# Iranian English Language Teachers' Conceptions Toward Research

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**Abstract**

**Purpose**: The purpose of the study was to examine teachers' perceptions towards research by first investigating teachers' conceptions about research and second, by examining the extent to which teachers read and do research.

**Methodology**: To this end, the participants of the present study were 98 English language teachers from language institutes and schools. Utilizing Borg's (2009) questionnaire, at first, the questionnaire responses were analyzed to determine the teachers' view of research; in this section, the teachers were asked to point out to what extent they felt the activities described in 10 scenarios were or were not research.

**Findings**: The results indicated that three scenarios were considered to be "probably research" and scenarios 4, 5 and 6 were regarded as "definitely research" by the participants. On the other hand, two scenarios were recognized as "definitely research". The results of the second research question showed that among 98 English teachers only 24 teachers "often or sometimes" read published research which is a very high index. Teachers' reasons for the answers to the second research question were lack of time, knowledge, access to resources, and institutional support. The findings of this research indicate that teachers' conceptions of research are very near to conventional scientific theories. Only 12.2% of the teachers mentioned that they "do research".

**Conclusion**: the findings of the present study may be useful for teachers who want to promote their English teaching as such findings are suggested to improve their level of engagement in research activities, and consequently the quality of their research.

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## 1.  Introduction

Generally, research is done employed as on any issue or concept needing investigation. Through research, one can gain knowledge of an issue and test it against empirical findings (Nazem & Tabatabaei, 2013). In this regard, how people conceive of the importance of research is of great significance as it may influence their tendency toward conducting research. More specifically teachers' conceptions of research are potentially effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning process (Borg, 2009; Borg & Liu, 2013; Mehrani, 2016). Richards and Schmidt (2002) define research as "the study of an event, problem, or phenomenon using systematic methods, in order to understand it better and to develop principles and theories about it". To more specifically focus on the concept of research and then teachers' conceptions toward it, it is wise to define the research concept first. According to Mackey and Gass (2005), research is "A systematic process of collecting and analyzing information that will investigate a research problem or question, or help researchers obtain a more complete understanding of a situation" (p. 364). Regarding the use of research, it is employed for doing both theoretical and empirical investigation and gathering relevant information on any particular issue (Mehrani & Khodi, 2014).

The importance of doing research is apparent as teachers always need updated knowledge regarding various aspects of education in order to effectively play their role in the educational arena. In fact, teachers maintain one of the most important and influential roles in educational system, and their responsibility in schools extends beyond just performing and delivering content to students. As Stronge states (2007), effective teachers are regarded as those who have the following characteristics: teacher as a person, classroom management and organization, planning and organizing for instruction, implementing instruction, and monitoring student progress and potential. Thorough expertise in all of these areas is met thorough educational knowledge and experience on the part of the teacher. It is obvious that such robust background for how to be an effective teacher can, besides having sufficient experience in teaching, requires teachers to be informed of recent theoretical and pedagogical research regarding various aspects of their career. Consequently, how teachers perceive of the importance of research can directly affect their teaching effectiveness. Regarding the necessity of doing research by the teachers Kumaravadivelu (2001) states that teachers should not be passive recipients of knowledge developed and publicized by others, rather they should be actively engaged in doing research and produce theories regarding teaching and learning and subsequently, practice in their classrooms what they have theorized themselves. By the same token, Allwright (2003) maintains that, for teachers to have more power and agency in the educational process, teachers should conduct research in their own classes based on action research principles. Therefore, for a teacher to be cognizant of recent developments in his/profession (Lewis & Munn, 1997), being able to recognize their instruction effectively, and solve anticipated and unanticipated problems skillfully among other responsibilities (Nazem & Tabatabaei, 2013).

