DE-MOTIVATORS, BURNOUT AND LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT IN AN IRANIAN EFL CONTEXT

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Abstract

The present study probed 250 English as foreign language (EFL) learners' de-motivation by investigating its role in students' burnout, i.e., a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding or stressful. It also sought to examine the indirect impact of de-motivation and direct impact of burnout on language achievement among Iranian English learners. To do so, a two-phase study was designed. The first phase comprised an array of different steps to validate the Persian version of the 'de-motivation scale' designed by Sakai and Kichuki (2009). It measures six constructs: teachers, characteristics of classes, experiences of failure, class environment, class materials, and lack of interest. In the second phase, the researchers utilized the validated questionnaire along with the student version of Maslach Burnout Inventory (Schaufeli et al., 2002) to explore the relationship among students' de-motivation, their burnout, and achievement. The latter scale measures three dimensions of burnout, namely, emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and academic inefficacy. The results of reliability estimates and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity indices of the Persian version of 'demotivation scale'. The findings of the second phase yielded via structural equation modeling (SEM) revealed that students' de-motivation positively predicted students' burnout with 'class materials' and 'lack of interest' having the highest influence. Burnout in turn was found to negatively influence language achievement.

Keywords: burnout, confirmatory factor analysis, de-motivation, language achievement, Structural equation modeling

1. Introduction

Motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain behavior and a process that guides, maintains, and initiates goal oriented treatments. It represents causes of people's needs, actions, and desires. Dörnyei (2001) defined motivation as a concept which is one of the most significant human characteristics and is also a multifaceted and highly complex issue. Wlodkowski (1986) has also contended that there is always room for argument in defining motivation since it is a broad, complex, and hypothetical term. As Covington (1998) stated, motivation is like the concept of gravity which is easier to describe than to define. A more consummate definition of motivation was represented by Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) in which it is referred to a changing arousal in a person that initiates, augments, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive processes whereby primary desires and wishes are prioritized and acted out (successfully or unsuccessfully). In the domain of education, motivation is a determining factor in developing an individual's success toward learning which comprises several factors such as learners, teachers, teaching methods, materials and content, facilities, and textbooks. Over the past decades, researchers paid more attention to this positive side but neglected the darker side which tends to diminish motivation known as de-motivation. This concept is viewed as the flip side of motivation. De-motivation is as crucial as motivation in learning process, especially EFL learning. English as an international language is taught in different contexts as a native, second, or foreign language. The problem arises when English learners lose their motivation. The increasing number of students who have lost their motivation toward EFL learning has recently caused researchers to consider the concept of de-motivation as a controversial issue and one of the most influencing obstacles in learning a foreign language.

According to Dörnyei (2001), de-motivation reduces the motivational basis of an on-going action or behavioural intention.In countries in which English is learned as a foreign language, students face some problems regarding many diverse factors such as learning conditions, teaching methodologies and behaviors, lack of learning facilities or equipment, or boring materials. As a result, learners may become de-motivated which can

form negative attitudes toward learning English. Among these countries in which EFL is used as a vehicle for communication due to increasing need of students to learn English as an international language, Iran is not an exception (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2016). So, knowing the reasons behind this phenomenon which can be seen as causes of failure in language learning should receive special attention by teachers and researchers who want to explore the sources of de-motivation in the process of EFL learning. It is accepted that de-motivation is not a constant issue and learners who are affected by this negative concept can rehabilitate their motivation. This phenomenon of recovering motivation is known as re-motivation. Ushioda (1998) defined re-motivation as a process of getting somebody's motivation online again. Falout (2012) put forward another definition for re-motivation. In his definition, motivation can be recovered after students have lost it in which more motivated learners recover their motivation better than low motivated ones after missing it.

Moreover, as Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) maintained, exploring the causes of de-motivation can help understand the theories of the positive side, i.e., motivation. These causes are factors which diminish student's motivation to learn English as a foreign language and shape obstacles to participate in classroom activities. De-motivation factors can originate from lack of intrinsic motivation. Arai (2004) and Dörnyei (2001) stated that negative attitude within learners themselves and lack of self-confidence are found to be the causes of de-motivation. In addition to these internal factors, students may not find learning contents and materials related to their actual usage in authentic situations. Consequently, they try to pass the tests successfully without fulfilling the actual goal of learning English.

In the present study, the impact of de-motivators on an emotional-associated construct, i.e., burnout is hypothesized. This refers to a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations which are emotionally demanding or stressful (Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003). When individuals do not receive agreement on their functioning, they feel powerless which leads to a sense of meaningless (Dworkin, 1987). In the domain of education, burnout has been defined as a multidimensional construct with three related constituents:

emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1976). Emotional Exhaustion occurs when individuals feel their emotional resources are depleted in contact with other people. Depersonalization is defined as dehumanized perception of others in which individuals are unconcerned toward their peers. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decline in professional effectiveness and competence (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

While a plethora of studies, thus far, strived to investigate the concept of motivation in an EFL context, there is still a scant body of research attempting to delve into the antecedents and ramifications of de-motivation, and, to the best knowledge of the present researchers, no documented study to date has studied Iranian EFL learners' de-motivation and burnout as two detrimental factors within a single framework.

Accordingly, the main purpose of the present study is to explore the EFL learners' de-motivation in the EFL context of Iran. To do so, Sakai and Kichuki's (2009) demotivation scale was translated into Persian and then administered to a group of Iranian EFL learners to determine its validity and internal consistency. The second purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between EFL learners' de-motivation and their burnout. Finally, it seeks to determine the role of these two factors, namely, students' demotivation and burnout in language achievement. Hence, the following research questions were formulated and addressed:

1. Is the Persian version of 'de-motivation scale' a valid and reliable tool in the EFL context of Iran?
2. Is there any significant relationship between student de-motivation and student burnout?
3. Does EFL students' de-motivation influence their language achievement?
4. Does EFL students' burnout influence their language achievement?

