Iranian English language teachers' job satisfaction and organisational climate in public and private schools

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Organisation issues rarely feature in the English language education literature, since language education is seemingly mostly concerned with the individual learner or teacher. As such, the impact that school climate might have on Iranian English language teachers remains an uncharted territory. This mixed-method study explores the relationship between organisational climate and EFL teachers' job satisfaction. A total of 128 male and female EFL teachers from public and private language institutes responded to two scales, one assessing school organisational climate and the second assessing teachers' job satisfaction. Interviews were also held with 12 participants. Correlations, t-tests, multiple regression analyses as well as thematic analysis revealed that teachers in both public and private language institutes were moderately dissatisfied with their jobs and they do not perceive their institutional climates to be favourable. Moreover, there exists a significant positive relationship between organisational climate and EFL teachers' job satisfaction was found. It was also found that private and public language schools had significantly different organisational climates. Finally, organisational climate dimensions of principal leadership and reward system appeared to be significant predictors of EFL teachers' job satisfaction.

Introduction

It is difficult to over-estimate the crucial role that teachers play in education (Popham, 2009). It follows that the extent to which teachers feel fulfilled and satisfied with the job they are doing is of utmost importance in the success or otherwise of education in general and language education in specific. Of the many factors possibly affecting teachers' job satisfaction, a prominent one is teachers' workplace environment or what has come to be known as *organisational climate* (OC), defined as "the meaning organizational employees attach to the policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviours they observe getting rewarded, supported, and expected" (Schneider & Barbera, 2014, p. 10). The literature in educational management and industrial psychology has it that the climate of an institution is such a powerful influence that can potentially override other individual factors which have consumed, and continue to do so, much of the attention and resources in teacher training, be it in-service or pre-service training. This crucial determinant of job fulfilment seems to have escaped the attention of scholars working in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL).

In the field of English language teaching (ELT), the pendulum of interest has traditionally swung in favour of the individual and away from the collective. As such, individual language teacher characteristics such as teacher beliefs, teacher pedagogical knowledge, teacher language awareness, teacher assessment literacy, and teacher cognition have been the subject of much scholarly debate. Yet, when the focus is taken away from the individual toward the collective, the pendulum swings to the other end of the cline: global

macro-political issues such as the imperialism of English language (Philipson, 2009; Canagarajah, 1999), World Englishes (Davies, 2009; Khodadady & Shayesteh, 2016), and critical applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2001). The pendulum, however, seems to have never stayed midway to address the social units beyond the individual but smaller than the global. This study seeks to address the interim stage on the continuum of individual to global: the institutions where EFL teachers work.

Given that the ELT literature has focused mainly on the individual, the teacher and the learner in isolation, with little attention to the social units wherein educational processes take place, results from this study can provide insights into the collective of ELT. In terms of pedagogy and instruction, approaching language education from a managerial and organisational perspective could provide language education policy makers, administrators, principals, teachers and learners with expanded horizons regarding how social units need to be considered in language pedagogy. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the degree to which Iranian EFL teachers' job satisfaction is affected by the school climate where they work.

This study also aims to identify aspects of organisational climate that explain variation in Iranian teachers' satisfaction with their jobs. Finally, we seek to know if the relationship between Iranian English teachers' job satisfaction and organisational climate is moderated by their teaching in private or public schools. The paper concludes with implications of the findings for language teacher training and language education management in both public and private language education sectors.

Literature review

Organisational climate refers to an organisation's members' holistic and conscious perceptions and descriptions of their work environment, which is affected by the individual characteristics of the organisation, the structure and standards prevailing in the organisation, and also by the organisation's culture (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey, 2013). At the outset, a distinction has to be made between the climate of an organisation and its culture. Though occasionally some scholars consider these terms to be referring loosely to the same construct, the two terms are in fact different.

Organisational climate is defined as "the meanings people attach to interrelated bundles of experiences they have at work", whereas organisational culture is "the basic assumptions about the world and the values that guide life in organisations", respectively (Schneider et al., 2013, p. 361). In simple terms, organisational culture refers to the accumulated history and traditions within and around that organisation, which together give the organisation and its members their distinct identity, norms, and values (Schneider & Barbera, 2014; Schneider et al., 2013). On the other hand, the climate of an organisation deals with the current atmosphere in an organisation, regardless of its historical and traditional antecedents (Griffin & Moorhead, 2014). Though it is never possible to detach the present from the past, and hence the culture from the climate, the distinction has proved to be a useful heuristic to study educational organisations. Being the outcome of history

and tradition, the culture of an organisation is not readily amenable to quick, short-term changes (Griffin & Moorhead, 2014), whereas its climate lends itself more easily to change. Therefore, managers are able to change the climate of their organisations in the short term but not the cultures of their organisations.