They should know how to conduct research. In other words, competent teachers necessarily need to be engaged in doing research in order to keep pace with advances in teaching and learning. This statement is confirmed by Borg (2009) claiming that teachers' positive conceptions of research are facilitative of improving the quality of teaching methodology and learning. Despite the mentioned necessity for teachers to be aware of the significance of research and being able to conduct scientific investigations, the path toward informing teachers of the importance of research and also probing teachers' understanding of and perceptions toward research is still murky. In this regard, Allison and Carey (2007) noted that while the relationship between research and language teaching has been the topic of many studies, little attention has been paid to EFL teachers' conceptions of research if at all (Allison & Carey, 2007). The intensity of the problem is even more severe in the context of Iran in which, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is a dearth of research investigating the significance teachers ascribe to research or how they perceive the status of research as a navigating tool in their professional journey. This issue is in need of urgent attention as teachers' engagement in research is an old phenomenon in ELT. It is surprising that despite the remarkable amount of

research allocated to guidelines preparing teachers for how to conduct research (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Freeman, 1998; Nunan, 1992), the negligence of teachers' conceptions toward the research phenomenon is obvious. Besides, in the context of Iran, there is a huge gap between research and practice in the field of ELT (Mehrani & Behzadnia, 2013) testifying to the claim that less teachers are engaged in research to solve real classroom problems by the solutions found in their own research. Therefore, investigating teachers' conceptions of research may be a step toward realizing the present research-practice gap in ELT in Iran. With these issues in mind, the present study aimed to bridge this gap in the literature by uncovering Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions towards research. Recent literature on the educational reform has highlighted the concept of teacher-as-researcher. It is believed that by creating teaching materials and instructional approaches and expecting teachers to blindly apply them in their classrooms is in fact de-skilling teachers who instead should have the authority, power, and agency to produce theories and then practice what they have theorized in their teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

In other words, teachers should be equipped with sufficient knowledge in order to diagnose and solve problems happing in reality of teaching for them. The solution put forward by Allwright (2003) for solving such tangible problems is for a teacher to become a practitioner research. Accordingly, practitioner research is a teacher who is able to solve daily teaching problems through employing principles of action research. Traditionally, educational research had been done by researchers investigating various aspects of teaching and learning theoretically and empirically. The main issue was that teachers were not that much active in those research projects. However, due to the recent educational reform in which the importance of teacher as the researcher was highlighted, today, teachers tend to ponder more upon their teaching and student learning and the factors mediating these processes. In this regard, through utilizing classroom-based evidence gathered in their own classes for the aim of action research, teachers can scrutinize problems arisen in their classroom, find answers to these problems, and take action in order to solve them (Allwright, 2003). As pointed out before, teachers who engage in educational research are called teacher researchers (Nazem & Tabatabaei, 2013). In this regard, many westerns countries have moved toward empowering teachers through propagating teaching as an evidence-based profession which is characterized by a drive to have teachers who are engaged in educational research (Borg, 2007). One basic discussion which underpins such movements deals with the advantages that it can have for teachers' professional development (Kincheloe, 2003; Lyle, 2003). Furthermore, it is also argued that one of the outcomes of teachers' engagement with educational research is making pedagogical decisions being informed by sound research evidence which will direct both teaching and learning toward improvement (Borg, 2007).

The existence of the term "teacher researchers" for those teachers who are active in doing research attests to the importance of conducting research in order for teachers to provide high quality instruction to students. This claim is approved by Borg (2010) maintaining that research has always been an important aspect of academic life, and it has been increasingly promoted as a central strategy in the development and career advancement of language teaching professionals. More specifically pertained to the concern of the present study, research plays a central role in professional development of teachers in the field of ELT, and after the teacher and textbook, research is believed to be the next vital factor in the EFL/ESL classroom. This recent activity has developed our understandings of what teacher research means in practice, of its real benefits to teachers, and of the challenges that teachers face when they take on the role of teacher researchers (Borg, 2017). The purpose of teacher research is to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Of course, improvement assumes informed decision-making which stems from the deeper understanding that teacher research generates and in this sense, understanding is also a key goal of teacher research, though ultimately this understanding needs to be put to concrete use for the benefit of students (Borg, 2017).

