

Toward the Development of a Model of Teaching as Profession in the Iranian EFL Context: Insights from Iranian EFL Teachers

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Abstract

Teachers pose different perspectives toward teaching. Some teachers share this attitude that teaching is just a job and a sole source of income, while others believe that teaching is a vocational and moralistic career associated with love, commitment, and devotion. This study, in the form of a qualitative grounded theory approach, aimed to deeply investigate the interrelationship of data emerged from teachers' perspectives toward teaching as profession to develop a model in this regard. Therefore, twenty-six Iranian English teachers, teaching at schools and Farhang language institute, were requested to share their ideas as to how they view teaching as a profession. A semi-structured interview, in three sessions with 20 participants and focus-group interviews with 6 participants were conducted. Based on Corbin and Strauss's (2014) systematic steps for grounded theory, the data then transcribed and codified. The findings ended with an eight-factor model containing 40 categories. The factors include: a) source of income, b) decreasing motivation, c) poverty and inclination to become a teacher, d) insufficient salary, e) deteriorated quality of teaching, f) experience, g) society negative attitude, h) dissatisfaction. The proposed model opens a new window for teachers and reminds the government educational policymakers, training centers, ministry of education, and those who care about quality education and students' academic achievements to observe income inequality, and salary differentials, increase teachers' social status, and motivation, facilitate difficult working conditions, reduce resource wastage, support teachers appropriately, decrease teachers' financial concerns, terminate the sense of socioeconomic inequality, and speak out the voices of marginalized teachers.

Keywords: teaching, teachers, teaching profession, teaching profession model, grounded theory

1. Introduction

Teaching nowadays is viewed from different points of view by teachers. Some teachers, view teaching as a vocational and moralistic duty and a call from deep within, while others pose this attitude that teaching is a job and a mere source of income like other careers. Interesting for the vocational and moralistic part of teachers' perspectives, Poorbehzadi et al. (2019) focusing on Iranian teachers' perspectives on teaching as a vocation, developed an eight-factor model which included financial concerns and insufficient salary, love and passion for teaching, low social status, high demands for becoming a teacher, devotion and high sense of responsibility, limitations, and lack of freedom, setting a pattern and gaining experience, and equivocal images of teachers. Kennedy (2003) argued that many high-level international organizations discussions, now focus on the teaching profession and proved that the agencies agree that teachers and the quality of teaching workforce are among key elements in the future development of all nations. Teo (2019) contended that educators around the world in the past two decades, call to prepare students for the current century, and equip students with a comprehensive education that emphasizes life skills like communication, cross-cultural collaboration, and critical thinking. Zaree and Ghasedi (2014) held that more support given from the authorities is expected and better equipment with more communications teaching techniques and more power to develop up-to-date materials.

The profession is generally defined as an occupation characterized by skilled intellectual techniques, voluntary association, and a code of conduct. Siergrist (2015) held that professions are characterized by special functions, strategies, structures, forms of knowledge, and sociocultural styles. Day and Gu (2014) argued that understanding why, for some teachers, teaching becomes just a job while for others it remains a passionate calling remains the focus and

the center of few empirical studies. Iranian EFL context is not an exception and although some studies have examined the L2 teaching profession components (e.g., Poorbehzadi, 2019; Poorbehzadi et al., 2019; Samimi et al., 2016; Salehizadeh et al., 2020) and its relation with some important variables (e.g. Ganjali et al., 2019; Malmir & Mohammadi, 2018; Zaree & Ghasedi, 2014), still far rigorous research is required in this regard.

This study follows two major purposes. Firstly, tries to investigate the perspectives of Iranian English teachers toward teaching as profession, project the real problems of teachers, and develop a model as a result of grounded theory. Secondly, aims to contribute to the body of knowledge and probe deeply the nature of these concepts, i.e., teaching and profession in the Iranian context. The focus of the present study is on teaching as a profession in an Iranian context. As a result, the researcher conducted a qualitative grounded theory study, working on Iranian English teachers at schools, and Farhang language institutes from nearly all parts of Iran, including Amol and Ramsar in the north, Kermanshah and Malayer in the west, Mashhad in the east, Shiraz in the southwest, Lamerd, Kahnouj, Manoujan, Ghale Ganj, and Faryab, in the south. By face to face interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher attempted to explore the perspectives of Iranian English teachers as the participants of the study toward teaching as profession, and develop a model in this regard.