Past research has provided evidence for the relationship between job satisfaction and the organisational climate in the financial sector (Basu, 2017), the health sector (Liou & Cheng, 2010) and in education (Ghavifekr & Pillai, 2016). Hence, it is plausible to think that issues of climate affect English language teachers job satisfaction also. Gray (2007) entertained the possibility of a reciprocal relationship between the climate of an organisation and its members' job satisfaction. In other words, job satisfaction is one of the cardinal organisational dimensions, which is of central importance in shaping its climate. Job satisfaction is defined as "more of an attitude, an internal state. It could for example, be associated with a personal feeling of achievement, either quantitative or qualitative" (Mullins, 2010, p. 282). More recently, Griffin (2013) defined job satisfaction or dissatisfaction as "an attitude that reflects the extent to which an individual is gratified by or fulfilled in his or her work" (p. 423). Such attitudes of fulfilment, achievement, and gratification are shaped by the prevailing climate in the workplace. As teachers are the clients and implementers of educational changes (Popham, 2009; Markee, 1997), the degree to which they are fulfilled and satisfied impacts other aspects of education, including management, student learning, learner motivation, and parents' attitudes and willingness to become involved in educational issues.

When it comes to empirical studies of job satisfaction, there are three main research approaches, in all of which organisational climate is implicated. These approaches include the traditional approach, focusing on the physical arrangement of work environment and the role of monetary compensation; the human relations approach placing emphasis on employees and their social needs, and the third approach is the human resource approach, giving priority to job design and life quality (Griffin & Moorhead, 2014). Obviously, the arrangement of work environment, the monetary concerns, the social needs and job design and life quality all are affected by and in turn affect the climate of an organisation.

Organisational climate enjoys an extensive literature, a comprehensive review of which goes beyond the scope of the current work. Thus, in the interest of space, the remainder of this section is devoted to only two themes in organisational climate literature, that are of closest relevance to language education. We first review the existing literature on the climate of educational institutions, and then report on studies investigating the linkages between the climate of educational institutions, teachers' job satisfaction and performance in general educational settings. The review ends with a synthesis of related studies in the ELT literature.

One strand of research regarding the climate of educational institutions has become known as the field of school climate. What elements or dimensions constitute school climate has been the subject of numerous theoretical debates and empirical studies. For some, school climate consists of academic press and communitarian climate, with the former relating to demands on student achievement and the latter being about teachers'

climate of work (Philips, 1997). Yet others break the construct further into additional dimensions, including affiliation, innovation, participatory decision making, resource adequacy, and student support (Johnson & Stevens, 2006, p. 114).

The relationship between measures of organisational climate and job satisfaction among child care teachers was studied by Pope and Stremmel (1992). Correlational and factor analyses showed that organisational climate and satisfaction represented operationally separate but related constructs. Using a factorial analysis design, the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational climate in elementary schools was investigated by Abu-Saad and Hendrix (1995). In this study, teachers' satisfaction with work itself appeared to be the dominant job satisfaction factor and principal leadership emerged as the dominant organisational climate factor. Additionally, findings of the multiple regression analysis showed that the organisational climate factors of principal leadership and autonomy on the job were significantly related to teachers' satisfaction with their work, and the interaction between principal leadership and teachers' intimacy was significantly related to both job satisfaction factors. There is also evidence about the relationship between climate of organisations and teachers' job performance (Adeymi, 2006). Similar findings were reported in Selamat, Samsu, and Kamalu (2013). In particular, they found the trust dimension to be of special importance in teachers' job performance.