2. Literature Review

Some researchers have recently investigated the role of de-motivation in predicting students' failure or success and explored a number of de-motives. Gorham and Christophel (1992), for instance, conducted a study to find motivating and de-motivating factors of 308 college students in their lecture

classes who were studying at an American university. In their study, all participants were asked to list causes of their motivation and de-motivation. Among 2404 factors, 20 categories were chosen. Four categories of motivators indicated factors regarding the context in which learners were taught. Six classes referred to structure factors, and ten classifications were related to teachers' behaviours. 583 de-motivating factors were also detected by the researchers. Among these categories, 169 referred to contexts, 198 accounted for teacher behaviours, and 216 concerned structure/format of the class. It was concluded that, learners perceive motivation as a student-owned state, but de-motivation as a teacher-owned problem.

Oxford (1998) conducted a study to identify factors which decrease students' motivation. She surveyed 250 high school and university students' emotions and experiences over five years by analysing their essays. The results revealed four categories of de-motivating factors including classroom activities, conflicts between teachers and students regarding the style used in the classroom, teachers' attitude toward the course, context, material, and the way teachers behave to the students. Ushioda (1998) substantiated the previous findings. The researcher used a structured interview for collecting data and analysed 20 university students' experiences on motivation and their ideas of the elements they perceived to be the causes of de-motivation in their language learning. Ushioda (1998) found that students restrict their loss of motivation to external factors and separate its negative affect from their own internal elements. In his study external factors were teachers' styles, methodologies, and learning tasks. Chambers (1999) administered a questionnaire to 191 students and another questionnaire to 7 teachers in four schools in Leeds, UK. Students were asked to identify the main reasons which lead to de-motivation toward their L2 learning and teachers were asked to describe the characteristics of de-motivated learners. The students considered teachers as the main source of de-motivation and blamed them for utilizing out of date teaching materials, methodologies, and inferior equipment, not getting feedback from students, not giving clear instructions and explanations, shouting and criticizing when students do not understand. Teachers on the other hand, did not perceive themselves to be the cause of students' de-motivation and described de-motivated learners as pupils who

lack motivation, enthusiasm, concentration, self-confidence, eagerness in doing homework, are unwilling to cooperate, distract other students, shout and throw things, make no effort to learn, claim to have lost the material, and give negative response to praise and positive feedback.

In a similar vein, Dörnyei (2001) was among the researchers who concentrated on de-motivated EFL pupils and identified nine de-motivating factors including course book, students' negative attitudes toward the language, group members and L2 community, teacher's methodology, competence, personality, and commitment, lack of self-confidence, compulsory nature of the course, lack or inadequacy of facilities, and interference of another language being studied. Williams, Burden, and Lanvers (2002) have also carried out a study to find whether there is any difference between males and females regarding de-motivation, the relationship between de-motivation and age and also to see whether students' de-motivation varies according to the language they are studying. The researchers distributed a questionnaire among 228 secondary school students learning foreign languages at the south-west of England. Males were found to be more de-motivated than females and a negative relationship was observed between age and motivation level. In other words, by increasing students' age, their de-motivation level would increase. The findings also revealed that a higher motivation existed for learning German than French. Ikeno (2002), in another study, explored some motivating and de-motivating factors. The researcher used 65 Japanese education and humanities university students' experiences of motivation and de-motivation. Finally, 89 motivating experiences (22 categories) and 76 de-motivating experiences (13 categories) were identified. He listed the most significant de-motivating factors including peers' negative attitude toward English learning (n= 2), feeling of inferiority regarding one's English ability (n= 5), exam-oriented classes (n= 6), lack of control over the material being learned (n= 12), and distrust in the character and ability of teachers (n= 19). Hasegawa (2004) studied Japanese high school learners' experiences toward EFL learning and de-motivation. The researcher directly asked students their overall grade, their interest in English, the reasons of their like or dislike, and whether they have lost interest in studying English. Like the previous

studies, it was found that, teachers were the most prominent sources of de-motivation. In other words, inappropriate teachers' behaviors can impact negatively on students' de-motivation.

Falout and Maruyama (2004) investigated a study to see whether de-motivation level is different between two groups with different proficiencies. Utilizing the nine categories of de-motivating factors introduced by Dörnyei (2001) and an in-house institutional test to determine the proficiency level of the participants, the researchers chose 64 college students from two different proficiency levels; low and high. The selected learners responded to the 49-item questionnaire and finally it was found that, the two groups had been de-motivated to the same degree, but the lower-proficiency group developed negative attitudes regarding English learning earlier than the higher-proficiency group. Attitudes of group members, self-confidence, attitudes toward the language, teachers, and materials were de-motivating factors for the lower-proficiency group, and self-confidence was the only de-motivating factor regarding higher-proficiency group. In other words, mentioned factors were relatively neutral for the second group of learners. Arai (2004) has also asked 33 EFL university students to explain their de-motivating experiences and to describe the experiences and their reactions to such experiences. The researcher collected 105 comments and identified some categories including the boring or monotonous classroom atmosphere (49.5%), teachers' behavior/ personality (46.7%), and other factors (3.8%).

