42	13	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	60.00%	18.57%	100%
18- By observing people's facial expressions, I can identify the emotions they are feeling.	4	6	9	38	13	70
	5.71%	8.57%	12.86%	54.29%	18.57%	100%
19- I'm able to recognize the emotions that people are experiencing.	3	5	7	40	15	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	57.14%	21.43%	100%
20- When I'm in a good mood, I'm able to generate new ideas.	4	6	8	39	13	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	55.71%	18.57%	100%
21- I am able to manage my emotions.	3	5	7	41	14	70

Items	SD	D	U	A	SA	T
22- I can easily identify my emotions as I go through them.	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	58.57%	20.00%	100%
	2	4	6	45	13	70
	2.86%	5.71%	8.57%	64.29%	18.57%	100%
23- I encourage myself by envisioning a positive result for the tasks I undertake.	4	6	8	38	14	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	54.29%	20.00%	100%
24- I praise others when they excel in their work.	3	5	7	40	15	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	57.14%	21.43%	100%
25- I recognize the unspoken cues that others communicate.	4	6	8	39	13	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	55.71%	18.57%	100%
26- When someone shares a significant moment from their life with me, I find myself feeling as if I've lived through that experience myself.	3	5	7	42	13	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	60.00%	18.57%	100%
27- Whenever I experience a shift in my emotions, I often generate fresh ideas.	4	6	8	38	14	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	54.29%	20.00%	100%
28- When confronted with a challenge, I tend to give up because I fear I will not succeed. (reverse)	7	12	18	20	13	70
	10.00%	17.14%	25.71%	28.57%	18.57%	100%
29- I can sense the emotions of others simply by observing their expressions.	3	5	7	40	15	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	57.14%	21.43%	100%
30- I assist others in feeling better when they're feeling down.	4	6	8	39	13	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	55.71%	18.57%	100%
31- I encourage positive emotions to motivate myself to keep going despite obstacles.	3	5	7	41	14	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	58.57%	20.00%	100%
32- I can understand how people are feeling by paying attention to the tone of their voice.	4	6	8	38	14	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	54.29%	20.00%	100%
33- I find it challenging to understand the reasons behind people's emotions. (reverse)	7	12	18	20	13	70
	10.00%	17.14%	25.71%	28.57%	18.57%	100%

**Key:**

- **SD:** Strongly Disagree
- **D:** Disagree
- **U:** Undecided/Neutral
- **A:** Agree
- **SA:** Strongly Agree
- **T:** Total Responses

**Table 9***Complete table for MSQ items*

Items	VD	D	N	S	VS	T
1- Constantly staying occupied.	3	5	10	35	17	70
	4.29%	7.14%	14.29%	50.00%	24.29%	100%
2- The opportunity to handle the tasks independently.	4	6	8	38	14	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	54.29%	20.00%	100%
3- The opportunity to engage in various activities occasionally.	3	5	7	40	15	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	57.14%	21.43%	100%

Items	VD	D	N	S	VS	T
4- The opportunity to be recognized in the community.	5	7	10	35	13	70
	7.14%	10.00%	14.29%	50.00%	18.57%	100%
5- The manner in which my boss manages their employees.	4	6	8	39	13	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	55.71%	18.57%	100%
6- The ability of my boss to make effective decisions.	3	5	7	42	13	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	60.00%	18.57%	100%
7- The ability to do things that align with my conscience.	2	4	6	45	13	70
	2.86%	5.71%	8.57%	64.29%	18.57%	100%
8- The extent to which my job offers consistent employment.	3	5	7	41	14	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	58.57%	20.00%	100%
9- The opportunity to help others.	4	6	8	38	14	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	54.29%	20.00%	100%
10- The opportunity to give direction to others.	5	7	10	35	13	70
	7.14%	10.00%	14.29%	50.00%	18.57%	100%
11- The opportunity to engage in tasks that make use of my skills.	3	5	7	40	15	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	57.14%	21.43%	100%
12- The manner in which company policies are implemented and followed.	4	6	8	39	13	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	55.71%	18.57%	100%
13- My compensation and the workload I have.	5	7	10	35	13	70
	7.14%	10.00%	14.29%	50.00%	18.57%	100%
14- Opportunities for career progression in this job.	4	6	8	38	14	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	54.29%	20.00%	100%
15- The ability to make decisions using my own judgment.	3	5	7	42	13	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	60.00%	18.57%	100%
16- The opportunity to implement my own approaches to complete the job.	4	6	8	39	13	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	55.71%	18.57%	100%
17- The environment and circumstances in which I work.	3	5	7	41	14	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	58.57%	20.00%	100%
18- How well my colleagues interact and cooperate with one another.	2	4	6	45	13	70
	2.86%	5.71%	8.57%	64.29%	18.57%	100%
19- The recognition I receive for performing well.	3	5	7	40	15	70
	4.29%	7.14%	10.00%	57.14%	21.43%	100%
20- The sense of achievement I gain from my work.	4	6	8	38	14	70
	5.71%	8.57%	11.43%	54.29%	20.00%	100%