As the inclinations and attitudes of teachers toward doing educational research affect their actual engagement with research, Borg (2009) investigated conceptions of 505 English teachers from 13 countries about research. The design of the study was mixed-methods research in which in order to gather the required

data regarding teachers' conceptions toward research, Borg employed questionnaire and follow-up interview instruments. According to Borg's (2009) study, the teachers held conceptions of research with conventional scientific notions of inquiry, meaning that teachers reported moderate to low levels of reading about and doing research. Besides, they attributed such low tendencies to lack of time, knowledge, and inaccessibility to materials. The outline of Borg's study is the reflection of what Creswell (2003) calls a sequential explanatory multi-method strategy. This is an outline which "is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data." (p. 215). Borg's study aimed at understanding the conceptions of research held by teachers from different countries around world. The cross-sectional survey in the form of a questionnaire helps a large amount of information to be accumulated efficiently, economically and in a standardized manner. Borg's questionnaire contained these six parts: emphasizing participants' conceptions about research, beliefs about the features of good research, receptions of their institutional culture in relation to research, involvement in reading research, involvement in doing research, and personal background information. These teachers chosen from thirteen countries located in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Australia completed the questionnaire. though, in the literature, there are a lot of arguments in favor of values of teacher research engagement, teachers' unfavorable working conditions, attitudinal, conceptual, and procedural factors led to insufficient teacher research engagement in ELT in Borg's (2009) study.

In the same line, Allison and Carey (2007) reported developing an empirical study about English language teachers' engagement in research. Based on this study, through using questionnaires and interviews, twenty members of staff teaching at a university language Centre in Canada believed that shortage of time after fulfilling teaching duty, lack of drives and not to be a part of teachers' job descriptions to do research were the main constraints for teacher research engagement. The major purposes of Allison and Carey's study were twofold. As a scholarly activity, firstly, they reported a relationship between language teachers and language teaching researchers, and connected this relationship to issues in professional literature. Simultaneously, this research was a kind of professional activity and a step toward a program for further action in workplace. This dual agenda is not only fundamental to their project, but also it suggests an interesting quandary for the status of teachers' actions. Work in this tradition pursues more meaningful conceptions and more effective collaboration between the realm of teaching and research, especially in teacher training and throughout professional life. The previously mentioned reports of research findings show the relationship between researchers and teachers which has been a constant concern in many professional arguments. It is not logical to claim that practitioners and researchers are two separate groups since many individuals suggest that both groups have both roles: the researchers in the field of applied linguistic often teach, and many research activities are done by second-language teachers, some of which were reported in published forums. In another study done on a group of Chinese teachers, it was reported that some of the challenges these teachers tackle with in order to engage with research are lack of financial resources, shortage of time, huge workload, and limited expertise in English (Gao, Barkhuizen, & Chow, 2010). Other teaching-related factors have been reported by Gore and Giltin (2004) as obstacles toward doing research by teachers which are unpredictable nature of the classroom, insufficient time, and complexity of academic writing language.

The results of various projects conducted by researchers who are active in this area indicated that only a small portion of teachers had understood the nature of research. That is to say, investigator' findings revealed the understanding of the nature of research by only a limited number of respondents (Borg, 2009). The results of Barker (2005) study, in which twenty-one teachers were interviewed, showed that most respondents were uninterested in doing research due to lack of external pressure, time, and institutional supports. Similarly, Mehrani and Behzadnia (2013) study was an attempt to investigate the extent to which English teachers are engaged in doing and reading educational research and to seek the obstacles that hinder teachers to be engaged in research. The data of the study was gathered through employing interview sessions with two groups of Iranian teachers: high school teachers and teachers at private language institutes. The

analysis of the data showed low levels of engagement in terms of both doing and reading research on the part of the participants. The results also presented some barriers to do research including: barriers related to the use of research, production of research, educational system, and lack of collaboration between researchers and practitioner. The study concluded with a discussion of a set of practical strategies that can be employed in the Iranian ELT context to improve teachers' research practice gap. In the Chinese context, Borg and Liu (2013) explored conceptions of research held by the college English teachers and the extent to which their beliefs led to their professional development. They reported that research, as perceived by the Chinese teachers, is not regarded a useful way of exploring, understanding, and improving their teaching.

Moreover, it is possible to consider an amalgamation of teaching and research roles in a self-directed investigative instruction and even a corresponding career structure. This imagination could be the final definition of the notion of teacher research (Edge & Richards, 1993; Freeman, 1996; Hopkins, 1993; Nunan, 1989), or of reflective practice (McDonough & McDonough, 1997; Schon, 1983), and it is apparent that being a teacher is not separable from being a researcher. But the qualitative movement criticized the relationship between researchers and educators in language pedagogy. Critics had a different view on the relationship; they believed its layout is in power, culture and knowledge. The outsider viewpoint of conductors of research was challenged by critics; they were the advocates of an emic attitude in pedagogical research. Their critical ideas were condemned due to coding the relationship of researchers with teachers scientifically. Therefore, the division between researchers and practitioners was again opened up by the critical opinions of academicians (Mehrani, 2014, 2015, 2017).