2. Literature Review

Despite the fact that there are different perspectives toward teaching, the current work of research focuses on the view which supports the idea that teaching is a profession and a sole source of income, not a vocational and moralistic career. The present study through a qualitative grounded theory

approach and with a close look at the related literature is going to find deep, sound, and convincing answers to the question raised regarding the Iranian English teacher's perspective toward teaching as a profession. Guneyli and Aslan (2009) argued that teachers' attitudes and behaviors affect the students most and further held that Turkish language teachers chose the Turkish language, for the love it. They also held that teachers' most important concerns are their job security, employment, and lack of proper education in the future. Mtika and Gates (2011) concluded that its ability to enhance knowledge, low pay with no incentives, low-status profession, and lack of trust to make trainee teachers form a range of images about teaching; therefore, more consideration and support is needed on the part of policymakers. Carr (2011) came to the conclusion that for professional teacher education, principled dispositions, intellectual virtues, procedural virtue, and moral virtues are necessary. Tigchelar et al. (2012) held that more support and discussion on three patterns of development including growth, consolidation, and regression are needed. Rampa (2012) argued that to sustain a passion for teaching, a flexible framework is proposed to grow. Klensasser (2014) argued that based on the extensive works on this issue the significance of teacher self-efficacy in teaching has been proved. Hursen (2014) argued that the elements affecting the teachers' lifelong learning process are mostly financial problems, educational policies, and learner profile. Horn (2015) contended that historically, the work of teaching in the United States had been considered as a semi profession, and the status of the teaching profession in terms of training, and licensing, quality, working conditions, and pay has changed in the twenty-first century. Cochran et al. (2016) argued that conceptualizing educational inequality, defining practice for equity, creating curricula, and structures that are equity-centered are four essential tasks that are needed now. Poorbehzadi (2019) developed two

interesting models on Iranian English teachers' perspectives toward teaching and reached thought-provoking results on challenges English language teachers are facing in Iran nowadays.

Based on the literature reviewed, unfortunately, few studies have so far been conducted in terms of teachers' perspectives toward teaching in the Iranian context. To bridge this gap, this study attempted to make a deep inquiry inside the minds of Iranian teachers, and discover how they think of teaching. Through a qualitative grounded theory approach, the researcher aimed to investigate if Iranian English teachers view teaching as a mere job and a sole source of income like other professions. As a result, the present study explored this overlooked area to theorize a model for teaching as profession. Consequently, this study probes the following research questions:

1. What perceptions do Iranian EFL teachers hold toward teaching as profession?
2. What qualitative model of teaching as profession evolves from perceptions of Iranian EFL teachers?

3. Method

Following a qualitative grounded theory approach, this study deeply investigated the inner link of data extracted from Iranian English language teachers' perspectives toward teaching as profession to propose a model as a result.

3.1. Participants and Settings

Twenty-six English language teachers, teaching at schools from different parts of Iran and Farhang private language institute participated in this study.

To fulfill the demands of transferability and generalizability, the participants were selected from nearly major parts of Iran, including Amol and Ramsar in the north, Kermanshah and Malayer in the west, Mashhad in the east, Shiraz in the southwest, Lamerd, Kahnouj, Manoujan, Ghale Ganj, and Faryab, in the south. Due to the concerns of the time, distance, traveling, and resources, a potential large population of the study and more importantly increasing the credibility of the study, participants were chosen according to random purposeful sampling method from among Iranian English language teachers. Even though there was a large pool of participants who declared their readiness and showed their willingness to participate in the study, due to the yardstick of data saturation, no new forthcoming data and themes were likely to emit from the next interviews; therefore, the number of participants was limited to this special number.

3.2. Instruments

To collect data about the perspectives of the teachers toward teaching as profession Semi-structured interviews were chosen. Before holding the first semi-structured interview, the interview guide was developed by the researcher. McCracken (1998) held that the use of prompt to follow up questions is a particularly important feature, and the long interview could be devised to understand respondents in their own terms.

At the next phase, the questions were piloted in advance with four interviewees accessible in Kahnouj Shahed high school, and Farhang language institute in Kahnouj. As a result, two questions were revised and one more question was added to the interview guide. The special nature of qualitative studies helped the researcher collect and analyze the data simultaneously. Besides, the final interview guide emerged as time passed (see appendix A).

Covering the key issues in the whole domain, and avoiding impromptu irrelevant questions were two main objectives of developing an interview guide first.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

Twenty participants were interviewed in the form of face to face talks and six members of participants through focus group discussion for collecting the necessary data. According to Seidman (2006), the data of this study were collected in three steps. In the first step, a tentative interview guide was developed. In the second step, the developed interview guide was piloted with four participants before be used in the main study. In the third step, a 3-session interview was held with the same participants to extract meaningful data.

