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**Research Paper**

## **Job Satisfaction of Iranian EFL Teachers: Exploring the Role of Gender, Education Level, Teaching Experience, and Service Location**

**Afsheen Rezai**

*Assistant Professor, Teaching English and Linguistics Department,  
University of Ayatollah Ozma Borujerdi, Borujerdi City, Iran*

**Ehsan Namaziandost<sup>1</sup>**

*PhD in Applied Linguistics (TEFL);*

*1) Lecturer, University of Applied Science and Technology (UAST),  
Khuzestan, Ahvaz, Iran*

*2) Lecturer, Mehrarvand Institute of Technology, Abadan, Iran*

**Fidel Çakmak**

*Department of Foreign Language Education, Alanya Alaaddin  
Keykubat University, Antalya, Turkey*

### **Abstract**

Teacher's job satisfaction (JS) is a crucial factor making objectives realized in an education system. It is deemed that various factors affect teachers' JS. This study aims to investigate if Iranian EFL teachers' JS is affected by gender, education level, teaching experience, and service location factors. For this purpose, using a stratified sampling method, a sample, including 440 female and male EFL teachers were chosen from Tehran, Lorestan, and Markazi Provinces, Iran. To collect the required data, the participants were asked to complete a printed version of a Teachers' Job Satisfaction Survey along with items addressing their demographic information (e.g., gender, education level, teaching experience, and service location). An independent sample t-test and a

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author: [e.namazi75@yahoo.com](mailto:e.namazi75@yahoo.com)

one-way ANOVA were used to analyze the collected data. Results evidenced no statistically significant difference between the female and male participants regarding their JS. Additionally, the findings documented that the participants with higher education levels had higher job satisfaction. Moreover, the results turned out that the participants with more teaching experiences participants felt less gratified with their jobs. Likewise, the findings disclosed that the participants working in Tehran Province enjoyed higher JS than the teachers working in Lorestan and Markazi Provinces. The study ends with proposing some implications for educational stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, Gender; Education level, Teaching experience, Service Location, Iranian EFL teachers

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## 1. Introduction

It is self-evident that all nations need well-educated and civilized citizens to develop in all dimensions of the modern world. This requirement is not satisfied unless all nations have a quality education system. A quality education system is made of qualified staff, most specifically teachers (Pourbahram & Sadeghi, 2020; Rinantanti et al., 2019). Undoubtedly, they are the teachers who guarantee the success of an education system. As Zahoor (2011) notes, a quality education system cannot be established or educational reforms are not possible unless there exist well-trained, motivated, committed, and highly-satisfied teachers in an education system. As such, it is hoped that teachers go for their job duties willingly and try their best work to make the educational objectives realized.

One of the strong predictors of teachers' job performance and job productivity is their JS (Abdollahpoor et al., 2017; Huang & Yang, 2018; Khokhar et al., 2021; Masanja, 2013). Accordingly, the capability of schools to meet the educational objective is closely linked to teachers' job satisfaction. That is why teachers' JS and the factors shaping it have gained

noticeable attention from education officials over the last decades (Baroudi et al., 2020; Mbua, 2003; Nguyen & Ngo, 2017).

Demographic characteristics, such as gender, teaching experience, education service, and service location and their correlation with JS has received huge attention (Evans 1998). This relationship is of paramount importance for two reasons. First, considering the fact that teaching is one of the crucial professions in all countries, it is essential to investigate if gender, teaching experience, education service, and service location contribute significantly to teacher job satisfaction. Second, teachers' JS exerts a direct effect on their job aspirations, professional development, and future progression. Given these points, the present study purports to examine the role of gender, teaching experience, education service, and service location in teachers' JS in Iranian EFL context. It is hoped that the findings of this study provide education officials with invaluable insights for addressing the problems that may be associated with low levels EFL teachers' job motivation and JS.

## **2. Background of the Study**

Despite this huge attention to teachers' JS, there has been a long-lasting lack of consensus over its definition and the factors constituting it (Evans, 2016; Spector, 2008). In an early definition, Locke (1976) considers JS as a pleasing emotion emerged when employees evaluate their job experiences positively. Additionally, Berry (1997) views JS as "an emotional reaction based on the comparison between actual and expected outcomes" (p. 38). From this view, once there is a discrepancy between a teacher's actual and expected gaps, their JS is adversely affected. More recently, Gupta (2007) opines that JS is affected by environmental, physiological, and psychological factors. He adds more that after performing job duties, JS is the final feeling created in an employee. From this perspective, as an employee is involved in

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a job duty, and their needs and wants are fully satisfied and they are in complete harmony with their expectations and values, they feel satisfied with the job. From a different perspective, for Ilham (2009), JS is concerned with an employee's positive or negative attitudes toward job duties.

