A Study of Iranian EFL Teachers' Attributions, Job Satisfaction, and Stress at Work

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Job satisfaction is generally defined as combination of psychological, attitudinal, emotional, and environmental circumstances which make a person content with his/her profession. The present study probed English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' job satisfaction in relation to attitudinal and emotional factors. In particular, it investigated the role of Iranian EFL teachers' attributions and stress at work in their job satisfaction. Moreover, the impact of attributions on stress at work was examined. To this end, 134 Iranian EFL teachers were selected and asked to complete of three questionnaires: English Language Teacher Attribution Scale (TAS), a combined Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and Job in General(JIB) Scale, and Stress at Work (SAT) Scale. The results of structural equation modeling (SEM) indicated that among teacher attributions concerning job satisfaction, teaching competency (TC) and teacher effort (TE)—both internal attributions—predicted job satisfaction positively and significantly, with TE having a greater influence. The SEM analysis also explored the association of teacher attributions of job satisfaction and their stress levels at work. It was revealed that among the four attributions, TC and TE negatively and significantly predicted stress at work. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that teacher stress at work is negatively and significantly associated with job satisfaction. The conclusion of the study is that EFL teachers' job satisfaction and stress at work is related to internal, controllable, and unstable attributions.

La satisfaction au travail se définit généralement comme une combinaison de circonstances psychologiques, comportementales, émotionnelles et environnementales qui font en sorte qu'une personne est satisfaite de sa profession. La présente étude porte sur la satisfaction au travail d'enseignants d'anglais langue étrangère (ALE) telle qu'indiquée par des facteurs comportementaux et émotionnels. Plus particulièrement, elle s'est penchée sur le rôle que jouent les attributions et le stress au travail des enseignants iraniens d'ALE dans leur satisfaction au travail. L'impact des attributions sur le stress au travail a également été examiné. Nous avons sélectionné 134 enseignants iraniens d'ALE et leur avons demandé de compléter trois questionnaires, un portant sur une échelle d'attributions pour enseignants d'anglais, un portant à la fois sur un index de descriptions de postes et une échelle des postes en général, et un portant sur une échelle de stress au travail. Les résultats d'une modélisation par équation structurelle indiquent que parmi les attributions portant sur la satisfaction au travail, la compétence en enseignement et les efforts des enseignants—toutes les deux des attributions internes—prédisent de façon positive et significative la satisfaction au travail (les efforts des enseignants ayant plus d'influence). La modélisation par équation structurelle a également révélé le lien entre les attributions de satisfaction au travail et les niveaux de stress au travail. Des quatre attributions, la compétence en enseignement et les efforts des enseignants prédisaient de façon négative et

significative le stress au travail. De plus, les résultats ont indiqué que le stress au travail des enseignants est lié de façon négative et significative à la satisfaction au travail. Nous concluons que la satisfaction et le stress au travail des enseignants en ALE sont liés à des attributions internes, contrôlables et instables.

Attribution Theory

In the motivational domain, "attribution" is characterized as a person's perceived cause for a success or failure within an experience or event (Weiner, 2000). As such, the investigation of attributions is concerned with people's convictions concerning why something happens and the impact of these causal convictions on their future choices, emotions, and actions (Atkinson, 1957, 1964). According to Kelley (1967), "attribution theory concerns the process by which a person explains events as being caused by a certain part of a rather stable environment" (p. 198). Therefore, *attribution* is the discernment that people form about the causality behind the degree of success of their actions in situations when these causes may not be directly noticeable. Attribution theory pivots around three facets into which an individual's attribution can be classified: locus (internal versus external), stability (stable versus unstable), and controllability (controllable versus uncontrollable) (Weiner, 2000). Locus alludes to whether the perceived cause is internal or external to the individual. Attributions described by internal locus of causality involve personal ability or effort and external attributions embroil environmental elements or others. Stability mirrors one's conviction regarding the variability or change of cause(s) over time. Stable causes, such as ability or aptitude, are those that are usually constant and permanent, while unstable causes, such as luck or chance, are those that are prone to change over time. Moreover, the most essential attributional dimension of individual controllability reflects the amount of control individuals accept they themselves have over their successes or failures. Causes such as effort and strategy are subject to intentional change, whereas others such as luck or aptitude, cannot be deliberately altered (Weiner, 2000).

One of the dominant effects of attribution theory has been an ensuing addition in educational contexts. Generally motivated by the Weiner's (2000) experimental and theoretical contributions, a considerable body of exploration has been conducted in investigating the relationship of learners' attributions with academic success (e.g., Graham, 1991; Graham & Folkes, 1990; Georgiou, 1999). What has evolved from these studies showed that academic success is enhanced when learners credit academic results to variables including effort and the utilization of suitable study procedures; conversely, academic success is impeded when learners attribute their failure to components such as absence of capacity or chronic health problems, and attribute their success to luck (e.g., Graham & Folkes, 1990; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004).