Furthermore, in teacher education curriculum, some information and skills have given to teachers to read research, but they do not become so engaged with it because what is received is not enough (Gore & Gitlin, 2004, p. 51). Another factor that is considered to be the main cause of the research practice gap is the lack of practical outcomes yielded by most studies in ELT which should be judged "not only by internal criteria of methodological rigor as understood by the particular epistemological models adopted, but also ultimately on the basis of its potential for positive impact on social and educational problems" (p. 430). Many studies conducted on research in language teaching profession, however, are connected to problems which have no significance or fascination to teachers (Block, 2000; Crookes, 1993; Nassaji, 2012). Some others have investigated the methodological features, ideological foundations, and the content of the Iranian ELT research papers (Mehrani & Khodi, 2014). To bridge the gap, the present study makes an attempt to make a further contribution in the existing lacuna in the literature by probing into the language teachers' conceptions of what makes the educational research (Mirhosseini & Ghafar Samar, 2015).

## 2. Methodology

The design of this study reflects what Creswell (2003) calls a sequential explanatory multi-method strategy. This is a design which 'is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data' (p. 215). Specifically, the study reported here adopted a survey approach in which largely quantitative data were first collected through a questionnaire. A sub-sample of the teachers who completed the questionnaire then participated in the second phase of data collection through which their questionnaire responses were explored and illustrated in more depth qualitatively (Borg, 2009). This study was conducted in Gorgan, Golestan Province, Iran. The participants of the present study were English language teachers from various language institutes and schools. They were in-service and part-time English teachers and native speakers of Persian whose age ranged from 25 to 50. Years of teachers' experience ranged from 1 to 30 and the teachers' academic degrees were either BA (83%) or MA (17%). Of 200 teachers who received the questionnaire, 98 of them responded to it. The participants were both males and females who were selected based on a non-random sampling including 37 males (38%) and 61 females (62%) teachers. In order to collect data regarding teachers' perceptions toward research, the questionnaire developed and validated by Borg (2009) was adopted in this study. This questionnaire included

6 main sections containing 44 items, each of which surveys specific ideas and conceptions about research hold by teachers. The estimated time for answering the questionnaire items is between 15 to 25 minutes.

In this part of the article, each of the sections of the scale will be briefly explained. The questionnaire had six sections. The first section aimed to understand what teachers conceive of the concept of research. Ten scenarios were given and teachers were asked to evaluate the instances as "definitely not research", "probably not research", "probably research" and "definitely research". They were 10 scenarios in this section, each of which involved a different type of inquiry, and English instructors were asked to evaluate each scenario as being related to research or not. In this section, there were no right or wrong answers. The purpose was to find out what types of inquiries were mostly valued by teachers as research. In section two, eleven possible characteristics of research were given and teachers were asked to identify their importance. Teachers were asked to rate them as "unimportant, moderately important, unsure, important, and very important". Section three asked about the institutional research culture, which included nine statements about teachers' general attitudes toward research in the school. In section four, teachers were asked to rate their engagement in reading about research and the reasons behind reading or not reading about research. Section five aimed to note teachers' commitment in doing research with the reasons behind it. Finally, the last section included items requesting demographic data such as country, years of experience as an English language teacher, and age. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient reported for the questionnaire was .79 which is considered as a high index. In order to answer the research questions, the following procedures were followed. The study was carried out on a group of English teachers chosen from various schools and private language institutes in Gorgan, Iran. The questionnaire used included 44 items which was distributed among 200 teachers of whom 98 responded to it. The teachers answered the items of the questionnaire with the researchers' guidance. After they completed the questionnaire and the required data was gathered, SPSS version 21 was used to analyze the data. The research was conducted in winter, 2015.