Teachers' JS is determined by some factors. The first factor determining is job itself. This factor deals with “the characteristics of job that allow individuals to fulfill their needs are determinants of job satisfaction” (Kinicki & Kreitnen 2003, p. 127). When a job is mentally challenging, provokes interest and fun, and makes allowance for successful experience, it can lead to the rise of JS (Lock, 1976; Spector, 2008). The second factor determining JS is payment system. In this sense, once the payment system is perceived as fair and transparent and is in line with teachers' expectations and job productivities, it can make teachers feel satisfied with their job. (Rabane et al., 2012). The third factor affecting teachers' JS is promotion. Promotions are offered in different forms and in different rewards with the aim of giving opportunities to teachers for reaching more personal growth, more career duties, and increased social status (Luthans, 1998). Teachers experience satisfaction with their job when the promotions are offered fairly (Witt & Nye, 1992). The fourth factor shaping teachers' JS is supervision. When a supervisor or school principal behaves teachers friendly, supports them, listens to their voices and concerns, and praises their job performance appropriately, teachers' JS increases substantially (Burke, 1995; Locke, 1976; Rezee et al., 2018). The fifth factor playing a significant role in teachers' JS is colleagues. Teachers are likely to feel satisfied with their job, when they have friendly and supportive colleagues (2008). As Luthans note, when teachers are in professional and personal problems, they can turn back to their colleagues. The last factor causing teachers to feel satisfied with their JS is the working environment. As Rabane et al. (2012) note, working

environment is of paramount importance to teachers since it plays a crucial role in creating personal comfort and doing job duties.

The theoretical underpinning of most research on JS has rested upon the dual-factor theory of Herzberg et al. (1959). Based on this theory, JS and job dissatisfaction should be perceived of as two independent concepts of each other affected by different group of factors: motivators and hygiene factors. The former groups of factors are intrinsic aspects of jobs such as achievement. However, the latter group of factors are extrinsic aspects of job like working conditions quality. As Menona and Athanasoula-Reppa (2011) note, if the latter group of factors are absent, they hey lead to dissatisfaction. For example, when the working conditions are poor. However, when they are present, they do not lead to satisfaction.

Having gained insights from the framework of International Teacher 2000 Project and the findings of their studies (1998, 2000, 2002), Dinham and Scott present a JS model in educational settings. They came up with three group factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction. The first group of factors is related to the teaching profession playing a noticeable role in teachers' job satisfaction. They assert that the aspects germane to teaching duties, such as students' learning and achievements are likely to lead to increased teachers' job satisfaction. The second group of factors, found to be associated with job dissatisfaction, include extrinsic aspects of a job, such as societal and governmental issues. The last group is associated with school. It entails internal factors, like school climate, school leadership, decision-making mechanisms, and its image in the wider environment. Dinham and Scott claim that school factors were neutral concerning teachers' JS. That is, they cause teachers neither to feel satisfied nor to feel dissatisfied (Dinham & Scott, 2002). It should be underlined that the model is considered as a theoretical foundation for the present study.

Overall, JS within educational organizations is viewed as a very crucial factor, since there exists a mutual linkage between teachers' JS and job productivity. Latham (1998) and Mertler (2002) opined, JS is the central factor that education officials should give enough attention to sustain productive and satisfied teachers. When they satisfied and productive in a school, the quality of instruction and school productivity are boosted accordingly (Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2016; Amoli & Youran, 2014). This, in turn, leads to the improvement of students' learning and achievement (Akiri, 2014; Chamundeswari, 2013).