In line with the previous studies, Zhang (2007) investigated a study among students of four countries including Japan, U.S., China, and Germany to find de-motivating factors. Five sources of de-motivation were detected: teachers' indifference to the course and students, teachers' incompetence, unfair testing, boring presentations, and the amount of information. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) designed and validated a 35-item questionnaire regarding students' de-motivation to be used in the EFL context of Japan and extracted five factors by administering the questionnaire to 112 English learners. These factors are as follows: teachers' competence and teaching styles, inappropriate methodology, inadequate school facilities, course books, and test scores. The researchers also concluded that inadequate

school facility is the less de-motivating than the other four factors. In another study done by Trang and Baldauf (2007), two broad groups of de-motives were detected: internal and external factors. The first category included students' negative attitudes toward English learning, lack of self-esteem, and their experiences of failure (36%) among which the last one was the most crucial origin of learners' lack of motivation. The external attributions comprised the learning environment, teacher-related factors, and other reasons (64%) in which teacher-related factors were the most prominent cause of de-motivation. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) conducted a study to find the most salient de-motivating factors and the degree of difference between less motivated and more motivated learners regarding de-motivation. Although their questionnaire was constructed based on a six-factor model (class environment, teachers, characteristics of classes, students' experiences of failure, lack of learners' interest, and class materials), the factor analysis extracted five factors. It was also found that participants with no or a little motivation were more influenced by lack of intrinsic motivation than the participants with moderate and high motivation. Falout, Elwood, and Hood (2009) in an attempt to find the difference among diverse students in terms of proficiency, age, and major toward investigating coping strategies regarding de-motivation found that, beginning, less-proficient students in non-English majors had the least control over their affective states to cope with de-motivating experiences than advanced, English learners.

A number of studies have also been conducted in Iran on de-motivating and re-motivating factors among Iranian EFL learners with results more or less identical to those of the above-reviewed literature. These studies include the ones conducted by Sahragard and Alimorad (2013) as well as Sahragard and Ansaripour (2014).

Taken together, the above literature on de-motivators, their detrimental role in EFL learning, and their most crucial antecedents and ramifications clearly demonstrated that studies on demotivation encompasses a host of dimensions. Nevertheless, to the researchers' best knowledge, no study to date has examined the Iranian EFL students' de-motivation, burnout, and language achievement within a single framework. The present paper, thus,

aimed at validating the Persian version of demotivation scale and investigating the causal associations among de-motivators, burnout, and language achievement.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of the present study comprised 250 Iranian EFL learners (161 female and 89 male) selected according to convenience sampling among EFL students learning English in private language institutes and universities in Mashhad, a city in north east of Iran. Their age ranged from 18 to 32 (M= 24, SD= 3.78).

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 De-motivation questionnaire

To determine EFL students' de-motivation, the researchers translated 'de-motivation scale' designed and validated by Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) to Persian and made minor modifications regarding the content of some items (e.g., the tense of the items from the past was changed into present and literal translation was avoided to eschew ambiguity). The de-motivation questionnaire contains 35 statements evaluating six constructs of de-motivation: teachers (6 items), characteristics of classes (7 items), experiences of failure (5 items), class environment (7 items), class materials (6 items) and lack of interest (4 items). The scale measures the six constructs via a 5-point Likert-type response format (not true, to some extent not true, not either true or untrue, to some extent true, and true) (see appendices A & B which appear on the journal's webpage). The questionnaire also included one statement about motivation to learn English: "I'm a motivated English learner". The participants were required to choose one of the alternatives: 1: totally untrue, 2: untrue, 3: not either true or untrue, 4: true, and 5: totally true. Based on the responses to this question, the participants were divided into less motivated learners and more motivated learners. Validity evidence for construct interpretation was investigated through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). A GFI of .91 and a RMSEA of .06 were indicative of model fit. Item response theory was used to examine the adequacy of the definition

of each construct including how well the 5-point frequency response scale worked for the items and respondents. Sample items for *'teachers'* construct included: 1) The teacher ridicules students' mistakes, and 2) Teachers' explanations were not easy to understand. Sample items for *'characteristics of classes'* construct are: 1) I seldom have chances to communicate in English, and 2) Most of the lessons focus on grammar. Sample items include in *'experiences of failure'* dimension are: 1) I get low scores on test, and 2) I get lost in how to self-study for English lessons. Sample items for *'class environment'* construct are: 1) The computer is not used, and 2) Visual materials (such as videos and DVDs) were not used. Sample items for *'class materials'* dimension are: 1) Topics of the English passages used in lessons are not interesting, and 2) English passages in the textbook are too long. Sample items for the last construct *'lack of interest'* are: 1) I have lost my interest in English, and 2) I have lost my goal to be a speaker of English.

3.2.2 Burnout inventory

The student version of Maslach Burnout Inventory Student-Survey (MBI-SS) designed and validated by Schaufeli, Martinez, Marques-pinto, Salanova, and Bakker (2002) was used to determine EFL students' burnout. The scale comprises 15 items evaluating three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion (5 items), cynicism (4 items), and academic efficacy (6 items).The scale measures the six dimensions via a 5-point Likert-type response format (never, seldom, sometimes, often, and always). The Persian version of the scale – translated and validated by Rostami, Abedi, Schaufeli, Ahmadi, and Sadeghi (2014) – demonstrated acceptable reliability indices (see appendices C & D on the journal's webpage). Cronbach's alpha for emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and academic efficacy were 0.88, 0.90, and 0.84, respectively.

3.3 Data collection

After a brief explanation of the purpose of the research, all participants received the translated version of the de-motivation questionnaire in order to determine its reliability and validity. To gather the reliable data, the participants were assured that their views would be confidential so there was

no need to write their names. They were just required to indicate demographic information such as, age, gender, educational level, average, and major. The questionnaires were coded numerically. Having validated the instrument, in the second phase of the study, the researchers asked the same respondents to complete another questionnaire measuring their burnout levels. They were also asked to write their grade point average (GPA) on the questionnaires as the indication of their language achievement.