Though the idea of organisation is not frequently invoked in mainstream research in ELT, it does come to play in the literature that has developed in language program evaluation as well as in innovation management. The realisation that changes in the content of educational programs and teaching methods do not in and of themselves guarantee the success of innovations in education has encouraged educational change managers to examine the management literature for insights (Alderson, 2009; Markee, 1997). As such, several scholars have been concerned with how ideas in educational management can foster change in language programs. Markee (1997) questioned the widely held assumption that research findings in second language acquisition (SLA) will automatically "trickle down to practitioners" and policy makers for adoption (p. 80). SLA scholars and language teachers continue to be worlds apart because findings of the former are distant from practitioners' immediate concerns and even if at times they are not, they are packaged in a language so technical that they are rendered inaccessible to teachers (Eykin, 1987, cited in Markee, 1997). Similar concerns have been voiced with regard to language teachers' failing to embrace and adopt ideas and insights produced by language testing scholars (Brindley, 2001). Even those who have attempted to bring about educational changes through the undeniable power of examinations have found that unless broader managerial issues are taken into account, desired pedagogical changes are hard to implement, no matter how eloquent and attractive the idea of change might be (Wall & Alderson, 1993; Wall, 1996; Alderson, 2009). The failure to consider managerial and organisational issues in improving language education has contributed to an unhealthy division of labour between SLA scholars and practitioners, causing the efforts of both parties to lack concrete outcomes. In Markee's words, "SLA THEORY and RESEARCH do little to promote change in language education because they do not address the real-life concerns of teachers and policy-makers" (1997, p. 81, emphasis in the original).

In their quest to understand why most educational innovations fail, scholars turned to the sociology of change, where a much broader perspective is adopted on how a social change transpires (Rogers, 1995). Turning to social theories of change implies that for the betterment of language education the larger social setting in which a change, in this case more efficient language teaching, takes place has to be taken into account, which means a departure from the *researcher discovers and the practitioner applies* paradigm. One social unit of crucial importance in any social change, including educational changes, is the institution or organisation in which change designers and implementers find themselves in (Alderson, 2009). In language education, unlike in general education, this has not been adequately addressed.

Outside language education, the larger educational environments or organisations, which subsume individuals, have been demonstrated to exert considerable influences on teachers and their efficiency. An obvious corollary of such findings for language education is that no matter how well language teachers are trained, the school climate may overpower all efforts and resources that have gone into teacher education. Conversely, optimal school climates likely compensate for many individual teacher factors. Since there has been little theoretical development or empirical research addressing the effects that organisational climate and job satisfaction as well as their interaction have in language education, the present study seeks to investigate the extent to which EFL teachers' job satisfaction is a function of the organisational climate in which they work. In particular, answers to the following research questions are sought:

1.   Is there any relationship between organisational climate and EFL teachers' job satisfaction?
2.   Which organisational climate dimension or cluster of dimensions predicts Iranian English teachers' job satisfaction?
3.   Are the organisational climates of private language schools and that of state schools different?

Context of the study

Generally speaking, English language teaching in Iran takes place in either public schools, regulated by national policies, or private institutes, owned and run by private owners. The two school environments are different in several ways, including their management mechanisms, the motives of their managers and students, their physical space, and their payment systems. In Iran, an expanding circle country, to use Kachru's (2006) classification, language education is a huge industry. Private language institutes have mushroomed everywhere to the point that in some remote villages, where basic life facilities are lacking, language schools have been established. To give an idea of the scale of English teaching in the country, one central language school in Tehran, Iran Language Institute (ILI), has over hundreds of branches across the country. In the public sector, official English language education starts from the first year in junior high school and continues for the next seven years. Overall, English language education occupies a big portion of education in the country.

Methods and materials

The data for the current study were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Using a convenience sampling approach, a total of 128 English teachers, 62 males and 66 females, participated in this study. Half of the participants were working in state schools and the other half in private language schools.

The quantitative data were collected using two modified questionnaires: one for assessing organisational climate and the other for job satisfaction. For the former, the *Organisational Climate Inventory* (OCI) (Abu-Saad and Hendrix, 1995) was adapted. OCI consists of 17 Likert scale items, ranging from *strongly agree* = 5, to *strongly disagree* = 1. Items negatively worded were reversely coded. The OCI captured five dimensions of organisational climate including *principal leadership*, *reward system*, *autonomy and decision-making*, *intimacy and warmth*, and *school facilities*. For the dependent variable, job satisfaction, we adapted the scale developed by Sharma (2001), comprising 17 Likert type statements regarding job satisfaction dimensions: *satisfaction with the work (the nature of the work itself)*, *promotion opportunities*, *pay and job security*, *working conditions*, *co-worker relations*, and *job flexibility*. The item structure of the job satisfaction questionnaire was similar to that of OCI and a similar scoring procedure was followed.