### **3. Empirical Studies in the Literature**

To lay the groundwork for the current study, some previous studies are reviewed critically. In an early cross-sectional descriptive study, Klecker and Loadman (1997) explored the correlation between the determining factors of teachers' JS and teaching experiences in Ohio, US. Their findings showed that there was no significant correlation between the participants' teaching experiences and determining factors of JS (e.g., salary, general work conditions, or interaction with students). Additionally, in a comparative study, Dinham and Scott (2000) investigated the JS of British, New Zealand and Australian teachers and school executives. Their findings disclosed the intrinsic rewards such as the participants' own self-growth and students' achievement were the determining factors of their JS. In a similar research strand, Menona and Athanasoula-Reppa (2011) investigated the role of teachers' gender and teaching experiences in JS in Cyprus. The findings showed that the participants teaching experiences was a determining factor of their JS. However, no statistically significant difference was reported between the female and male teachers regarding their job satisfaction. Likewise, in the research by Baroudi et al. (2020) in Lebanon, the extrinsic and intrinsic factors influencing teachers' JS were examined. The findings

disclosed that the participants' JS was more influenced by extrinsic factors (e.g., professional growth) vis-à-vis intrinsic factors (e.g., work load). The results also showed that in developing countries, teachers' extrinsic needs are a prerequisite to uplift teachers' job satisfaction.

In the Iranian context, Nosraty et al. (2015) explored if motivation factors embedded in Herzberg's theory affected elementary school teacher's job satisfaction. Their findings documented that the participants' JS was positively correlated with the type and amount of feedback, opportunities for advancement, job characteristics, training and development, appreciation and recognition, and types of job duties. Besides, Soodmand Afshar and Doosti (2016) came up with two broad categories: Motivating factors and demotivating factors. The former includes serving the society, having an internal desire to teach, and imparting knowledge to others. However, the latter entails demotivating factors, like inadequate salary, students' lack of motivation to learn English, principals' inattention to the teachers, low occupational and social status, and not being encouraged to seek professional development. Last but not least, Sarani and Rezaee (2017) carried out a study to uncover the type and amount of the correlation between the English teachers' teaching experiences and job performance, in one hand, and the impact of their gender on job performance, on the other hand. Their findings disclosed that participants with higher experiences did their job duties more successfully. However, the participants' gender was not found to be an influencing factor in determining their job performance.

#### **4. Aims of the Study**

Considering the above points, it is necessary to throw light on the factors affecting the Iranian EFL teachers' job satisfaction. In fact, to broaden the insights of education officials to boost the Iranian EFL teachers' job satisfaction, empirical research such as the present one

should be conducted. The hope is that the present study's findings can be fruitful to the Iranian education officials to critically review the existing motivational policies and practices to increase EFL teachers' JS and, accordingly, improve their work efficiency. Moreover, as can be implied from the studies reviewed above, there has been a scarcity of research concerning the role of gender, education level, years of experience, and service location in EFL teachers' JS in the Iranian context. Hence, the present study aims to fill in this lacuna by addressing the research question below:

Does any statistically significant difference exist in the Iranian EFL teachers' job satisfaction in terms of their gender, education level, years of experience, and service location?

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1 Design of the Study**

The present study's design was quantitative, because the required data were gathered using a questionnaire from EFL teachers with different genders, education levels, teaching experiences, and service locations (Gay et al., 2009). This design was employed to shed light on the cause-and-effect relation among the factors affecting EFL teachers' job satisfaction. In sum, this study set out to disclose the role of gender, education level, years of experience, and service location EFL teachers' JS in Iran.

### **5.2 Participants**

The sample was selected from high school EFL teachers in Markazi, Tehran, and Lorestan Provinces, Iran. The underlying reason for selecting the sample of the study in the three provinces was to increase the generalizability of the findings. 440 EFL teachers, including male ( $N = 196$ ) and female ( $n = 244$ ) were chosen through a stratified sampling method. According to Riazi (2016), stratified sampling is a method of sampling from a population which can be partitioned into subpopulations. The participants held different

education levels: A.A. (n = 49), B.A. (n = 149), M.A. (n = 182), and Ph.D. (n = 42). Regarding the participants' location services, 160 teachers were from Tehran Province, 130 teachers were from Markazi Province, and 150 teachers were from Lorestan Province. Concerning the factor of teaching experiences, they were divided into four bands: less than 8 years of experience (n=157), between 9 to 16 years of experience (n=84), between 17 to 24 years of experience (n = 74), and more than 25 years of experience (n = 22). Additionally, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were measured by distributing it among 60 EFL teachers, out of whom 30 were female teachers and 30 were male teachers. It is worth noting that the participants were informed that their participation was voluntarily, their names and responses would be kept confidential, and they were would be informed about the final results.