For the reasons of distance, traveling, and limitations of resources, cyberspace was used and some interviews were conducted virtually and synchronously via the live connection with the participants in Instagram, and WhatsApp internet-based applications. As Ary et al. (2014) maintained that removing barriers to participation such as time, traveling, and scheduling are considered as some benefits of conducting online interviews.

To hold a safer and more accurate interview session, the researcher took the following steps and allowed the participants to use any language either L1 or L2 with which, they felt comfortable most, informed the participants about the purpose of the study, and made assured that their viewpoints would remain confidential, and only used for the purpose of the study, pre-informed the participants of recording their voices on their permission and agreement, gave backchanneling signals like; yeah, uhmm, nods, uuh, and the necessary feedback to the participants, took notes of the main points and asked the clarification questions to make the points straightforward for themselves,

remained neutral and conducive during the interview process, and actually did not interfere in participants talks, unless the entrance was needed to put the interviewees in the right path, and signaled the end of each interview by giving the last remained time to the interviewee, to sum up, his talks. At the third and final interview session, a summary of the significant points analyzed and transcribed by the researcher was copied and distributed to the participants. Consequently, the participants reviewed their own viewpoints and added or remove any inconsistency.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were subjected to MAXQDA for analysis. The researcher utilized the program to analyze the data faster and more accurately. The transcription of the audio files, the field notes, and the follow-up memos was conducted. The data was imported into MAXQDA software after familiarizing and building a long list of transcriptions According to the person and the place the interview session was held; each transcription was assigned a name. All in all, 26 datasets were given and categorized in the software. To assure the reliability or dependability of the study three steps were taken. First, the researcher himself compared the data with the assigned codes and the follow-up memos to make sure that the codes and their definitions match the stretches of phrases or sentences. Second, two more coders cross-checked twenty percent of the data independently and compared in terms of stability and consistency on the given codes. As a result, consistency was achieved by more than 80% among the coders. Miles and Huberman (1994) held that for an acceptable qualitative dependability index, consistency among coders is in accord at least by 80%. By the end, the researcher and the coders attended

documented meetings and exchanged their independent coding in a step to reach an agreement.

To meet the concerns of readers about the validity or the accuracy of findings, the researcher took many steps and applied versatile procedures to assess the validity or credibility of findings. Ary et al. (2014) held that attending to the issue of validity guarantees the integrity of qualitative research. To judge whether the data are actually derived from the participants' viewpoints, the final drafts of findings were given back to the participants. Despite that, a three-session interview was held for each participant. In the final session, via a strategy known as member checking, a synopsis of each participants' transcription was given to him to comment on the findings. A peer debriefer was asked for help to check the genuineness of the data. The researcher also asked an external auditor or an independent investigator who was unaware of the identity of the researcher and the whole work to review the study carefully. He probed the transcriptions and scrutinized the relationship between the research questions and the collected data. Finally, he confirmed that the data are genuinely collected, transcribed, and interpreted. As Samimi et al. (2016) mentioned in their qualitative study, after organizing the data, the researchers according to Corbin and Strauss's (2014) systematic steps, started the coding and the reducing process in the grounded theory. In the first stage, many labels were given to the data and the data was torn into small parts. The memos written by the researcher during the interview process were also inserted into the software and incorporated into the coded data. By the end, a large number of codes and their frequency of occurrences emerged out of this stage (249) codes.

In the second stage, the segmented data were chained and compiled into workable categories, (40) categories. To make the data more understandable,

the large number of codes and subcategories were reduced into smaller categories. To combine the codes and sort them into similar and/or different groups, the constant comparative method was conducted to the data. Selective coding as the final stage integrated the data and connected the categories into themes. Based on the existing data and body of literature, the researcher over exceeded the data and reorganized the categories into eight themes. As a result, the probable model of teaching as profession contained eight themes.

4. Results

To answer the research questions, after collecting and analyzing the data, in summary, eight main factors were pulled out as the outcomes of grounded theory. The factors and the follow-up instances are presented in details as follows:

A: Source of Income

Data elicited from the participants' viewpoints through face to face interview and focus group discussions directs attention to many important issues which range from materialistic view toward teaching, the main source to provide their families with necessary needs in life, financial self-efficiency and standing on their own feet to pure view towards becoming a teacher as a money-making job.