Since various studies have shown that learners' attributional patterns are critical for academic success, it is reasonable to suppose that teachers' attributions would affect teacher behaviors and actions. Recently, educationalists have paid more attention to teacher-related attributions. For instance, in order to evaluate teacher opinions of student classroom misbehavior, Ding. Li, Li, and Kulm (2008) conducted interviews with 244 Chinese teachers (teaching different subjects, such as science, math, arts, and others). The main focus of these interviews was on teachers' general concerns about classroom management, teachers' opinions of the most frequent and troublesome types of misbehavior, and teachers' apparent needs for

help with improving classroom management. The results revealed that the majority of these Chinese teachers did not believe that classroom management was a great concern. It was also indicated that these teachers perceived day dreaming to be the foremost and annoying misbehavior. More recently, Ghonsooly, Ghanizadeh, Ghazanfari, and Ghapanchi (2014) studied Iranian teachers' attributions of success and failure. The study yielded mixed results, indicating that teachers in the study tended to ascribe perceived success more to their effort and teaching competency and perceived failure more to students' effort. It was also found that these attributions vary by the respondent's age, teaching experience, and educational level, but not by their gender.

Although various studies have been carried out to examine the relationship of learners' attributions with skills and factors contributing to effectiveness, teacher attributions, particularly English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' attribution, remained an unknown domain deserving further investigation. The main objective of present study is to explore EFL teachers' attributions through investigating their relationship with two other teacher-related constructs, job satisfaction and stress at work.

Job Satisfaction

One of the variables of the overall efficiency of work performed is "satisfaction." It is configured as the consequence of the relationship between what individuals actually get from work (in terms of pay, status or position, appreciation, etc.) and their expected outcomes. Locke (1976) stated that this is a positive or satisfying emotional state stemming from a person's appreciation of his/her own job. In the organizational behavior field, it is generally acknowledged that job satisfaction is the most significant and frequently studied attitude-related construct. Job satisfaction is important in that its absence often causes fatigue, reduced organizational commitment, and job withdrawal (Levinson, 1997; Moser, 1997). According to Popescu-Neveanu (1978), satisfaction is a multifaceted mental structure not always totally conscious, comprising a set of positive attitudes of an individual towards the work they have done. This concept can be characterized as the occasions that lead to a subjective feeling of release, delight, and pleasure which may be stated or expressed by the person who is feeling it, but cannot be seen from the outside by someone else (Mathis, 1997).

Several studies have indicated that job satisfaction is an important factor in employee's health and well-being (e.g., Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, & Pinneau, 1980; Gardell, 1971). Caplan, Cobb, and French (1975) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and employee's health. The results showed significant negative correlation between job satisfaction and some psychoneurotic syndromes (i.e., boredom, despair, nervousness and anxiety). Another similar investigation directed by Khaleque (1981) showed that dissatisfied employees experience greater degree of stress and strain in comparison to satisfied employees. Two definitions of job satisfaction have been presented with regard to teachers, such as the feelings that they have about their profession (Garcia-Bernal, Gargallo-Castel, Marzo-Navarro, & Rivera-Torres 2005; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995), or the mental state ascertained by the extent to which they perceive their occupational needs as being met (Evans, 1997). Generally, staff who feel content with their work show greater loyalty to their organization (Coomber & Barriball, 2007; Matzler & Renzl, 2006). In the educational realm, the degree of teachers' job satisfaction is considered an important predictor of their probability of ending their career (Crossman & Harris, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The existence of a relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and

their intent to quit undoubtedly holds true since teachers' job satisfaction has been related to their sense of efficacy, burnout, stress, trust, work culture, extra-role performance behaviors, and job commitment (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2003; Van Houtte, 2006). Therefore, it is plausible to contend that the factors contributing to teachers' job satisfaction are likely to increase teacher retention.

Stress at Work

Stress at work is another factor studied in the present study. After the revolutionary work on psychological stress by Selye in 1950s, the term "stress" became broadly used in the social sciences (Selye, 1956). Stress can be defined as a dynamic and mutual relation between the individual and environment (Antoniou, Davidson, & Cooper, 2003). Although job-related stress is not a new concept, it has become a greater threat to employee health and well-being than ever before. In the 1960s, researchers began to make reference to teachers' anxieties and concerns over their profession and their functioning in the class, including a number of studies which concentrated on novice teachers (e.g., Selye, 1965; Vroom, 1964). Moreover, studies on job satisfaction in teachers began to recognize the origins of dissatisfaction. However, it was not until the mid-1970s that publications focusing directly on stressors in teaching began to appear in reasonable numbers (Coates & Thoresen, 1976; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977). The research literature reporting on teacher stress had become voluminous by the end of the 1990s (Kyriacou, 2000). Teacher stress can be defined as the negative and unpleasant emotions—such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression—experienced by teachers. These negative feelings are caused by some features of their occupation as a teacher.