### **5.3 Instruments**

To gather the required data, the researchers used the Teachers' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ), developed and validated by Spector (1985). TJSQ. The researchers adopted TJSQ because it is built on a robust theoretical foundation and covers factors measuring adequately teachers' job satisfaction. TJSQ comprises 36 items asking the participants to assess their JS based on a five-point Likert scale, including completely agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), and completely disagree (1). TJSQ includes ten determining factors of EFL teachers' job satisfaction. The first factor is *supervision*, dealing with the quality of the relationship between a school principal and teachers. The second factor is *colleagues*, referring to the relationship of a teacher with school staff. The third factor is *working conditions*, treating the environmental features. The fourth factor is *payment*, associated with financial compensations offered to a teacher and the extent to which such compensations are perceived as fair. The fifth factor is *benefits*,

related to the rewards and profits existing in the job. The sixth factor is *work itself*, comprising items linked to daily tasks, creativity, autonomy, and demands in doing the job. The seventh factor is *advancement/promotion*, treating the existing opportunities for promotion. The eighth factor is *operating procedures*, referring to the required tasks and activities that teachers are supposed to perform. The ninth factor is *communication*, associated with the kinds of inter-personal relationships that teachers have with other colleagues and school staff. And the tenth factor is *contingent rewards*, dealing with the benefits and gifts given based on a fair system.

Before running the study, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were checked out with a group of 60 EFL teachers who resembled the participants of the main study. The reliability was measured using Cronach's alpha, the findings yielded ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ) which was found acceptable for the present study's objectives. The validity was confirmed through expert's judgment strategy. In doing so, the questionnaire was given to two associate professors in Applied Linguistics and two assistant professors in Psychology in Lorestan University to examine if it has the required face and content validities. They examined the questionnaire meticulously and offered some comments about the readability of the items. In particular, they were asked to check out if the contents of the items were relevant and they were easy to understand. In line with their comments, some modifications were applied to the items. For example, they were rephrased so much so that they could be understandable for the participants. It should be noted that the researchers recruited two experts in translation to translate the items into Persian. The reason for this was avoid any possible misunderstandings on the part of the participants. The questionnaire starts with some items addressing demographic information, including gender, education level, years of experience, and location service.

#### **5.4 Procedure and Data Collection**

The researchers followed some steps to carry out the current study. At the first step, the researchers recruited two experts in translation to translate the questionnaire into the participants' mother tongue (Persian). At the second step, the researchers run a pilot study to gauge the reliability and validity of the items of the questionnaire. In exact words, they ensured that there was not any problem with the items in terms of wording, content, question sequencing, and bias. At the third step, the researchers administered the semi-structured interviews with 10 EFL teachers. In doing so, the first researcher referred to the schools and invited the EFL teachers to a comfortable place. After warm greetings, the first researcher explained the study's objectives and invited the EFL teachers to read out the questionnaire items. If they faced any problems within the items in terms of readability, they highlighted it. Then, the first researcher recorded it to remove it later. In effect, the aim was to ascertain that the items had an acceptable readability and lacked any ambiguity. At the fourth step, the researchers administered the adapted questionnaire to the selected participants. In doing so, the researchers asked kindly the participants to complete the items of the JSQ as carefully as possible. It is worth noting that the participants read the items carefully and chose their intended responses in a comfortable setting without any time pressure.

#### **5.5 Data Analysis**

The researchers analyzed the collected data using SPSS version 22. Along with the calculation of the basic descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, the researcher used a one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to examine if the data were normally distributed. Besides, they run an independent sample t-test to examine if there was any statistically significant difference between the EFL female and male teachers concerning job

satisfaction. Further, they employed a one-way ANOVA to check out if there was any significant difference among the EFL teachers' JS with different education levels. Moreover, they used a further one-way ANOVA to disclose if there was any statistically significant difference among the EFL teachers' JS with diverse teaching experiences. Finally, to verify the type and amount of difference among the EFL teachers in terms of service locations, they run a one-way ANOVA.

### 6. Findings

Prior to running the main study, TJSQ's reliability was measured in a pilot study. The calculated Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ), shown in Table 1, indicates that the instrument enjoyed the required reliability.

Table 1

*Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) for the Job Satisfaction Scale in the Pilot Phase*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.87	34

Then, the researchers checked out if the collected data were normally distributed through a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Data are regarded normal if the calculated Sig is equal to or more than (0.05), called the significance level. The normality of the TJSQ and its sub-factors are presented in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to Measure Normality of TJSQ and its Sub-components*

	Job satisfaction	Supervision	Pay and benefits	Promotion and advancement	Contingent rewards	Colleagues and communication	Work itself	Work conditions and operating procedures
N	74.05	440	440	440	440	440	440	440
Mean	14.159	9.64	8.71	13.1333	8.8000	11.12	16.62	13.1333
St. D	.116	2.721	2.717	4.79385	6.17830	3.255	4.367	4.79385
Absolute	.116	.120	.128	.192	.248	.178	.139	.192
Positive	-.92	.120	.128	.143	.248	.159	.139	.143
Negative	.752	-.090	-.087	-.192	-.133	-.178	-.124	-.192
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	.624	.778	.826	.743	.961	1.154	.901	.743
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.624	.581	.502	.640	.314	.139	.392	.640

a. Test distribution is normal.

b. Calculated from data.