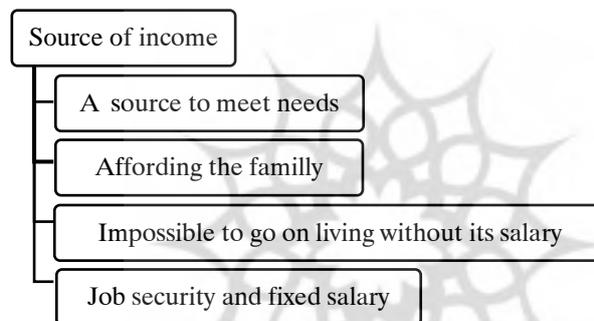
Below are some genuine excerpts are taken from teachers as participants of the study:

1. *To me teaching and becoming a teacher is rather a job and a source to meet my needs. (a1)*
2. *I wanted to provide my family with money made through teaching (a2) and better to say to stand on my own feet.*

3. *Social duty and spiritual affairs also need a full stomach, not poverty and misery. (a3)*
4. *I chose to become a teacher because of my material needs and demands. (a4)*
5. *Focus group: I decided to become a teacher due to its job security and source of income. (a5)*

Figure 1

Source of Income



B: Decreasing Motivation

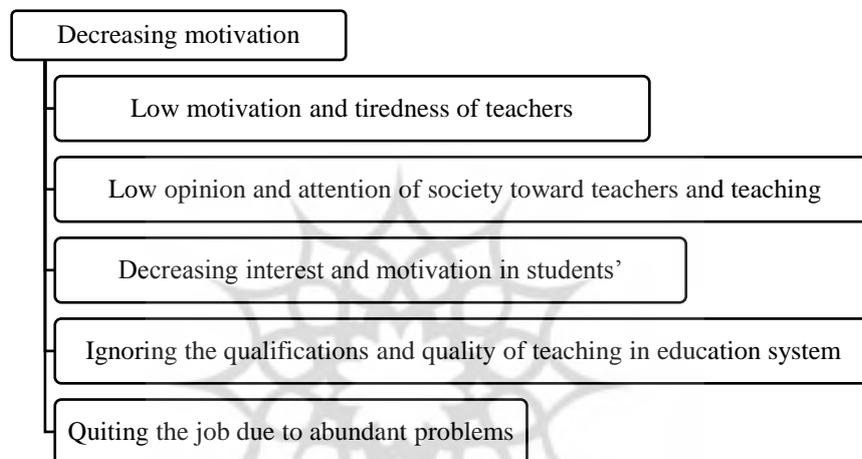
Information extracted from teachers as the participants of this study denotes the fact that teachers are nowadays less motivated compared with the first days and years of their careers. Students are reluctant and less motivated and committed to fulfilling their duties in the classroom and at home. Society pays low attention to the teachers in general and the education system in particular. Qualifications and the quality of teaching are two lost rings in the education administration and society as a result. Some teachers are coming to the conclusion that the only option available is to give up teaching and shift into a new job. Natural instances from participants' viewpoints are presented below:

1. *I have lost motivation compared with the past and less serious in my job. (b1)*
2. *Society puts a low value on teachers and teaching. (b2)*

3. Students are less motivated and indifferent to fulfill their duties (b3) in the classroom and at home

Figure 2

Low Motivation



- 4. Gradually. I am considering to quit teaching and choose another job. (b4)*
- 5. At first I was a highly motivated teacher, but now I am tired and regret. (b5)*
- 6. Focus group: Qualifications and quality of teaching in education are nearly neglected (b6) and this has led to decreasing motivation among most teachers.*

C: Poverty and inclination to become a teacher

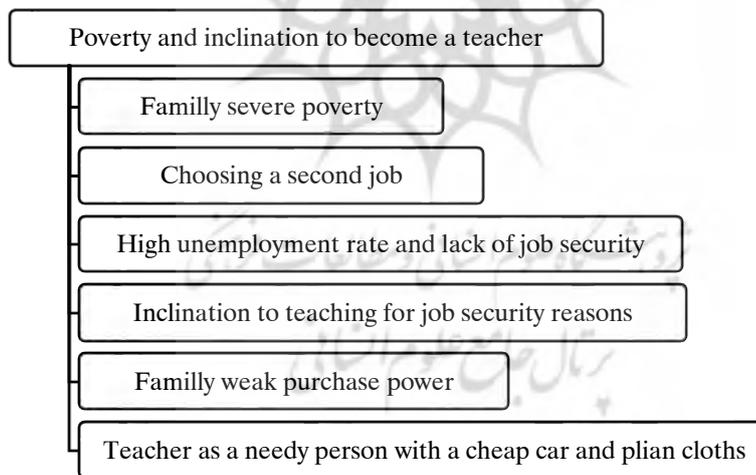
Data pulled out from the participants of the study, reveals that most of the teachers suffer from the back-breaking poverty they are dealing with in their everyday life. Most salient problems include lack of economic security, not affording the needs of the family, unable to provide the family with a good and safe house and a car due to the low salary a teacher earns after 30 days per

month. Poverty and abundant life problems force the teachers to choose a second job to make a better living. Despite all defects and follow up problems some teachers believe that teaching is a safe and secure job and because of the high unemployment rate in the society, they had no other option but to become a teacher. Below some natural excerpts of participants' viewpoints are presented:

1. *I became a teacher because of my family's severe poverty. (c1)*
2. *To meet my basic needs in my life I selected teaching as my future job. (c2)*
3. *If governments' monthly paid money or subsidies cuts down, some teachers will not be able to even fill their cars with gas to reach their workplace. (c3)*

Figure 3

Poverty and Inclination to Become a Teacher



4. *Most teachers have a second job due to abundant problems (c4) and challenging poverty.*
5. *Teacher is a miserable person with plain clothes and a very cheap car, most of the time a Pride model. (c5)*

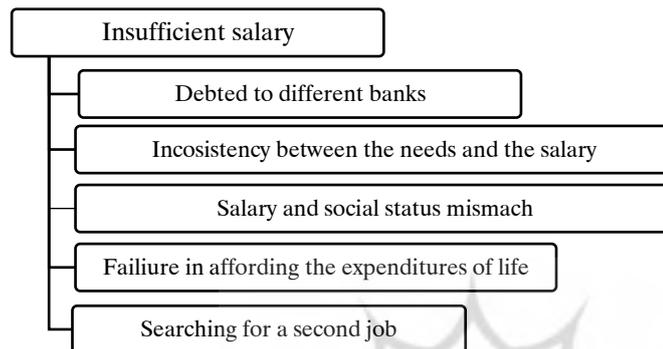
6. Because of the high unemployment problem, the young incline to teaching as a job. (c6)

Focus group: employment concerns, weak family's economy and low purchase power, and job security (c7) leads many people to become a teacher.

D: Insufficient Salary

Data extracted from participant's points of view puts a finger on a highly reported factor with which most teachers agree. The insufficient salary is a common problem most teachers face and always complain about. Heavy debts to banks and failure to pay the loans in time, inconsistency between the real social status of teachers, inflation level and ailing economy of the society and the salary they receive, hardships and piled up difficulties due to low pay and not affording the expenditures of life, and prompting to choose a second job to compensate for meeting the increased demands of everyday life are only some of the concerns which teachers are dealing with.

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Figure 4*Insufficient Salary*

Some comments elicited from the participant's points of view are presented naturally below:

1. *Low salary and high problems of life have exhausted me (d1) off as a teacher.*
2. *My salary is not consistent with my debts to different banks. (d2)*
3. *If I was paid enough, I wouldn't choose a second job. (d3)*
4. *The main problem with teachers is the insufficient salary (d4) they receive.*
5. *Focus group: My salary is not relevant to the social status a teacher is expected to have in society. (d5)*

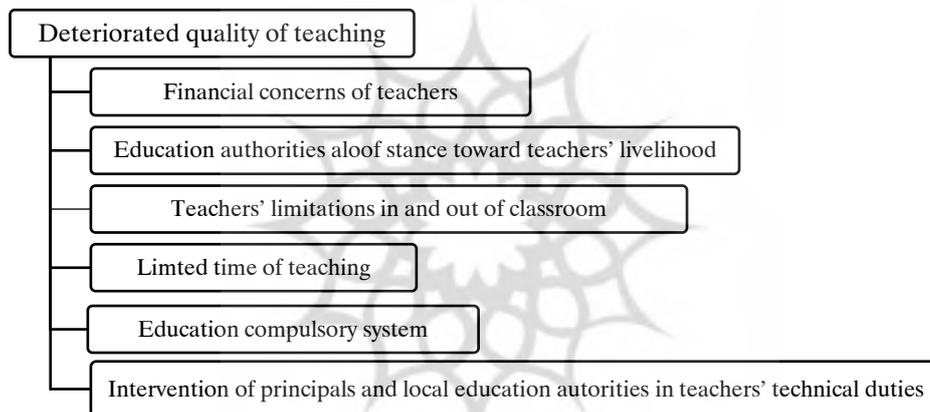
E: Deteriorated Quality of Teaching

Another highly reported factor extracted from the participants' viewpoints is the disturbing quality of teaching as a result of many challenging issues. The link between the financial concerns of a teacher and his/her function in the classroom seems to lead to the deteriorated and low quality of teaching as a whole. The unsatisfactory attitude of the authorities toward the materialistic needs of teachers to make an honored living and to manage a life with high reputation, the intervention of schools' principals in teachers'

methodology of teaching in the classroom, professional limitations, limited time of teaching in a week, education compulsory system and most of all teachers' livelihood all seem to have affected the quality of teaching in the education system. Below some segments of participants genuine comments are naturally presented:

Figure 5

Deteriorated Quality of Teaching



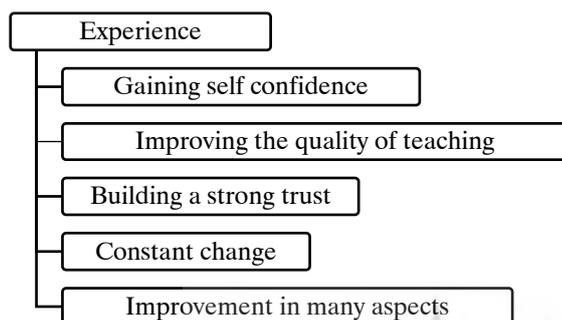
1. *The quality of education has decreased drastically nowadays (e1) and I as a teacher cannot make changes.*
2. *If the authorities do not fulfill their responsibility correctly (e2) towards teachers. The teachers will not perform their duties well and this leads to deteriorated quality of teaching. (e3)*
3. *If the financial concerns and the livelihood of teachers are paid enough attention, this consequently affects the quality of teaching positively. (e4)*
4. *If the needs of a teacher are not met, this issue affects his/her job negatively. (e5)*

5. Focus group: Intervention of principals in the methodology of teaching in the classroom, school score-centered approach, unprofessional behavior of some colleagues at schools, professional limitations have deteriorated the quality of teaching. (e6)

F: Experience

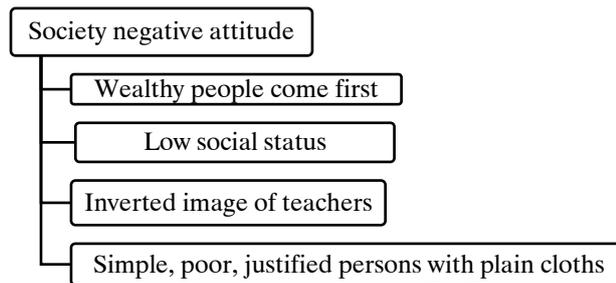
Data pulled out from participants' viewpoints through interviews and focus group discussion directs minds to a very common and highly reported factor which seems to enjoy a kind of unanimous agreement among teachers. Experience in participants' words encompasses a broad scope ranging from developing self-confidence in teachers, building a better trust in student-teacher relation in the classroom, to constant positive change, and improvement in many aspects among teachers. Below some examples of participants' comments are listed:

- 1. As time passes. I gain more self-confidence in teaching. (f1)*
- 2. Every year, with the experience I receive, the quality of my teaching increases. (f2)*
- 3. As an experienced teacher, I have built a better trust with my students. (f3)*
- 4. A teacher is constantly changing (f4) as time goes on.*
- 5. I have changed a lot and improved in many fields as I become more experienced. (f5)*

Figure 6*Experience****G: Society Negative Attitude***

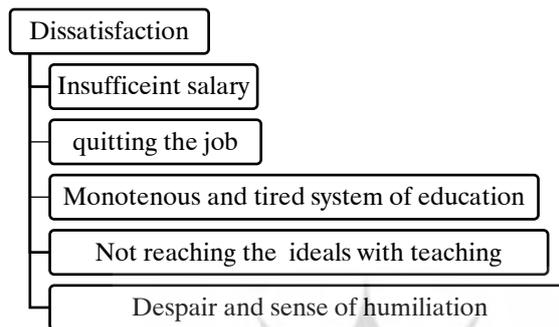
Another factor elicited from participants' viewpoints is the overwhelming complaint of teachers, objecting to society negative view towards teachers. Ignoring the true value of teachers, paying less attention to teachers' financial concerns on the part of education authorities, forgetting the social status of teachers, and giving more importance to the wealthy uneducated persons form only some complaints of teachers to the negative attitude of society toward them. Some genuine extraction from participants of the study are given below:

1. ***Society puts more value on wealthy people than poor teachers. (g1)***
2. ***Teachers should have the highest position in society, but in our society the reverse cycle is dominant. (g2)***
3. ***In our society teachers receive low attention and are not as important as a judge or a lawyer or a physician. (g3)***
4. ***In our city, the teacher is a very simple, poor, justified person, wearing plain clothes, with a cheap car like the Pride model. (g4)***
5. ***Society views me as a teacher who is owed a considerable amount of loans to banks and deals with so many problems. (g5)***