## 3. Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions towards research. In addition, this article tried to find the extent to which teachers do or read research. The analysis of the data is presented in this section using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical results for the research questions are followed by the interpretation of the findings. The purpose of this section was to elicit teachers' views on the kinds of activities which can be called research. In this section, the teachers were asked to point to what extent they felt the activities described in 10 scenarios were or were not regarded as research. The findings for this section are shown after each scenario.

**Table 1.** *Teachers' Assessment of Ten Scenarios*

| Scenario | Number of Teachers | Definitely not Research | Probably not Research | Probably Research | Definitely Research |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 98 | 23.5 | 12.2 | 44.9 | 19.4 |
| 2 | 98 | 4.1 | 8.2 | 31.6 | 56.1 |
| 3 | 98 | 4.1 | 8.2 | 23.5 | 64.3 |
| 4 | 98 | 3.1 | 6.1 | 20.4 | 70.4 |
| 5 | 98 | 3.1 | 8.2 | 18.4 | 70.4 |
| 6 | 98 | 5.1 | 11.2 | 22.4 | 61.2 |
| 7 | 98 | 18.4 | 27.6 | 33.7 | 20.4 |
| 8 | 98 | 15.3 | 44.9 | 22.4 | 17.3 |
| 9 | 98 | 10.2 | 10.2 | 49 | 30.6 |
| 10 | 98 | 8.2 | 14.3 | 43.9 | 33.7 |

As shown in Table 1, scenario one "A teacher noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. She tried something different in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful", nine "A teacher trainer asked his trainees to

write an essay about ways of motivating teenage learners of English. After reading the assignments, the trainer decided to write an article on the trainees' ideas about motivation. He submitted his article to a professional journal", and 10 "The Head of the English department wanted to know what teachers thought of the new course book. She gave all teachers a questionnaire to complete, studied their responses, and then presented the results at a staff meeting" were considered to be probably research and scenarios four "A university lecturer gave a questionnaire about the use of computers in language teaching to 500 teachers. Statistics were used to analyze the questionnaires. The lecturer wrote an article about the work in an academic journal", five "Two teachers were both interested in discipline. They observed each other's lessons once a week for three months and made notes about how they controlled their classes. They discussed their notes and wrote a short article about what they learned for the newsletter of the national language teachers' association", and six "To find out which of two methods for teaching vocabulary was more effective, a teacher first tested two classes. Then for four weeks she taught vocabulary to each class using a different method. After that she tested both groups again and compared the results to the first test. She decided to use the method which worked best in her own teaching" were regarded as definitely research by the participants. On the other hand, scenarios seven "A headmaster met every teacher individually and asked them about their working conditions. The head made notes about the teachers' answers. He used his notes to write a report which he submitted to the Ministry of Education" and eight "Mid-way through a course, a teacher gave a class of 30 students a feedback form. The next day, five students handed in their completed forms. The teacher read these and used the information to decide what to do in the second part of the course" were the ones considered as definitely not research. This section of the questionnaire asked teachers whether they read research and if not what are the reasons that keep them from following research findings. From among 98 English teachers, 36 (36.7%) of them said that they never read published language teaching research, 38 teachers (38.8%) said that they rarely read research articles and 21 teachers (21.4%) said that they sometimes read research findings in the realm of language teaching, and only 3 teachers (3.1%) said that they often study published research in ELT.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of Reading Research

|  | Alternatives | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reading Research | Never | 36 | 36.7 |
|  | Rarely | 38 | 38.8 |
|  | Sometimes | 21 | 21.4 |
|  | Often | 3 | 3.1 |
|  | Total | 98 | 100.0 |

As shown in Table 2, 36.7 percent of the teachers said that they never read research, 38.8 percent chose rarely reading research, 21.4 percent sometimes read research, and only 3.1 percent often read published research. Table 3 illustrates that 8.2 percent of the respondents preferred to read books containing research projects, 2 percent read books and professional journals, 14.3 percent read books, academic journals, professional journals and other sources, and 75.5 percent did not read any kind of published research.