As seen, given  $p$  (0.62) calculated is larger than the significance level (0.05), the data were normally distributed. In addition, since the calculated  $p$ s of the sub-components of TJSQ were larger than the significance level (*supervision* ( $p = 0.58$ ), *promotion and advancement* ( $p = 0.64$ ), *work conditions and operating procedures* ( $p = 0.64$ ), *pay and benefits* ( $p = 0.50$ ), *work itself* ( $p = 0.39$ ), *contingent rewards* ( $p = 0.31$ ), *colleagues and*

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*communication* ( $p = 0.13$ )), it was concluded that the data were normally distributed for each sub-component.

Moreover, the means (M), and standard deviations (SD) of the TJSQ sub-components are reported in Table 3. For *supervision* M (9.81) and SD (2.47), for *colleagues and communication* M (11.54) and SD (2.86), for *working conditions/operating procedures* M (12.34) and SD (2.91), for *pay and benefits* M (9.90) and SD (2.21), for *work itself* M (17.60) and SD (3.91), for *advancement and promotion* M (8.73) and SD (2.98), for *contingent rewards* M (10.08) and SD (2.97) were calculated, respectively.

Table 3  
*Mean and Standard Deviations of TJSQ Dimensions (N= 440)*

Dimensions	Mean	SD
<i>Job satisfaction</i>	79.90	15.54
Supervision	9.81	2.47
Colleagues and Communication	11.54	2.86
Working conditions/Operating procedures	12.34	2.91
Pay and Benefits	9.90	2.21
Work itself	17.63	3.91
Advancement/Promotion	8.73	2.98
Contingent rewards	10.08	2.97

As noted above, the first part of the research question examined if there was any a statistically significant difference between the EFL female and male teachers concerning job satisfaction. The basic descriptive statistics of the EFL male teachers, M (79.09), SD (15.51), and the EFL female teachers, M (80.55), SD (15.57) are reported in Table 4.

Table 4  
*Results of Descriptive Statistics of the EFL Female and Male Teachers' Job Satisfaction*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Job satisfaction	male	196	79.09	15.51	1.10
	female	244	80.55	15.57	.99

As seen, no significant difference exists between the two genders regarding JS. However, to unveil if this difference was statistically different, the researchers used an independent sample t-test.

Table 5

*Results of the Independent Sample T-test of the EFL Male and Female Teachers' Job Satisfaction*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
Job satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	.47	.49	-.97	438	.329	-1.458	1.491	-4.389	1.473	
	Equal variances not assumed			-.978	418.414	.329	-1.458	1.491	-4.389	1.472	

As reported in Table 5, because the value of sig (0.49) is larger than the significance level (0.05), the conclusion, therefore, is that the two genders were not statistically different concerning their job satisfaction. That is to say, both the EFL male and female teachers' JS was not very different from one other.

The second part of the research question investigated if any statistically significant difference existed among the Iranian EFL teachers' JS with different teaching experiences. As presented above, since the collected data enjoyed the required normality, a one-way ANOVA was used to clarify the type and amount of the correlation between teaching experience and the EFL teachers' job satisfaction. The findings are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

*One-Way ANOVA for the Relationship Between EFL Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Teaching Experience*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job satisfaction	Between Groups	9572.208	3	3190.736	17.847	.000
	Within Groups	35756.630	200	178.783		
	Total	45328.838	203			

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As observed, a statistically significant difference does not exist among the participants' JS with different years of experience in teaching English (Sig = 0.001 and  $f = 17.874$ ). To unravel which group of the participants were less satisfied, a Scheffe test was used and Table 7 reported the results.