Figure 7*Society Negative Attitude****H: Dissatisfaction***

Data extracted from participants of the study through face to face interview and focus group discussions denotes the fact that many teachers are not satisfied with their job. Insufficient salary, tiredness of teaching for many hours a week to make more money, the monotonous education system, and teachers' livelihood problems are just a few of many challenges they face with. Some examples of natural participants' viewpoints are listed below:

1. ***Sometimes, I think of quitting my job. (h1)***
2. ***I feel tired and exhausted and mentally ill, (h2) due to the abundant challenges I encounter.***
3. ***Education system is monotonous (h3) and needs to be updated.***
4. ***Financial problems (h4) hinders me to do my duties well.***
5. ***I am not satisfied with my job (h5) and my current state of affairs.***

Figure 8*Dissatisfaction***4.1. The Emerging Model**

According to Strauss and Corbin's (2014) systematic approach for codification and analysis of the data, the data collected in this study were analyzed. Therefore, the final model includes eight main themes (see figure9) and 40 categories (see table 1).

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Table 1*The Gist of the Main Themes and Categories of the Preliminary Model of Teaching as Profession*

Theme	Category
Source of income	1.A source to meet needs 2.Affording the family 3.Impossible to go on living without its salary 4.Job security and fixed salary
Decreasing motivation	5.Low motivation and tiredness of teachers 6.Low opinion and attention of society toward teachers and teaching 7.Decresing interest and motivation in students 8.Ignoring the qualifications and quality of teaching in education system 9.Quiting the job due to abundant problems
Poverty and inclination to become a teacher	10.Family severe poverty 11.Choosing a second job 12.High unemployment rate and lack of job security 13.Inclination to teaching for job security reasons 14.Family weak purchase power 15.Teacher as a needy person with a cheap car and plain cloths
Insufficient salary	16.Debted to different banks 17.Inconsistency between the needs and the salary 18.Salary and social status mismatch 19.Failiure in affording the expenditures of life 20.Searching for a second job
Deteriorated quality of teaching	21.Financial concerns of teachers 22.Education authority's aloof stance towards teachers' livelihood 23.Teachers limitations in and out of the classroom 24.Limited time of teaching 25.Education compulsory system 26.Intervention of principals and local education authorities in teachers' technical duties
Experience	27.Gaining self-confidence 28.Improving the quality of teaching 29.Building a strong trust 30.Constant changing 31.Improvement in many aspects
Society negative attitude	32.Wealthy people come first 33.Low social status 34.Inverted image of teachers 35.Simple, poor, justified persons with plain cloths
Dissatisfaction	36.Insufficient salary 37.quitting the job 38.monotonous and tired system of education 39.Not reaching the ideals with teaching 40.Despair and sense of humiliation

As Table 1 shows, the emerging model of teaching as a profession involves eight themes and 40 categories. Through face-to-face interviews and focus groups, discussions with Iranian English teachers, the components of the model were built. After analyzing the data, the proposed model of teaching as a profession emerged as follows in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Presented Model of Teaching as Profession



5. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the perspectives of Iranian English teachers toward teaching as profession through a qualitative grounded theory approach and develop a model in this regard. The results finally revealed eight main themes in the developed model of teaching as a profession. Regarding the first factor of the present study, which is the source of income; many studies proved that there is a correlation between income and teachers' turnover and quality of teaching. Scafidi et al. (2007) argued that descriptive statistics prove that new teachers are more likely to leave schools with lower test scores, lower-

income, or higher proportions of minorities. Hendricks (2014) contended that higher teacher pay reduces turnover, which boosts students' achievement through higher retention rates.

A couple of studies confirmed the findings of the second factor of this study, which is decreasing motivation. Durksen and Klassen (2017) argued that the positive relationship between motivational constructs and professional learning are emphasized, specifically when learning is collaborative. Sharabyan (2011) held that highly motivated teachers will be more likely to work hard and spend more time refining their skills thus better managing their students, leading to better learning and having a positive impact on the learning environment. Dejesus and Lens (2005) argued that teachers seem to suffer highly from a lack of motivation across the board, more so than any other profession.

No trace of the third factor 'poverty and inclination to become a teacher' was found. Despite that, the findings that are genuine excerpts from participants' points of view might contribute a great part to the body of knowledge and open a new scope for further research.