The instruments were translated into Persian to make sure differences in participants' English proficiency did not introduce construct irrelevant variance to the collected data. To ensure that the original and the translated versions elicited the same data, hence construct validity, a back translation was carried out and areas of discrepancy were identified and resolved. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the OCI and job satisfaction scales was 0.85, and 0.80 respectively. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) showed that data loaded well on the intended number of factors.

For the analysis of data, in addition to descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, Pearson correlation, and an independent t-test were applied. For the qualitative data, interviews were held with 12 participants, six from each group, who agreed to be interviewed. Interview data were collected in May and June, 2015 and each interview lasted for about 20 to 25 minutes. The interviewees were met at their own convenience in their workplaces. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and thematically analysed. Interviews were conducted and analysed in Persian and illustrative quotations were translated into English by the authors. To refer to the interviewees from whom we quote, pseudonyms are used throughout the text. To minimise the subjectivity involved in identifying the themes, another colleague familiar with the topic was invited to derive the recurrent themes. The inter-coder reliability of .87, estimated via coefficient of agreement (Brown, 2005), proved to be satisfactory, which was expected given the nature of the interview questions, which were informed by subscales identified in the questionnaires.

Results

Quantitative findings

In this section, the descriptive statistics on the two major variables of the study are first presented. We would then turn to inferential statistics. Table 1 contains the mean and standard deviations of participants' scores on the six dimensions of job satisfaction (the maximum possible score was five and the minimum was one). Table 1 shows overall low scores on all dimensions of the job satisfaction measure, indicating that Iranian EFL teachers in both the public and private sectors are dissatisfied with their teaching jobs. The mean scores on the satisfaction dimensions are all below the neutral value of three on the 5-point scale (Larsen-Hall, 2010), for both private and public school teachers. For teachers in private language schools, the two dimensions with the highest scores are *co-worker relations* (mean = 2.92, SD = .94) and *promotion opportunities* (mean = 2.70, SD = 1.06) respectively, whilst the dimensions with the lowest mean scores for this group of teachers are *pay and job security* (mean = 2.27, SD = .85) and *job flexibility* (mean = 2.34, SD = .97). For language teachers in public schools, the dimensions with highest scores are *co-worker relations* (mean = 2.83, SD = .90) and *satisfaction with the work* (mean = 2.81, SD = .66), whilst the dimensions with lowest scores are *job flexibility* (mean = 2.23, SD = .79) and *pay and job security* (mean = 2.28, SD = .82).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of teachers' scores on job satisfaction dimensions

Job satisfaction dimensions	Private schools		Public schools	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Satisfaction with the work	2.64	0.90	2.81	0.66
Promotion opportunities	2.70	1.06	2.49	0.81
Pay and job security	2.27	0.85	2.28	0.82
Working conditions	2.64	0.64	2.76	0.53
Co-worker relations	2.92	0.94	2.83	0.90
Job flexibility (job efficiency)	2.34	0.97	2.23	0.79

Table 2 demonstrates participants' mean scores and their standard deviations for the dimensions of organisational climate. For private language school teachers, the organisational climate dimensions with the highest scores are *principal leadership* (mean = 3.33, SD = .86) and *intimacy/warmth* (mean = 3.34, SD = .47), followed by *reward system* (mean = 2.91, SD = 1.01) and *autonomy/decision-making* (mean = 2.83, SD = .70), whilst the dimension with the lowest score is *school facilities* (mean = 2.75, SD = .77). Like private school participants, public school teachers scored highest on the *intimacy/warmth dimension* (mean = 3.33, SD = .5) followed by *reward system* (mean = 2.94, SD = 1.13). English teachers in public schools are most discontented with *school facilities* (mean = 2.13, SD = .69) and *principal leadership* (mean = 2.58, SD = .75) dimensions of their organisational climate.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of organisational climate dimensions

Organisational climate dimensions	Private schools		Public schools	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Principal leadership	3.33	0.86	2.58	0.75
Reward system	2.91	1.01	2.94	1.13
Autonomy/decision-making	2.83	0.70	2.89	0.72
Intimacy/warmth	3.34	0.47	3.33	0.50
School facilities	2.75	0.77	2.13	0.69

The first research question of the study investigated whether there was any significant relationship between organisational climate and the participants' job satisfaction. Table 3 shows the relationship between organisational climate and Iranian English teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 3: The correlations between organisational climate and job satisfaction

Correlations		Job satisfaction
Organisational climate	Pearson correlation	.458**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	128

As can be seen in Table 3, the Pearson correlation test shows a significant positive relationship between the organisational climate of schools and English teachers' job satisfaction (r = .458, p < 0.01, N= 128). It should be noted that the data for both groups of teachers are combined, indicating that whether teachers work in public or private schools, organisational climate and job satisfaction are positively correlated.