3.4 Data analysis

In this study, to check normal distribution, descriptive statistics were employed. To substantiate the validity of the Persian version of demotivation scale, a confirmatory factor analysis was applied to the data. In so doing, LISREL statistical package (8.50) was utilized. It is pioneering software for structural modelling. The reliability of the questionnaires was computed via Cronbach's alpha. The causal association between de-motivators and burnout was examined through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via LISREL. SEM is a robust statistical technique that is used to interpret the causal relationship among several variables within a single framework. To explore the correlations among variables, Pearson product moment correlation utilizing SPSS was applied to the data.

4. Results

4.1 Phase 1

The first phase of the present study comprised an array of different steps to validate the translated version of the 'de-motivation' scale. Having translated the scale into Persian, the researchers assured the quality of items by accommodating the views of three experts. The translated questionnaire was then administered to 250 EFL students. To determine the validity of the scale, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) utilizing the LISREL 8.50 statistical package was performed. The model consisted of six de-motivators, namely, *teachers, characteristics of classes, experiences of failure, class environment, class materials,* and *lack of interest. Teachers* comprised 6 items, *characteristics of classes* consisted of 7 items, *experiences of failure* included 5 items, *class environment* comprised 7

items, *class materials* consisted of 6 items, and *lack of interest* comprised 4 items of the scale. A number of fit indices were examined to evaluate the model fit: the chi square/*df* ratio which should be lower than 2 or 3, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) and the Good Fit Index (GFI) with the cut value greater than .90**,** and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of about .06 or .08 (Schreiber, Amaury, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006). The structural model is presented in Figure1. As indicated by Figure 1, the chi-square/*df* ratio (2.1), the RMSEA (.062), and the NFI=.90 all reached the acceptable fit thresholds. Overall, it can be concluded that the proposed model had a good fit with the empirical data.
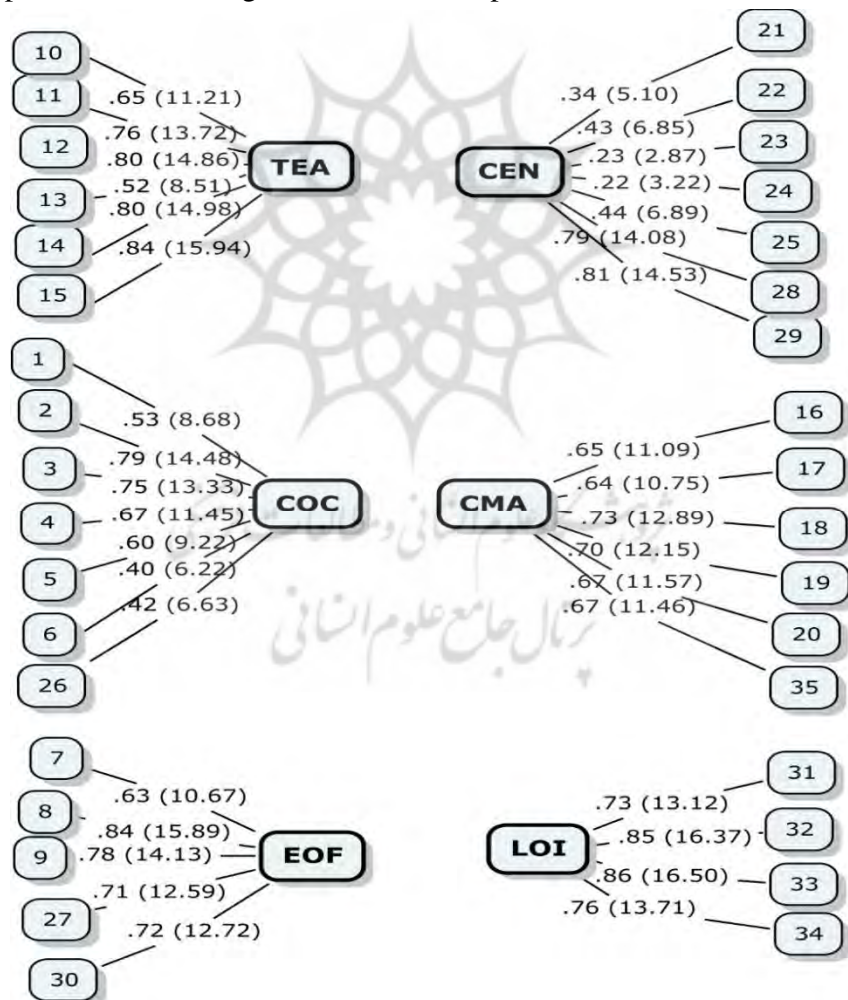
χ2= 1173. 41, *df*= 545, *RMSEA*=. 062, *CFI*=.91, *GFI*=.89, *NFI*=.90

Figure 1. The schematic representation of the six de-motivators and the corresponding items. Note: TEA: teachers, COC: characteristics of classes, EOF: experiences of failure, CEN: class environment, CMA: class materials, LOI: lack of interest, and GPA: grade point average.

The indices on the lines indicate the standardized estimates and *t*-values, respectively. The first one is the standardized coefficient (*β)* which demonstrates the factor loading of each item with respect to the corresponding factor and presents an easily grasped picture of effect size. The closer the magnitude to 1.0, the higher the correlation and the greater the factor loading of the item is. The magnitude of lower than 0.30 is an indication of weak factor loading; in such cases the item must be revised or discarded. The second measure is the *t*-value (t); if *t* > 2 or *t*< -2, we call the result statistically significant. As the figure demonstrates, all items had accepted factor loading.