**Table 3.** What Teachers Read as Research

| | Alternatives | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What Teachers Read | Books | | 8 | 8.2 |
| | Books + Professional journal | | 2 | 2.0 |
| | Books + Academic + Professional journal +other | Sources | 14 | 14.3 |
| | Total | | 24 | 24.5 |

As Table 4 shows, respondents chose the following items as the main reasons why they do not read published research: Item number three, "I do not have access to books and journals", was chosen by 26.5 percent of the respondents who never or rarely read published research. Regarding this item, 15.3 percent of the respondents said that some reasons such as "I am not interested in research", "I do not have access to books and journals", "I find published research hard to understand", and "Published research does not give me practical advice for the classroom" were the main causes of their low tendency to read research.

**Table 4**. *Reasons for Not Reading Research*

| | Alternatives | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reasons for not Reading Research | I am not interested in research | 1 | 1.0 |
| | I do not have time | 11 | 11.2 |
| | I do not have access to books and journals | 26 | 26.5 |
| | I find published research hard to understand | 6 | 6.1 |
| | Published research does not give me practical advice for the classroom | 2 | 2.0 |
| | 1,3,4,5 | 15 | 15.3 |
| | 1,2,3 | 7 | 7.1 |
| | Total | 68 | 69.4 |
| Missing | (No response) | 30 | 30.6 |
| | Total | 98 | 100.0 |

Section five of the questionnaire focused on teachers' engagement in research. Teachers were asked how often they did research, if so, why, and if not, what the reasons for this were.

**Table 5.** *Descriptive Statistics of Doing Research*

| | Alternatives | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Doing Research | Never | 69 | 70.4 |
| | Rarely | 17 | 17.3 |
| | Sometimes | 10 | 10.2 |
| | Often | 2 | 2.0 |
| | Total | 98 | 100.0 |

As seen in Table 5, teachers reported how frequently they did research. Among the respondents, 69 (70.4 %) teachers said they never did it, 17 (17.3%) teachers said they did it rarely, 10 (10.2%) teachers said they did it sometimes, and 2 (2.0%) teacher said they did it often.

## 4. Discussion

The results of this hypothesis analysis showed that the effect of positive thinking on depression was significant. In the sense that positive thinking led to depression in the experimental group. The present study adopted the theoretical framework of Borg's (2009) paper which investigated the conceptions of 505 English teachers from 13 countries about research. Through using questionnaire, he gathered data regarding teachers' views toward what research is and how often they read and do research. In the same line, the present study replicated Borg's (2009) research in the context of Iran by examining 98 EFL teachers' conceptions toward research. To summarize the findings of the present study, considering the first research question, it was found that some of the characteristics of a good quality research using experiments, testing hypotheses, and the researcher being objective. Regarding the second research question, only 24.48% of

respondents claimed that they sometimes or often read published research. Thirteen teachers said that they read published research, and 11 teachers believed that reading published research had a strong influence on what they do in the classroom. In other words, still many of the teachers in Iran do not consider reading research as being necessary for or influential in their professional improvement. Regarding the third research question, it was found that only 12.2% of the teachers intended to do research in the classroom which was a very small portion of the whole number of teachers participated in this study. More than 70% of respondents claimed that they had never conducted any research projects in their classrooms. These findings testify to the gap existing, on the one hand, between research and practice and, on the other hand, between research and teaching. Although there is myriad of research emphasizing the importance of doing research for teachers (Allwright, 2003), in reality, many teachers do not regard research as a necessary tool in their teaching baggage.

Comparing the findings of this study against that of Borg (2009), in the present study, scenarios four, five, and six were considered to be definitely research while in Borg's study, scenarios two, five, and six were highlighted as definitely research. On the other hand, in Borg's study, regarding scenarios which were least recognized as definitely research, scenarios eight, nine, and one were selected, and scenarios one, seven, and eight were least rated as definitely research in the present study. In a similar study, Kutlay (2012) came up with similar results reporting scenarios four, two, and six rated as definitely research and scenarios one, eight, and ten as the least rated scenarios for definitely research. As mentioned before, the results of one study in the context of Iran in this regard reported some similarities and some differences compared to the represent study findings. Accordingly, Tabatabaei and Nazem (2013) reported scenarios nine, four, and three as definitely research which was different from the result of the present study. But the beliefs about the scenarios which were least recognized as research were in line with the results of the present study.
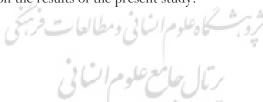
Furthermore, regarding the first research question of the present study, taking into account the characteristics of a good quality research, the results were similar to those of Borg's (2009) study. Borg (2009) found that teachers believe the following items were of paramount significance: "The researcher is objective, hypotheses were tested, and the results give teachers ideas". In line with his findings, the present study came up with the following results in the context of Iran: Experiments are used" (81.6%), "Hypotheses are tested" (74.4%) and "The researcher is objective" (72.5%). With regard to the aforementioned characteristics, Kutlay (2012) showed, in his research, that his respondents chose the following items as characteristics of a good quality research: "Hypothesis were tested (92%), a large volume of information was collected (58%), and information was analyzed statistically (81%)", which share only the first item with the findings of the present study. Tabatabaei and Nazem (2013) came up with the following results about the characteristics of a good quality research: Their results showed that "give teachers ideas they can use (87%), the results were applied to many ELT context (78%), and information was analyzed statistically (48%)", were chosen less in comparison to other items.