Table 4 gives the results of the correlations between organisational climate dimensions and EFL teachers' job satisfaction, based on the combined scores of both groups of teachers.

Table 4: Relationship between organisational dimensions and job satisfaction

Correlations		Principal leadership	Reward system	Auton-omy	Intimacy	School facilities
Job satisfaction	Pearson correlation	.434**	.359**	.396**	.282**	.160
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.001	.072
	N	128	128	128	128	128

According to Table 4, except for school facilities, all organisational climate dimensions are positively correlated with teachers' job satisfaction. In other words, principal leadership, reward system, autonomy, and intimacy are all in a direct positive correlation with the degree EFL teachers are content with their jobs.

Table 5 illustrates the correlations between organisational climate and teachers' job satisfaction in private and public schools separately.

Table 5: Relationship between organisational climate and the
job satisfaction of private and public school teachers

	School	Organisational climate	
		R	p-value
Job satisfaction	State	.322**	.009
	Private	.585**	.000

As can be seen for both public and private school teachers, there exists a significant positive correlation between organisational climate and teachers' job satisfaction. Nonetheless, considering the coefficient of determination (Brown, 2005; Larsen-Hall, 2012), it is revealed that there is 34 percent (R^2 = .34) shared variance between climate and job satisfaction in private schools, while the amount of shared variance between the two for public school teachers is much lower (R^2 = .10). Judged by Cohen's (1991) power criteria the former is considered a large correlation while the latter is a medium one. This indicates that issues of organisational climate are of more relevance to the job satisfaction of teachers working in private language schools.

The second research question was concerned with how much of the variation in teachers' job satisfaction could be accounted for by factors constituting the climate scale. In simple terms, it seeks to determine the degree to which aspects of organisational climate predict EFL teachers' feeling of job satisfaction. To this end, a multiple regression analysis was conducted (Table 6).

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis for organisational
climate dimensions and teachers' job satisfaction

Dimensions	R^2	F	β	p-value
	.496	7.944		.000
Principal leadership			.242**	.037
Reward system			.204**	.023
Autonomy/decision-making			.170	.108
Intimacy/warmth			.026	.791
School facilities			-.045	.605

**p<0.05; Dependent variable: job satisfaction

As the R^2 coefficient indicates, almost half (49.6%) of the variance in teachers' job satisfaction was explained by the dimensions of school climate and the regression model, explaining the impact of organisational climate factors on job satisfaction proved to be valid (F=7.944; p=0.05). According to β values, teachers' job satisfaction is mostly influenced by principal leadership and the reward system. The *autonomy and decision-making* dimension also contributes a good deal to the equation by explaining 17 percent of the variance, though not showing statistical significance. The two dimensions of *intimacy and*

warmth (β = .026), and *school facilities* (β = -.045) appeared to explain little of the variance in the dependent variable.

The third research question of the study aimed to explore whether the organisational climate of state schools and that of private language institutes are different. To compare the means of the two groups of teachers on their reported perceptions of their affiliated organisations, an independent samples t-test was carried out (Table 7).

Table 7: State and private schools' differences in terms of organisational climate

Organisational climate	F	Sig.	t-test for equality of means						
			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differ-ence	Std. error differ-ence	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	8.055	.005	-2.50	126	.014	-.27	.10	-.489	-.057
Equal variances not assumed			-2.50	119	.014	-.27	.109	-.489	-.057

Table 7 shows that there is a significant difference between the organisational climate of state schools and that of private schools (t=2.50, df=126, p=.005). To examine how much can be read into this result, the strength of association was estimated (Field, 2009; Hatch & Lazartan, 1991), which yielded a relatively low value of .095, indicating that a considerable amount of variance remains unaccounted for.

Qualitative findings

As noted earlier, to triangulate the data and to obtain more in-depth insights, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve teachers. Three major themes emerged from the interview data pertaining to principals, facilities, and relationships. In public schools, teachers saw principals in a rather poor light mainly because of principals' qualifications. Mina, an experienced female teacher in a state school said

> I believe that my school's principal is not qualified to run the school efficiently because I think that one of the characteristics of a good principal is to pay attention to teachers' ideas and requests. But unluckily, she does ignore our ideas and all of my colleagues are dissatisfied with the situation prevailing in the school. She is also so strict with school regulations.