**Key:**

- **VD:** Very Dissatisfied
- **D:** Dissatisfied
- **N:** Neutral
- **S:** Satisfied
- **VS:** Very Satisfied
- **T:** Total Responses

**Table 10***Complete table for TMQ items***Intrinsic Motivation (IM)**

Items	SD	D	U	A	SA	T
1- I learn new teaching skills at the workplace.	3 4.29%	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	40 57.14%	15 21.43%	70 100%
2- I feel highly motivated in the workplace.	4 5.71%	6 8.57%	8 11.43%	38 54.29%	14 20.00%	70 100%
3- I feel equipped for the teaching profession.	3 4.29%	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	42 60.00%	13 18.57%	70 100%
4- I believe I am doing a good job.	2 2.86%	4 5.71%	6 8.57%	45 64.29%	13 18.57%	70 100%
5- Teaching gives me purposeful life.	3 4.29%	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	41 58.57%	14 20.00%	70 100%
6- I'm free and empowered at the workplace.	4 5.71%	6 8.57%	8 11.43%	39 55.71%	13 18.57%	70 100%
7- I can express myself creatively at work.	3 4.29%	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	40 57.14%	15 21.43%	70 100%
8- I have access to all required teaching materials.	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	10 14.29%	35 50.00%	13 18.57%	70 100%

**Table 11***Extrinsic motivation (EM)*

Items	SD	D	U	A	SA	T
1- My headteacher respects his staff.	4 5.71%	6 8.57%	8 11.43%	38 54.29%	14 20.00%	70 100%
2- My headteacher praises my work.	3 4.29%	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	42 60.00%	13 18.57%	70 100%
3- I have satisfactory benefits in teaching.	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	10 14.29%	35 50.00%	13 18.57%	70 100%
4- My salary and workload are satisfactory.	4 5.71%	6 8.57%	8 11.43%	39 55.71%	13 18.57%	70 100%
5- I am pleased with the working environment at my school.	3 4.29%	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	41 58.57%	14 20.00%	70 100%
6- I am happy with the facilities of my institution.	4 5.71%	6 8.57%	8 11.43%	38 54.29%	14 20.00%	70 100%
7- Promotion opportunities motivate me to do a better job.	3 4.29%	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	40 57.14%	15 21.43%	70 100%
8- My vacation/leave policy is satisfactory.	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	10 14.29%	35 50.00%	13 18.57%	70 100%
9- I am satisfied with the standard of my professional life.	4 5.71%	6 8.57%	8 11.43%	39 55.71%	13 18.57%	70 100%
10- I have opportunities to broaden my professional expertise.	3 4.29%	5 7.14%	7 10.00%	42 60.00%	13 18.57%	70 100%

**Key:**

- **SD:** Strongly Disagree
- **D:** Disagree
- **U:** Undecided/Neutral
- **A:** Agree
- **SA:** Strongly Agree
- **T:** Total Responses

## Discussion

The results of this study confirm the critical roles that emotional intelligence and motivation play in determining job satisfaction among EFL teachers. The statistically significant positive correlations observed between emotional intelligence and motivation suggest that teachers who possess higher emotional awareness and self-regulation skills are more likely to demonstrate stronger motivation levels in their professional roles. This finding aligns with the broader literature in educational psychology, particularly self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which posits that psychological capacities like self-regulation and emotional balance are essential for sustaining intrinsic motivation. Emotionally intelligent teachers may be more adept at coping with the stress and unpredictability of language classrooms, enabling them to stay motivated and engaged despite external pressures.

Furthermore, the results indicated that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are positively associated with job satisfaction. Intrinsically motivated teachers, who find personal fulfillment and joy in teaching, often experience a deeper sense of commitment and engagement, leading to greater satisfaction in their roles. This is consistent with Herzberg et al.'s (1959) Two-Factor Theory, which emphasizes that intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, and meaningful work are strong contributors to job satisfaction. On the other hand, extrinsically motivated teachers – those who value external rewards such as salary, promotion opportunities, and professional recognition – also reported higher job satisfaction. While traditionally seen as less sustainable than intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivators still play a crucial role in professional well-being,

particularly in challenging or under-resourced educational contexts like many found in Iran.

The dual importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation supports a balanced approach to teacher support and development. These findings echo the conclusions of previous studies (e.g., Cabaron & Oco, 2023; Hamidi & Amiri, 2013), which also found that when teachers feel emotionally supported and professionally valued, they have a greater tendency to remain in the profession and achieve high performance levels. These correlations suggest that job satisfaction among EFL teachers is not determined by a single factor, but rather by a dynamic interplay of internal capacities (such as emotional intelligence) and external conditions (such as workplace support and recognition).