Table 7

*A Scheffe Test to Reveal Which Groups of the Participants Enjoy the Higher or Lower Job Satisfaction in Terms of Teaching Experience*

Job Satisfaction	1	2	8.416*	2.229	.003	2.13	14.70
		3	18.175*	3.265	.000	8.97	27.38
		4	16.085*	2.978	.000	7.69	24.48
2	1	2	-8.416*	2.229	.003	-14.70	-2.13
		3	9.759	3.491	.053	-.08	19.60
		4	7.669	3.225	.133	-1.42	16.76
3	1	2	-18.175*	3.265	-.000	-27.38	-8.97
		2	-9.759	3.491	.053	-19.60	.08
		4	-2.090	4.011	.965	-13.40	9.22
4	1	2	-16.085*	2.978	-.000	-24.48	-7.69
		2	-7.669	3.225	.133	-16.76	1.42
		3	2.090	4.011	.965	-9.22	13.40

The mean difference is significant at 0.05 level

As can be observed, the amount of JS in the EFL teachers who had less than 8 years of experience were more than the other groups. The findings indicated that the EFL teachers who had a high teaching experience felt less satisfied with their job.

The third part of the research question explored whether existed any statistically significant difference among the Iranian EFL teachers' JS with diverse education levels. As demonstrated above, since the data were found normal enough, another one-way ANOVA was used to unveil the type and amount of the correlation between the education levels and the EFL teachers' JS. The Table 8 presents the findings.

Table 8  
*One-Way ANOVA for the Relationship Between EFL Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Education Level*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Education Level	Between Groups	5111.260	3	1703.753	7.663	.000
	Within Groups	44467.367	200	222.337		
	Total	49578.627	203			

As shown in Table 9, the findings led us to the conclusion that the amount of JS in the EFL teachers who held M.A. was more than the other groups. In other words, the teachers holding A.A., B.A., and Ph.D. were less satisfied compared to the teachers holding M.A.

Table 9  
*A Scheffe Test*

Dependent Variable	(I)	(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Job Satisfaction	A.A.	B.A.	.449	3.064	.999	-8.19	9.09
		M.A.	-10.534*	3.004	.008	-19.00	-2.06
		Ph.D.	4.565	2.612	.386	-2.80	11.93
	B.A.	A.A.	-.449	3.064	.999	-9.09	8.19
		M.A.	-10.984*	3.566	.026	-21.04	-.93
		Ph.D.	4.116	3.242	.657	-5.02	13.26
	M.A.	A.A.	10.534*	3.004	.008	2.06	19.00
		B.A.	10.984*	3.566	.026	.93	21.04
		Ph.D.	15.099*	3.185	.000	6.12	24.08
	Ph.D.	A.A.	-4.565	2.612	.386	-11.93	2.80
		B.A.	-4.116	3.242	.657	-13.26	5.02
		M.A.	-15.099*	3.185	.000	-24.08	-6.12

The final part of the research question investigated if any statistically significant difference existed among the Iranian EFL teachers' JS with different service locations. Since it was demonstrated already that the data were normally distributed, to reveal which group of participants depending

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on the province wherein they have been working, a one-way ANOVA was run one more time.

Table 10  
*One-Way ANOVA for the Relationship Between EFL Teachers' JS and Service Location*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	2802.489	3	934.163	4.393	.005
	Within Groups	42526.349	200	212.632		
	Total	45328.838	203			

As observed, the participants' JS was statistically different among the EFL teachers with different service locations (Sig = 0.001 and  $f = 4.393$ ). Hence, to clarify which groups of the participants enjoyed higher job satisfaction, a Scheffe test was used. Table 11 shows the findings.

Table 11  
*A Scheffe Test to Reveal Which Group of the Participants Enjoys the Higher or Lower Job Satisfaction in Terms of Service Location*

Job Satisfaction	Location	Arak	Tehran	Markazi	Lorestan
Lorestan	Arak	4.241	2.997	.573	-4.21
	Tehran	-4.623	2.554	.354	-11.82
	Markazi	-4.241	2.997	.573	-12.69
Tehran	Arak	8.864	3.170	.053	-0.07
	Tehran	-8.864	3.170	.053	-17.80
	Lorestan	4.623	2.554	.354	-2.58
Markazi	Lorestan	4.623	2.554	.354	-2.58
	Arak	8.864	3.170	.053	-0.07

As seen, the EFL teachers' JS working in Tehran Province was higher than the participants teaching English in Markazi and Lorestan Provinces.