Farhad, a male teacher with 24 years of teaching experience, made a similar comment.

> In the school where I teach the school principal is not familiar with his duties. I mean the school principal does not have the qualifications of a capable principal. He in fact creates a negative school climate where nobody feels appreciated.

Closely related to leadership was teachers' agency, where private school teachers apparently enjoyed higher levels of agency in their instructional decision making. Mahnaz, a female teacher at a private school, remarked

> I make decisions according to my own ideas. No one has control over my teaching methods; we, teachers, can express and implement our ideas freely.

Likewise, Reza, a male teacher teaching in a private language school commented

> I try to foster innovation within the school. The manager allows me to be autonomous so that I can make my own decisions about my teaching job.

Conversely, in state schools, teachers enjoyed less autonomy. Zahra, a female teacher with 13 years of teaching experience at state schools, remarked that

> I have no full autonomy in my job. Actually, my school principal makes decisions regarding class-scheduling and my attitude toward her is negative. ... [She further added that]... I have many constraints in my job and I have little freedom to choose my teaching techniques.

The second theme emerging from interview data was school facilities. This sounds plausible given that language teaching is particularly equipment-intensive. Public school teachers complained more of insufficient school facilities. Marjan, a public school teacher with 13 years of teaching experience opined

> In my school, there is not adequate equipment, and the physical environment of the class is not attractive... [She then continued that this aspect of organisational climate] ... has a considerable impact on our job satisfaction.

However, private school teachers were more content with school resources. Ali, a male PhD student teaching in a private language school, was highly satisfied with the resources.

> I teach at a school where all classes enjoy cutting edge instructional technology, including video projectors, heating and cooling systems; as well as comfortable tables and armchairs.

Teachers across school types appeared to be rather uniformly positive on the final theme, intimacy and warmth. Hosein, a public school male teacher commented

> I have a friendly relationship with my colleagues and there is a warm climate between my co-workers. There is indeed no conflict between us.

Likewise, Akram, a woman from a private school added,

> In the school where I teach, there is a pleasant and warm climate among teachers. We have no conflicts, and there is a sense of belonging among the teachers. We rely on each other and we also feel committed to our occupation.

Discussion

The current research studied the extent to which Iranian EFL teachers are content with their language teaching job, how favourable their institutional climates are, and how EFL teachers' job satisfaction is mediated by the climate of the institution wherein they work. Findings of the study suggest that English teachers in both public and private schools are not highly satisfied with their language teaching job. Moreover, the organisational climate dimensions of security, payment and flexibility appear to cause the largest degree of dissatisfaction among teachers in both types of language schools. As to how teachers' sense of fulfilment is moderated by their perceptions of their institutional climate, the major outcome of the study is that there exists a significant and positive relationship between the organisational climate of language schools and EFL teachers' job satisfaction. It is of note that the strength of this relationship is greater for private school English teachers. This was further corroborated by the more favourable climate that was found in private language schools. Moreover, the two dimensions of *principal leadership* and *reward system* appear to explain respectable amounts of variance in the outcome variable: teachers' job satisfaction ($\beta = .24$; $\beta = .2$, respectively). As to the possible differences in the organisational climate of public and private language schools, the results attest to a more desirable climate in the latter, though the strength of association was quite low.

Concerning the overall relationship between organisational climate and EFL teachers' job satisfaction, the results of the present study have precedents in the literature (Abu-Saad & Hendrix, 1995; Adeymi, 2006; Selamat, Samsu & Kamalu, 2013; Vinay, 2011). The collected evidence appears to suggest that, *ceteris paribus*, organisational climate is associated with teachers' contentment with their jobs.

Among organisational climate dimensions, principal leadership appeared to be the most powerful predictor of job satisfaction, which is consistent with some previous research. (e.g. Abu-Saad & Hendrix, 1995; Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2014; Rostami, Ghanizadeh & Ghapanchi, 2015; Vinay, 2011). Likewise, Rostami et. al found that organisational climate explained considerable variance in teacher burn-out. On the other hand, our results diverge from those of Abu-Saad and Hendrix (1995) in that unlike their findings, the reward system in our case predicted a considerable portion of variation in teachers' job satisfaction. Currently, in Iran, establishing an English language centre is a matter of doing some paper work, with no strict managerial or language education requirements being in place. This might be one fundamental source of dissatisfaction with management in English language teaching institutions.