The Cronbach's alpha estimate for all six de-motivators was found to be .95 regarding 35 items. The reliability of the subscales ranged from .72 to .87 (teachers= .87, characteristics of classes= .72, experiences of failure= .84, class environment= .72, class materials= .82, and lack of interest= .87). The correlations among the six constructs were then computed. As indicated in Table 1, the highest correlations were found between experiences of failure and lack of interest ($r = 0.76$, $p< 0.05$), followed by the correlation between experiences of failure and teachers ($r = 0.75$, $p< 0.05$).

Table 1. The correlation coefficients among the constructs of De-motivation

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Teachers	1.00					
2. Characteristics of classes	.694**	1.00				
3. Experiences of failure	.750**	.686**	1.00			
4. Class environment	.611**	.600**	.562**	1.00		
5. Class materials	.742**	.651**	.729**	.574**	1.00	
6. Lack of interest	.723**	.679**	.762**	.587**	.726**	1.00

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

4.2 Phase 2

In the second phase of the present study, the researchers examined the relationship between students' de-motivation (teachers, characteristics of classes, experiences of failure, class environment, class materials, and lack of interest), their level of burnout (emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and academic inefficacy), and language achievement. Table 2 represents descriptive statistics of the six de-motivators. As the following table shows, among the six constructs, characteristics of classes and classroom environment had almost equal means: characteristics of classes (*M*=23.82, *SD*=4.38), classroom environment (*M*=23.40, *SD*=5.03).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the De-motivators

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers	250	6.00	26.00	17.7560	5.69581
Characteristics of Classes	250	11.00	33.00	23.8280	4.38032
Experiences of failure	250	5.00	22.00	15.3120	4.45038
Class environment	250	8.00	32.00	23.4040	5.03888
Class materials	250	6.00	27.00	18.6040	4.80954
Lack of interest	250	4.00	18.00	11.0643	4.27718
Valid N (listwise)	250				

The Cronbach's alpha estimate for burnout was found to be .84 regarding 15 items. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the three dimensions of burnout. According to the table, emotional exhaustion had the highest mean (*M*=16.53, *SD*=4.08).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of burnout and its three dimensions

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional exhaustion	250	5.00	25.00	16.5320	4.08555
Cynicism	250	4.00	20.00	12.5080	3.71283
Academic inefficacy	250	6.00	26.00	14.4200	3.56066
Burnout	250	15.00	63.00	43.4600	7.69919
Valid N (listwise)	250				

To examine the structural relations, the proposed model consisting of de-motivators, burnout, and language achievement was tested using the LISREL 8.50 statistical package. As demonstrated by Figure 2, the chi-square/*df* ratio (2.09), RMSEA (.071), GFI (.91), and CFI (.90) all reached the acceptable fit thresholds. This implies that the model had a good fit with the empirical data.
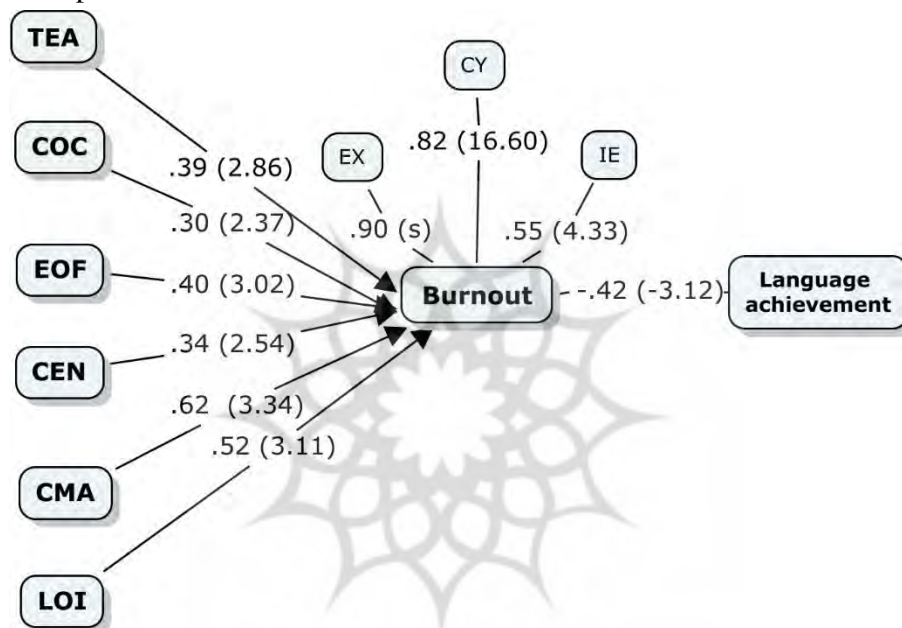
$\chi2= 220. 68$, *df*= 74, *RMSEA=. 071, CFI=.90, GFI=.91, NFI=.88*

Figure 2. The schematic representation of the relationships among the six de-motivators, burnout, and GPA. Note: TEA: teachers, COC: characteristics of classes, EOF: experiences of failure, CEN: class environment, CMA: class materials, LOI: lack of interest, EX: emotional exhaustion, CY: cynicism, and IE: academic inefficacy. Note: For clarity of schematic presentation, observed variables of de-motivators are not included and only latent variables are presented.