## 7. Discussion

The first part of the research question examined if any statistically significant difference existed between the EFL female and male teachers concerning JS. The findings indicated the EFL teachers' JS was not statistically different between the two genders. It means, JS was somehow gender-neutral the context of study. The results may be ascribed to this view that the EFL

female teachers might have been invested as equally as the EFL male teachers in their job. The reason for this may also ascribed to the fact that the salary and bonuses are more or less equal for both genders in the ministry of education of Iran. Along with Sarani and Rezaee (2017), one more reason to explain the results may be ascribed to the view that both genders' perceptions of the school workplace and other factors contributing to JS might have not been so different. That is, JS which is most often considered as feelings toward job might have been considered the same by both male and female teachers. To justify the findings more, as Grunberg (1979) notes, JS comprises emotions about the dimensions of a job, like work nature, payment, duties, and workplace. It seems that the major reason underlying this similarity might lie in these factors perceived alike by both genders. Since there is no significant gender- JS gap, it can be assumed that working conditions and work opportunities for the Iranian women and men tend to be equal.

The findings of the study are at large in consistent with the former studies. For instance, Clark's (1997) seminal research on the correlation between employees' JS and gender turned out that difference disappears for young and educated employees in both genders. Additionally, in another study with similar results, Sylvester (2010) found that gender cannot be a strong determinant of teachers' JS working in different educational centers. The findings of the study are also in accordance with those of Kifle and Desta (2012), reporting that teachers' JS dimensions were not affected by their gender. Likewise, the findings of the study are in line with those of Menona and Athanasoula-Reppa (2011), indicating that male and female teachers' JS was not statistically different. Overall, it can be concluded that in the Iranian EFL context gender difference concerning JS is neutral when for both genders, the workplace is similar.

The second part of the research question explored if any statistically significant difference existed Iranian EFL teachers' JS with different teaching experiences. The results disclosed that the JS statistically differed among different groups of the participants with different teaching experiences. Put it precisely, the findings evidenced that the participants' JS correlated negatively with their teaching experiences. In this way, the EFL teachers who were more experienced were found less satisfied with their job. The study's findings may be explained from diverse perspectives. The first explanation may be ascribed to the working environments. It might have caused the EFL teachers to have a negative feeling toward their job. Put it in other words, align with Nosraty et al. (2015), it may be reasoned that the EFF teachers have lost their satisfaction to invest effort in their job. A more explanation may lie in the payment system. Since teaching in Iran is considered a low-paid job (Sarani & Rezaee, 2017), it may have caused the EFL teachers to lose their JS with the cross of time. Since the life conditions of the Iranian teachers are not appropriate, it does not sound reasonable to expect that they come to their career duties with high motivation. That is why Ahmad et al. (2014) recommended education officials monitoring job situations along with checking the life conditions of the teachers. It means that education officials should be aware of the fact that teachers' needs and wants should be fully satisfied if they want to make educational objectives realized. The organizational responses to these needs and expectations over the years create negative or positive attitudes toward their job (Cetin, 2006). In the Iranian EFL context, it seems that these expectations have not been met well.

The results of the study are in sharp conflict with those of Sarani and Rezaee (2017). They found that the Iranian English teachers' job performance is positively correlated with their teaching experience. In addition, the findings of this research are not in consistent with those of

Harbison and Handshake (1992), reporting that teaching experience is a significant predictor of teachers' job motivation. This, in turn, implies that teachers' JS and job productivity are affected by their teaching experiences. Also, the results of the study are not in accordance with those of Oyewole (2009). He found that teacher's teaching experience and teacher's job motivation were positively correlated. In the end, the results are in clear contrast with the those of Menona and Athanasoula-Reppa (2011), revealing that the teachers with more teaching experience felt more satisfied with their job.

The third part of the research question examined whether any statistically significant difference existed in the Iranian EFL teachers' JS with diverse education levels. The findings revealed that the EFL teachers with different education levels enjoyed different levels of job satisfaction. Indeed, the results evidenced that the participants holding M.A. and Ph.D. degrees felt more satisfied with their job than the other groups holding A.A. and B.A. degrees. One possible explanation for the results of the study may be attributed to this view that the English teachers that had a higher education level, might have gained a higher professional competence. As such, it might have helped them do their career duties better. Accordingly, this might have made the EFL teachers with higher qualification feel more satisfied with their job. Another line of discussion for the findings may be related to knowledge and skills of the EFL participants with higher education levels. According to Kohli and Deb (2008), knowledge and skills are perceived as essential tools for any employee to carry out effectively the given career duties. Hence, the more knowledgeable the EFL teachers were, the better equipped they might have carried out the career responsibilities in classes and schools. The other justification for the findings is likely related to the intrinsic motivation of the EFL teachers with higher education level. That is, the EFL teachers who had

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put their prime time and energy into enhancing their education level might have been intrinsically motivated to learn and teach English though the working conditions may not be appropriate.