To make sense of the findings of the study, we must not lose sight of the larger socioeconomic context wherein participants of this study are acting. The observation that the reward system outweighs some other theoretically crucial dimensions in explaining EFL teachers' job satisfaction attests to language teachers' financially poor status in both public and private sectors, which is a rather universal situation (Mizala & Nopo, 2016). Consistent with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, English teachers must not be expected to harbour ulterior motives while their lower needs have not yet been fulfilled.

Regarding the significant explanatory power of principal leadership, again findings make sense given the power that is accorded to principals in Iran's centralised educational system, where principals are selected in a top-down approach. One might counter-argue that the findings might make sense for public schools, where all decisions are made in a top-down fashion but not for private institutes with less centrally based agendas. Two points are noteworthy here. First, the license to establish a private language school is granted by government authorities. Therefore, control does not completely vanish. Secondly, in a private school the principal, who is usually the owner, enjoys full autonomy and power in his or her hiring and paying decisions. It follows that how language teachers fare in these schools must be greatly influenced by the language school manager.

This finding that private language institutes enjoy more favourable organisational climates is somehow counter-intuitive given the fact that EFL teachers in private language institutes receive lower wages, work on an hourly basis, and lack job security. It might be argued that in comparison with state schools, private language schools have a more desired climate because teachers have a higher degree of autonomy and more freedom of decision-making in their instructional practices, the interpersonal relationships are stronger, and there is a sense of solidarity among teachers. These, however, have to be substantiated through further research. A more rational justification may have to do with expectations because research demonstrates that one's perceptions of organisational fairness and equality are mediated by one's expectations (Cherry, Ordóñez & Gilliland, 2002; Gilliland & Chan, 2001). Consistent with findings concerning expectations in comparison theories, since teachers in private schools do not enjoy tenure contracts, they harbour much lower expectations than their counterparts in public schools, who are tenured and enjoy full job security. Therefore, private schools' EFL teachers' expectations are easier to meet or surpass. Since their minimal expectations are fulfilled, their perceptions of their organisational climate would be more positive. Again, further research is needed to probe the precise mechanism that creates the different perceptions of organisational climate.

Conclusion: Implications and further inquiry

Whilst managerial and organisational issues have been subjected to extensive educational research reporting in the international literature, in all fields and sectors of education, these issues have received little attention in ELT research, in the contexts of Iran and other countries. The authors of the present paper encountered the view from some ELT journals that it was deemed outside the domain of language teaching. This could reflect an over-emphasis on research into individual teacher factors, whilst larger managerial and organisational issues receive less research attention. We should avoid being restricted by a seemingly tacit assumption in ELT that the language teacher with the right language and pedagogical skills is the sufficient and necessary factor to guarantee optimum outcomes. We believe that to improve upon the status quo in language teaching, more attention needs to be given to the organisation and management of language education environments. This can be accomplished in both pre-service and in-service language teacher training programs. We would like to suggest that time is ripe for higher education

institutions in charge of language teaching programs to offer courses on language program management. Moreover, program evaluators should not ignore the determining role of organisational issues in their assessment of language teaching and learning programs.

This study could barely scratch the surface of one of the myriad of organisational issues at stake in English language teaching. With regard to research in ELT, not much has changed since Alderson's (2009) call for serious attention to institutional concerns in ELT. Given the powerful influence that organisations can exert on individual EFL teachers and learners, institutional considerations deserve more scholarly attention. Future studies accommodating a more diverse sample of language institutes and with larger sample of participants would further our understanding of how institutional factors play out in English language teaching. More urgently needed are studies focusing on how different climates in language institutes lead to differential gains in language learning. To such an end, studies adopting hierarchical linear modeling approaches likely would shed further light on the interaction of institutional and individuals factors in English language learning. Furthermore, studies crossing national boundaries to study the institutional climates of language institutes in various countries with different governing systems would provide insights as to the interplay of political systems and the management of language institutes. Moreover, there are numerous other organisational considerations that wait for further inquiry behind the impervious walls of the individual-oriented ELT. Issues such as organisational justice, fairness, and organisational culture and discourse are just a few examples. Finally, how other teacher factors such as teacher reflection, cognition, burn-out, self-efficacy, and professional development are mediated by institutional considerations are all fascinating areas for future inquiry.

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