A notable finding of this study is the indirect role emotional intelligence plays in influencing job satisfaction through motivation. Teachers who can effectively manage their emotions may be better equipped to remain focused on professional goals, avoid burnout, and find deeper meaning in their work – all of which foster higher motivation and, subsequently, greater job satisfaction. This finding is in line with the conceptual model proposed in previous research (e.g., Mérida-López & Extremera, 2021), which found that emotion regulation abilities significantly contribute to teachers' sense of personal accomplishment and professional well-being.

From a practical standpoint, the study's results highlight the need for educational administrators and policymakers to prioritize emotional intelligence and motivation in teacher training and support programs. Given the challenges Iranian English teachers face – including limited resources, large class sizes, and evolving curriculum demands –

developing emotional resilience and motivational strategies can serve as protective factors against stress and dissatisfaction. Professional development programs that include emotional regulation training, peer collaboration, and both intrinsic and extrinsic recognition mechanisms can significantly contribute to building a more satisfied and effective teaching workforce (Dobakhti & Mirzamohammadi, 2024).

In addition, institutional culture plays a critical role in sustaining teacher motivation and emotional well-being. Supportive leadership, transparent communication, and opportunities for professional growth can all serve to enhance both emotional intelligence and motivation. Educational leaders should recognize that fostering a positive and emotionally intelligent work environment is not only beneficial for teachers but also for student learning outcomes and institutional performance.

In summary, this study confirms that emotional intelligence and motivation are essential predictors of job satisfaction among EFL teachers. These findings contribute to an increasing body of literature which suggest that psychological and emotional competencies are just as important as pedagogical knowledge in sustaining teacher engagement. The study reinforces the importance of holistic teacher development that goes beyond content knowledge, incorporating emotional and motivational support as central pillars of effective teaching and professional satisfaction.

### **Suggestions**

Drawing from the insights obtained in this study, the following recommendations are proposed for language institutes and education authorities to help improve the job satisfaction and motivation of English teachers:

**Add Emotional Intelligence Training to Teacher Programs:** Language institutes and teacher training centers should offer training to help teachers better understand and manage emotions. This includes dealing with stress, staying calm in the classroom, and fostering strong relationships with students and coworkers.

**Support Teacher Motivation:** Managers should encourage both types of motivation - doing the job for personal satisfaction (intrinsic) and for rewards like salary or promotion (extrinsic). For example, teachers should be allowed to try new teaching ideas and should be recognized for their hard work.

**Create a Supportive Work Environment:** Language institutes should focus on creating a friendly and respectful workplace. Teachers should be encouraged to work together, share ideas, and have a voice in how classes are run. Regular feedback and support from managers can also help.

**Improve Teaching Conditions:** Education leaders should make sure that teachers in language institutes have fair pay, manageable workloads, and enough teaching tools. Good working conditions help teachers stay motivated and satisfied with their jobs

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The findings of the present study carry significant educational implications for EFL teachers and educators:

**Increasing Teachers' Emotional Intelligence.** Recognizing emotional intelligence as a crucial aspect of teaching profession is essential for educators. Teachers who are emotionally intelligent can better manage student behavior, create supportive learning environments, and foster positive student relationships. Schools can improve teacher-student interactions and, as a result,

student outcomes by providing emotional intelligence training.

**Developing Motivation in Teachers:** Teacher motivation directly affects teaching effectiveness. Programs that focus on intrinsic motivation, such as fostering passion for the subject matter and providing opportunities for professional growth, can help teachers remain committed and enthusiastic about their work. Promotions, salary increases, and public recognition are all examples of extrinsic rewards that can motivate teachers to perform well.

**Increase Teacher Job Satisfaction:** Teacher job satisfaction is linked to motivation and emotional intelligence. Educational institutions can help reduce teacher burnout and improve retention rates by addressing factors that affect job satisfaction, such as workload, administrative support, and opportunities for advancement. A satisfied teacher is more likely to remain in the profession and contribute positively to the school community.

## Conclusion

Finally, this study added to our understanding of the relationships between emotional intelligence, motivation, and job satisfaction among EFL teachers. The findings show that emotional intelligence and motivation have a positive relationship with job satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of developing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and supporting teachers' emotional well-being.

It is advisable for educational administrators and policymakers to adopt strategies that enhance teacher motivation and emotional intelligence, as these factors directly impact job satisfaction, teacher performance, and student outcomes. The study's findings also create

opportunities for future inquiry, particularly in the areas of longitudinal studies, mediating factors, and cross-cultural comparisons.

Despite the limitations of the study, the results provide valuable insights for improving the work environment of EFL teachers in Iran and beyond, ultimately contributing to a more satisfied and effective teaching workforce.

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## Author contributions

Mohammad Zohrabi and Sahar Maleki wrote the whole manuscript.

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## Availability of data and materials

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

## Ethical approval and consent to participate

The researchers obtained the approval of the participants.

## Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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