The frequency of reading research in Borg's study was reported as the following: Only 3.8 percent of the respondents said they never read any kinds of research, 28.7 percent said they did it rarely, 51.9 percent sometimes, and 15.6 percent often. The findings of Kutlay (2012) in this realm were very close to Borg's. He reported that 3.8 percent of the respondents never read research, 50 % rarely, 30.7 % sometimes and 15.3 % reported that they often read research. In the present study, 36% of the respondents never read research, 38% said that they rarely did it, 21% said that they sometimes did it, and only 3% often read research which showed that the percentage of the teachers who never read research in the Iranian setting was drastically higher than those who work in other contexts. Moreover, the percentage of the teachers who often read research was considerably lower than the percentage of teachers in other studies.

Considering doing research, Borg (2009) came up with the following results: Only 8.1% said they never did it, 37.3% said they did it rarely, 41% sometimes and 13.6 % often did it. Kutlay (2012) reported that 15% of the teachers participated in his study never did research. With the highest frequency (46%), teachers

reported engaging in research rarely, 31% said they did research sometimes and only 8% of the teachers reported doing research often. Considering doing research in the present study, 70.4% said they never did it, 17.3% said they did it rarely, 10.2% sometimes and 2% often did it. To sum up, regarding the inclination of teachers to do research, the participants of the present study believed that Iranian EFL teachers have low level of enthusiasm to do research which was in line with the findings of Kutlay's (2012) study; However, the respondents in Borg's (2009) study showed higher level of participation in doing research.

The findings of the present study may be useful for English teachers, material developers, curriculum designers, and researchers. Through the results of the present study, Iranian EFL teachers can better understand EFL teachers' tendencies toward research and its necessity for their job survival. Through such results, administrative and school principals can take wise actions to hold extra-curricular workshops for teachers to inform them of the significance of research and how to conduct research. Additionally, in order to increase teachers' engagement in research, researchers and teachers can collaborate in doing research problems which aim at solving classroom problems (Allwright, 2003). In the same line, curriculum designers can provide applicable guidelines and useful material for teachers about how to do research in teachers' books. Besides, school administrators can set doing research project among the teacher's responsibilities in order to officially encourage teachers to do research. When teacher as researcher responsibility is appreciated by school authorities, teacher may be more willing to apply such research tendencies in their teaching. Therefore, institutional may plays a significant role in how teachers conceive of and actually engage in research. Furthermore, more research in the future following such line of inquiry is recommended as research is an integral part of becoming a good teacher (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) as teachers are to develop educational theories and consequently apply these theories in the practice. Therefore, as people attitudes, beliefs, and views affect the way they behave and act, understanding teachers' attitudes toward research, their tendency to do research, the obstacles in way of engaging in research, and if possible, overcoming such research obstacles for teachers are highly appreciated. As with any empirical research the present study is not without some limitations. First, the results of this study should be cautiously generalized to the Iranian EFL teachers' population as the data were gathered from 98 EFL teachers from one of the provinces of Iran, namely Golestan. Second, this study was purely quantitative in nature as the respondents only answered one questionnaire in order to provide the researchers with the needed data. Therefore, future studies can adopt a qualitative or mixed-methods research designs by using such instruments as interview, audio journal, logs in order to shed more light on the results of the present study.

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