The findings of the study are partially in conflict with those of Travis (2005), reporting that the employees with higher education levels had low JS than those with lower educational levels. Moreover, the findings are not in line with those of Eskildsen et al. (2004), reporting that the overqualified workers tended to have low JS in the workplace. Moreover, our findings are not in accordance with those of Mathieu and Zajac (1990), showing that an employee's level of education was negatively related to the job satisfaction. Finally, one of the studies whose findings do not support the results of the present study belongs to Mowdays et al. (1982). In brief, they found that there exists a direct correlation between educated individuals and their commitment with their organization.

The last part of the research question investigated if there was any statistically significant difference between the EFL teachers' JS with different service locations. The results of the study disclosed that the EFL teachers who were from Tehran Province enjoyed higher JS compared to the other participants who were from Markazi and Lorestan Provinces. One of the most outstanding findings of this study, in a sense, was the remarkable difference in JS among the EFL teachers from Tehran compared to other two provincial areas. The one possible explanation for the study's findings may be ascribed to the view that the EFL teachers from Tehran Province may have enjoyed better work opportunities. Though the living expenses are higher in Tehran as compared to the other cities and provinces, the EFL teachers from Tehran Province have better opportunities for making money through teaching English at private language schools. In Tehran, the number of English learners is higher than the other parts of the country. Moreover, another line

discussion for the results of the study may be attributed to better facilities at high schools in Tehran Province. In effect, observational evidence supports that the educational equipment at Tehran high schools is more advanced and available compared to high schools in provincial areas. This may have led to better working conditions, and consequently, might have resulted in higher job satisfaction. The study's findings are partially in line with those of Kim (2011). They evidenced that vis-à-vis the university teachers in provincial areas, the university teachers in Seoul declared higher JS with their jobs. However, the findings of the study are in conflict with those of Altbach (2005), reporting that there is not a striking gap between teachers' JS in Madrid with teachers at provincial areas.

## **7. Conclusion**

For the successful performance and survival of any education system, educational duties should be effectively done and the teachers who are in charge of those educational duties must enjoy doing them (Prasangani, 2019). In this regard, teachers' JS and the factors affect it are of paramount importance and should be given particular attention by education officials. Hence, this study purported to examine the role of gender, education level, teaching experience, and service location in EFL teachers' JS in Iran. The results revealed that there was not any statistically significant difference between the EFL female and male teachers concerning job satisfaction. Additionally, the findings indicated that the EFL teachers with higher education levels had higher job satisfaction. Moreover, the results disclosed a statistically significant difference between EFL teachers' JS with different teaching experiences. Likewise, the findings unveiled that the level of the EFL teachers' JS in Tehran Province was higher compared to the other provincial areas.

The results of the study may yield some significant implications. As teachers are regarded as the most precious asset of any education system, it should be assured that if they are satisfied with their jobs for some reasons. First, when the teachers are satisfied with their jobs, they are mentally and physically healthy. Moreover, job productivity can rise when the level of EFL teachers' JS increases. That is, it sounds logical to induce that when EFL teachers feel more satisfied with their jobs, they do their career duties effectively (Vosough & Nafissi, 2018). One more thing is that education officials can lower costs related to recruiting and retaining proficient teachers by raising the teachers' JS. In other words, it is less likely the EFL teachers to quit their job when they are content with their job and workplace. The other implication of the findings is that the Iranian education officials should take urgent action to increase the level of JS in EFL teachers with high teaching experience. Moreover, the results may inform education officials to review the present motivational policies and practices so that they can improve teachers' JS, in general and EFL teachers, in particular. The last implication is for the teacher educators to give more attention to the factors (e.g., gender, teaching experiences, education level, and service location) that influence the teachers' job motivation, JS, and job performance in teacher education courses.

In light of the limitations of study, some suggestions for further research are presented. At first, future studies can be carried out longitudinally to reveal how Iranian EFL teachers' JS will change over time. Second, further research can verify what factors do or do not cause differences in JS in terms of gender, education level, years of experience, and service location. Third, further research is needed to use different additional research methods, like observation and focus groups to obtain more accurate insights into the issue. Fourth, interested researchers can delve into the relationship between the EFL

teachers' JS and job performance. Last but not least, more studies are needed to investigate the university teachers' JS in Iran in terms of gender, education level, years of experience, and service location.

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