To check the strengths of the causal relationships among the variables, the *t*-values and standardized estimates were examined. The results demonstrated that the six de-motivators are positive and significant predictors of burnout (β= .39, *t*= 2.86 for teachers, β= .30, *t*= 2.37 for

characteristics of classes, β= .40, t= 3.02 for experiences of failure, β= .34, t= 2.54 for classroom environment, β=.62, t= 3.34 for classroom materials, and β= .52, t= 3.11 for lack of interest).Taken together, the results suggested that class materials and lack of interest are the most powerful predictors of burnout. It was also found that burnout significantly but negatively influences language achievement (β= .42, t= 3.12). In a sense, it can be argued that de-motivators influence language achievement indirectly via their impacts on burnout.

To investigate the relationships among students' de-motivation, their level of burnout, and their achievement, multiple correlations were run. The results of Pearson product moment correlations are presented in Table 4. As the table indicates, burnout is associated significantly and positively with the six de-motivators: burnout and teachers (r=0.579, p<0.05), characteristics of classes (r=0.488, p<0.05), experiences of failure (r=0.607, p<0.05), class environment (r=0.270, p<0.05), class materials (r=0.647, p<0.05), lack of interest (r=0.726, p<0.05). Burnout is associated significantly but negatively with language achievement (r= -0.484, p<0.05). Language achievement correlates significantly but negatively with all de-motivators: burnout and teachers (r=0.579, p<0.05), characteristics of classes (r=0.488, p<0.05), experiences of failure (r=0.607, p<0.05), class environment (r=0.270, p<0.05), class materials (r=0.647, p<0.05), lack of interest (r=0.726, p<0.05).

Table 4. Correlation coefficients for students' De-motivation, burnout, and achievement

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Teachers	1.00							
2.Characteristics of classes	.694**	1.00						
3.Experiences of failure	.750**	.686**	1.00					
4.Class environment	.611**	.600**	.562**	1.00				
5.Class materials	.742**	.651**	.729**	.574**	1.00			
6.Lack of interest	.723**	.679**	.762**	.587**	.726**	1.00		

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7. Burnout	.579**	.488**	.607**	.270**	.647**	.674**	1.00	
8.Language achievement	- .304**	- .251**	- .199**	- .290**	- .271**	- .282**	- .484**	1.00

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

5. Discussion

The present study delved into a rarely-explored construct in the realm of language education, i.e., EFL learners' de-motivation, in the context of Iran. The researchers of the present study set out to conduct this research on the grounds of the previous research in educational domain demonstrating the undeniable contribution of motivation to effective learning. So they conjectured that the role of the flip side of motivation, i.e., de-motivation, should be considered as paramount as motivation. To attain the goals of the current research, a two-phase study was designed. In the first phase, the researchers validated the Sakai and Kikuchi's (2009) scale measuring de-motivation among Iranian students in an EFL context. To do so, the scale was translated to Persian and then administered to Iranian EFL students. The results of CFA and reliability estimates indicated that the translated version of the scale enjoyed acceptable validity and reliability indices.

To see how the six de-motivators of the scale (teachers, characteristics of classes, experiences of failure, class environment, class materials, and lack of interest) converge with each other, a correlation analysis was run. The results indicated that the highest correlations were found between experiences of failure and lack of interest, followed by the correlation between experiences of failure and teachers. This finding can be explained from a common sense perspective as well as theoretical contentions. It is conceivable to presume that students' negative perceptions toward their failure in the learning process can reduce their interest for further attempt. As a result, it is important to teach students how to cope with such experiences and handle them. On the other hand, the teacher as an external factor was found to have the most prominent role in shaping students' failure. In other words, teachers' encouragement can reduce students' negative perceptions of failure and motivate them to see such experiences as

keys to success not as barriers. These findings can be interpreted as a plausible indication of further validation of the scale.

The second aim of the current study was to utilize the validated questionnaire to explore the relationship among EFL students' de-motivation, their burnout, and their language achievement. The findings demonstrated that de-motivators resulted in students' burnout and burnout led to decline in achievement. More specifically, it was found that all six de-motivators correlated positively and significantly with burnout, and classroom materials and lack of interest were found to affect students' burnout more than other de-motivators. It goes without saying that the curriculum of an EFL context is largely depended on the course book which contains carefully balanced and planned content. In this case, the course objectives would be identified and learning takes place within a particular framework. Learning course books with boring and old topics without any supplementary materials would lead to negative perceptions regarding the materials within the students, de-motivate them, and as a result, learners would experience burnout (Ghanizadeh & Rostami, 2015).

The high association between students' lack of interest and their burnout level implies if students are satisfied with their classroom, they will be more motivated for learning and enjoy the learning process. This can be plausibly interpreted in the light of theoretical models and empirical studies on burnout. It has been indicated that potential causes of burnout encompass a host of satisfaction-associated factors, such as, individuals' unmet expectation, perception regarding task value, inadequacy of peer interactions, and negative attitudes (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2015).

The results also revealed that there is a positive and significant correlation between experiences of failure and students' burnout. Such experiences can be harmful especially for students with low self-confidence. They may give up interaction with their classmates or teachers and sometimes lose their interest and motivation for learning. Consequently, students may experience the feeling of burnout which itself is detrimental for individuals and difficult to deal with. The next high correlation was found between teachers as de-motivators and burnout. Certainly, teachers play an important role in motivating students because learners look at their

teachers for reinforcement and approval. Moreover, teachers are the leaders of a classroom; they shape the roles of students and get them involved. Being able to motivate students, teachers need to be creative and know their students' requirements and interests. Contrarily, as stated by Ghanizadeh and Royaei (2015), if teachers do not pay enough attention to their students' concerns, learners will lose their motivation and consequently feel burnout by preferring loneness rather than interacting with others and passing the tests instead of learning language to use it communicatively.