The fourth factor of the presented model 'the insufficient salary' was confirmed by many interesting studies. Rumberger (1987) held that factors that influence teacher shortages include salary differentials between teachers and alternative occupations, although the relationship varies by gender and geographic area of the US. Figlio (1997) argued that according to the research, there has been a significant relationship between teacher salaries and quality measured by undergraduate college selectivity and subject matter expertise within local teacher labor markets.

A remarkable body of research supported the fifth factor of this study that is the deteriorated quality of teaching. Rogers and Vegas (2010) concluded

that in developing countries, teacher policy faces challenges even greater than those in wealthier countries. They further suggested some policies improve teacher supply and performance in developing countries, including; increasing salary levels, providing bonuses for better performance, promoting school-based management, employing contract teachers, and improving teacher training.

Experience “the sixth factor of the study” matched to many confirmatory studies. Louws et al. (2017) concluded that compared to mid-career teachers, early and late-career teachers indicated higher preferences to learn about classroom management domains, and examined teachers’ preferred learning in relation to their years of experience. Sahinkarakas (2012) argued that experienced teachers lose their motivation for effective teaching; consequently, keeping them motivated is important, or experienced teachers value themselves too highly and thus do not need to provide evidence of their teaching effectiveness.

The seventh factor of this ‘study society negative view’ was also manifested in a lot of relevant works of research. Orlov (2000) argued that in our age, teachers have not had any substantial income other than their salaries, and have always belonged to the category of workers who are not very well-paid. Davis et al. (1963) contended that economic level, educational level, occupation of father and images and stereotypes of teacher and teaching as an occupation are some indicators for teachers’ social status. They further argued that some of these indicators tend to lower teacher’s social status; others tend to raise it. Clearly, they held, the relatively modest economic status of teachers tends to lower their overall social status.

A considerable body of research confirmed the eighth factor of this study, which is ‘dissatisfaction’. Steven and Ramsey (2008) argued that teachers

were not satisfied with work conditions, and compensations. Teachers' job satisfaction varied with gender, years of teaching, and career status. Dernirtas (2010) held that teachers with a high level of job satisfaction are expected to give more qualified education and bring up successful students at schools. Lgnat and Clipa (2012) contended that there is a correlation between a good emotional intelligence of teachers and a positive attitude toward work and satisfaction with life and with work itself.

6. Conclusion

All things considered, the present study explored the perspectives of Iranian English teachers on teaching as profession and concluded by proposing a model in this regard. Data extracted from teachers who believed that teaching is a sole source of income and a money-making profession prompted the researchers to reach contemplating and reflecting conclusions. The reasons many teachers have chosen to become a teacher was mostly because they had no other job to manage their lives and teaching was their only source of income. Teachers of this type of perspective toward teaching were struggling with poverty, losing motivation to continue with teaching, experiencing a bitter life, feeling dissatisfied with their jobs and their insufficient salary, objecting to society negative view, and deteriorating quality of education.

In conclusion, The proposed model opens a new window for teachers and reminds the government educational policymakers, teacher training centers, ministry of education in particular, and those who care about quality education and students' academic achievements to observe income inequality, and salary differentials, increase teachers' social status, and motivation, facilitate difficult working conditions, reduce resources wastage, support teachers appropriately,

decrease teachers' financial and professional concerns, and terminate the sense of socioeconomic inequality and feeling marginalized among devoted teachers.

Many research specialists and researchers focus more on the particularity rather than generalizability in qualitative studies. The results of this study cover nearly the four main directions of the country, that is, Amol and Ramsar in the north, Kermanshah and Malayer in the west, Mashhad in the east, Shiraz in the southwest, Lamerd, Kahnouj, Manoujan, Ghale Ganj, and Faryab in the south. However, many teachers teaching at high schools and private language institutes participated in this study voluntarily, the present work had no plan and aim to generalize the findings. The developed model; however, can be modified or repeated in a new setting by many researchers for comparison and verification. By quantifying the proposed model, designing a questionnaire, and testing it empirically with a large population of Iranian teachers, the present study could pave the way for further research of the same type to functionalize the present model, utilizing the grounded theory.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide/Protocol

- 1) Why did you become a teacher?
- 2) Do you view teaching as a social and spiritual responsibility, commitment, and a call from inside or as a source of income and a tool for making living? Why?
- 3) What is society's perspective towards teachers and teachers toward society?
- 4) Is your life affected by being a teacher or becoming a teacher has affected your life?
- 5) How much have you changed, compared with the first years of teaching?
- 6) What are the main limitations and shortcomings and strong points of your job?
- 7) Do you think the interest and inclination of students and their families to teacher education centers and becoming a teacher has increased or decreased nowadays?