The fifth significant correlation was observed between characteristics of classes and students' burnout. Such characteristics vary from the number of students of a class to features of English lessons. There are many cons regarding classroom overcrowding; students do not receive enough individual attention, they seldom have chances to communicate in English and as a result, they would get low scores especially on reading and speaking tests and would have problems of concentrating on a task which should be done in the classroom. Teachers may also experience the feelings of stress and frustration which can be deleterious for learners as well as teachers (Khan & Iqbal, 2012). Scrutinizing items measuring characteristics of classes indicates that besides classroom crowdedness, lessons focusing on one aspect of language, i.e., grammar or translation are delineated as the sources of de-motivation (e.g., Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009; Lee & Lee, 2011). Virtually, they appear to de-motivate students by neglecting authentic factors regarding language use and all these features lead to students' loss of interest and burnout.

The last significant correlation was found between classroom environment and students' burnout. Items assessing this factor revolved around the use of multimedia and technology for enhancing learning. It is undisputable that by utilizing supplementary materials such as the computer, the internet, videos, CDs, etc., teachers can make learning more enjoyable for students. Authentic materials can also be used to motivate EFL learners to use the language in a more authentic way. This is in harmony with Garrett and McDaniel's (2001) contention that a supportive environment can reduce the amount of burnout among people cooperating in a social setting.

All the six de-motivators which positively and significantly predicted burnout can be divided into two broad categories; internal de-motivators and external ones. Internal de-motivators include experiences of failure and lack of interest and external de-motivators comprise teachers, characteristics of classes, classroom environment, and classroom materials. Taken together, based on the aforementioned results, it can plausibly be argued that the internal factors tend to have a more operative role in shaping students' burnout in comparison with the external de-motivators. Consistent with this finding, Ghanizadeh and Ghonsooly (2014) asserted that burnout is provoked and sustained differently by internal and external factors.

According to the findings addressing the last objective of the study, it was found that the six de-motivators affected burnout directly and students' achievement indirectly. In other words, EFL learner's demotivation resulted in burnout depletion which in turn deteriorated their language achievement as measured by their GPA. This finding corroborates the results of a study conducted by Jayoung, Puig, Kim, Shin, Lee, and Lee (2010) which probed the relationships among students' GPA, self-esteem, and burnout. They concluded that students with positive self-esteem and the highest GPA scores didn't experience burnout. In another study carried out by Nikodijević, Labrović, and Đoković (2012), it was found that there is a significant relationship between GPA and high risk of burnout. The researchers revealed that 54.4 % of students who had low GPA were at risk of burnout and 26.6 % were at high risk of burnout. In a similar vein, Fynchina (2012) investigated the relationships among academic procrastination, academic burnout, and its effect on students' GPA and found that students with higher GPA tended to have lower burnout scores. Regarding the relationship between de-motivation and students' GPA it was found that the de-motivators correlated negatively and significantly with GPA. In general, this result is consistent with plethora of studies on students' de-motivation and their language achievement (e.g., Dörnyei, 2001; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; and Falout, 2012).

6. Conclusions

Taken together, the findings of the current study put forward the prospect of developing a deeper understanding of EFL students' de-motivation and, accordingly, its effect on their burnout, and language achievement. According to the findings of the current research, it can be concluded that de-motivation as a detrimental factor reduces students' motivation, degrades students' achievement, influences learners' beliefs and attitudes, depreciates emotional states, and results in long-term learning outcomes. Our proposed model highlighted the role of internal de-motivators in student's burnout and language achievement. This in turn can have principal implications for EFL education and SLA research. In particular, teachers can re-motivate and develop the academic achievements of their students by promoting rapport between themselves and EFL learners, interacting with other teachers to adopt authentic and interesting materials, and providing a learning environment which incites learners and diminishes feelings of inefficacy.

The present study is limited in a number of ways. First, the participants were selected based on convenience sampling as far as feasibility considerations are concerned. Second, the students' demographic variables were not controlled; i. e., specific level and age were not restricted. Third, the participants of the current study consisted of EFL learners studying at university and language institute. Thus, the study should be replicated with samples from schools in various regions of the country to ensure the generalizability of the finding.

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Appendix A. The Persian version of Sakai and Kichuki's (2009) demotivation scale

نادرست	تقریبا نادرست	متوسط	تقریبا درست	درست	موارد	شماره
					فرصت های کمی برای برقراری ارتباط به زبان انگلیسی دارم.	1
					تاکید بیشتر درسها روی ترجمه است .	2
					تاکید بیشتر درسها روی گرامر است.	3
					بیشتر درسها حول آزمون های ورودی (کنکور) است.	4
					انتظار است از گرامر درستی برای صحبت کردن یا نوشتن به زبان انگلیسی استفاده کنم.	5
					بیشتر اوقات مجبورم جملات داخل کتاب را حفظ کنم.	6
					در حفظ کردن کلمات و عبارات مشکل دارم.	7
					در امتحانات(مثل میانترم و پایانترم) نمرات کمی می گیرم.	8
					نمیدانم چگونه مطالعه فردی داشته باشم.	9
					سرعت ارایه ی دروس مناسب نیست (خیلی کند یا خیلی سریع است).	10
					تلفظ معلمم به زبان انگلیسی ضعیف است.	11
					معلمم اشتباهات دانش آموزان را مسخره می کند.	12
					بیشتر اوقات معلمم تنها از یک روش برای توضیح دروس استفاده می کند.	13
					توضیحات معلمم را به سختی می	14

					فهمم.	
					معلمم عصبانی میشود و داد میزند.	15
					متن های انگلیسی داخل کتاب موضوعات جالبی ندارند.	16
					متن های انگلیسی داخل کتاب خیلی طولانی هستند.	17
					جملات انگلیسی داخل کتاب را به سختی می فهمم.	18
					تعداد کتابهای درسی و مکمل(مثل داستان) زیاد است.	19
					متن های انگلیسی داخل کتاب موضوعات جدیدی ندارند.	20
					در کلاسم از کامپیوتر استفاده نمی شود.	21
					در کلاسم از امکانات تصویری(ویدیوودی وی دی) استفاده نمی شود.	22
					در کلاسم از اینترنت استفاده نمی شود.	23
					در کلاسم از امکانات؟ استفاده نمی شود.	24
					در کلاسم از امکانات صوتی(نوار و سی دی) استفاده نمی شود.	25
					تعداد دانش آموزان کلاس زیاد است.	26
					به خوبی دوستانم نمی توانم از پس امتحانات برآیم.	27
					از هم کلاسی هایم خوشم نمی آید.	28
					دوستانم زبان انگلیسی را دوست ندارند.	29
					بیشتر وقت ها با دوستانم مقایسه می	30

					شوم.	
					انگلیسی درس اجباری ایست که باید آن را بخوانم.	31
					هدفم را از یادگیری زبان انگلیسی از دست دادم.	32
					علاقه ام را به زبان انگلیسی از دست دادم.	33
					هدفم را برای قادربودن به صحبت به زبان انگلیسی از دست دادم.	34
					سوالات انگلیسی پاسخ های روشن و واضحی ندارند.	35

Appendix B. The original version of Sakai and Kichuki's (2009) demotivation scale

1 I seldom had chances to communicate in English.

2 Most of the lessons focused on translation.

3 Most of the lessons focused on grammar.

4 Most of the lessons were entrance examination oriented.

5 I was expected to use (or speak and write) grammatically correct English.

6 I was forced to memorize the sentences in the textbooks too often.

7 I had difficulty memorizing words and phrases.

8 I got low scores on tests (such as mid-term and final examinations).

9 I got lost in how to self-study for English lessons.

10 The pace of lessons was not appropriate.

11 Teachers' pronunciation of English was poor.

12 Teachers ridiculed students' mistakes.

13 Teachers made one-way explanations too often.

14 Teachers' explanations were not easy to understand.

15 Teachers shouted or got angry.

16 Topics of the English passages used in lessons were not interesting.

17 English passages in the textbooks were too long.

18 English sentences dealt with in the lessons were difficult to interpret.

19 A great number of textbooks and supplementary readers were assigned.

20 Topics of the English passages used in lessons were old.

21 Computer equipment was not used.

22 Visual materials (such as videos and DVDs) were not used.

23 The Internet was not used.

24 LL equipment was not used.

25 Audio materials (such as CDs and tapes) were not used.

26 The number of students in classes was large.

27 I could not do as well on tests as my friends.

28 I did not like my classmates.

29 My friends did not like English.

30 I was often compared with my friends.

31 English was a compulsory subject.

32 I lost my understanding of the purpose of studying English.

33 I lost my interest in English.

34 I lost my goal to be a speaker of English.

35 English questions did not have clear answers.

Appendix C. The Persian version of Schaufeli e al.'s (2002) Burnout Inventory– Student survey

همیشه	بیشتر اوقات	نسبتا زیاد	گاهی اوقات	نسبتا کم	خیلی بندرت	هرگز	سوال	
							احساس می کنم که به خاطر انجام فعالیتهای مربوط به تحصیل تهی شده ام.	۱.
							در پایان روز در دانشگاه احساس بی رمقی می کنم.	۲.
							وقتی که صبح بیدار می شوم و مجبورم که روزی دیگر را در دانشگاه سپری کنم،احساس خستگی می کنم .	۳.
							با مطالعه یا حضور در کلاس به من فشار می‌آید.	۴.
							به خاطر انجام فعالیت های مربوط یه تحصیل احساس فرسودگی می کنم.	۵
							از زمان قبولی و ثبت نام در دانشگاه نسبت به دروسم کم علاقه شده ام.	۶.
							نسبت به دروسم شوروشوق کمتری دار م.	۷.
							نسبت به اهمیت دروسم تردید دار م.	۸.
							نسبت به کاربرد دروسم بیشتر بدگمان شده ام.	۹.
							به طور موثری می توانم، مشکلاتی را که در فعالیت های مربوط به تحصیل ام به وجود می‌آید حل کنم .	۱۰.
							معتقدم که مشارکت مؤثری در کلاس ها دارم.	۱۱.
							به عقیدۀ خودم دانشجوی خوبی هستم .	۱۲.
							وقتی به اهداف تحصیلی ام دست می یابم احساس برانگیختگی می کنم.	۱۳.
							موارد جالب زیادی را درجریان تحصیل یاد گرفتم.	۱۴.
							در طول کلاس اطمینان دارم که در انجام کارها موثرم.	۱۵.

Appendix D. The original version of Schaufeli's e al.'s (2002) Burnout Inventory– Student survey

Exhaustion

1. I feel emotionally drained by my studies.

2. I feel used up at the end of a day at university.

3. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and I have to face another day at the university.

4. Studying or attending a class is really a strain for me.

5. I feel burned out from my studies.

Cynicism

1. I have become less interested in my studies since my enrollment at the university.

2. I have become less enthusiastic about my studies.

3. I have become more cynical about the potential usefulness of my studies.

4. I doubt the significance of my studies.

Professional Efficacy

1. I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my studies.

2. I believe that I make an effective contribution to the classes that I attend.

3. In my opinion, I am a good student.

4. I feel stimulated when I achieve my study goals.

5. I have learned many interesting things during the course of my studies.

6. During class I feel confident that I am effective in getting things done.