In some studies, the term "stress" has been employed to refer to the degree of pressure and demands made on an individual, and some researchers have utilized the term "strain" to refer to the response to such stressors. Other researchers have described stress in terms of the degree of incongruity between the demands made upon an individual and the individual's capability to deal with those demands. Furthermore, previous researchers have concentrated on the influence of teachers' conceptions and beliefs in initiating and sustaining stress (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). In this study, perceptions teachers have of the causes of success and failure in their practices have been presumed to play a role in the stress they experience at work.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to explore EFL teachers' attributions by investigating the role of teacher attributions in their level of job satisfaction and their experiences of stress at work. To this end, the following research questions were posed and investigated in the study:

1. Do EFL teachers' attributions play a statistically significant role in their job satisfaction?

2. Do EFL teachers' attributions play a statistically significant role in their stress at work?

3. Do EFL teachers' report of stress at work play a statistically significant role in their job satisfaction?

Method

Participants

The participants of the present study comprised 134 EFL teachers who taught English in several private language institutes in Mashhad, a city in northeast Iran. The profile of the teacher-participants was as follows: they were between 19 to 57 years old (M= 28.19, SD= 6.35) with 1 to 33 years of teaching experience (M= 5.08 SD= 4.62). Out of the 134 teachers, 89 were females and 45 were males. The majority of participants had majored in different branches of English, i.e., English teaching, English literature, or English translation. Teachers who had degrees in majors other than English were qualified to teach it; they either had a TOEFL or IELTS certificate. Eleven teachers were PhD candidates, 46 held a master of arts (MA) degree or were MA students, and the rest (77) had a bachelor of arts (BA) degree or were BA students.

Instruments

A set of three questionnaires was utilized in the study.

English Language Teacher Attribution Scale (TAS). To assess a teacher's attributions, the researchers employed the English Language Teacher Attribution Scale (TAS), which was designed and validated by Ghanizadeh and Ghonsooly (2015). This questionnaire comprised ten hypothetical situations, half of which represented situations of success; the other half utilized scenarios that demonstrated failure. The questionnaire provided the participants with the directions on how to complete the scale. Teachers were required to think of similar situations from their own teaching experiences, and rate the statements on a six-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree according to their own opinions, insights, and understanding of the reason of each situation. Four attributions were considered for each situation: a) TC: teacher's teaching competency (internal, stable, uncontrollable); b) TE: teacher's effort (internal, unstable, controllable); c) ST: student's effort (external, unstable, uncontrollable); and d) IS: institutional supervision (external, stable, uncontrollable). Two situations from the scale, one illustrating success and the other failure are represented in Appendix A.

Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and Job in General (JIG) scales. To determine teachers' job satisfaction, the researchers utilized the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) while also using an abridged Job in General Scale (JIG) from Bowling Green State University (2009). The JDI and the JIG scales were selected for this research since they are broadly used to measure job satisfaction, and they have been assessed as valid predictors (Balzer et al. 1997; Kinicki, 2002). The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) evaluates five important facets of job satisfaction: a) people at work, b) the tasks involved in the job, c) pay, d) opportunities for promotion, and e) supervision. The Job in General (JIG) Scale measures an individual's overall job satisfaction (Bowling Green State University, 2002). In the present study, the researchers used the abridged version of the Job Descriptive Index, which has 30 items while the JIG has eight items; this meant a total of 38 components of job satisfaction were assessed. The items of these two scales were short words or phrases (e.g., "fascinating" for a description of the type work at the respondent's job, or "underpaid" for a respondent's assessment of their pay). Participants were required to put a (Y) beside an item if it exactly described their understanding of their career, an (N) if the item did not illustrate the aspect, and a (?) if they could not decide.

Stress at Work. In order to measure teachers' stress at work in this study, the Stress at Work Scale (Bowling Green State University, 2009) was chosen due to its ease of administration and applicability. This scale has been used in previous teacher-related studies and exhibited

acceptable reliability and validity indices. It contained eight items. Like the combined JDI and JIG scales assessment, teachers were asked to put a (*Y*) beside an item if it accurately described a feature of their job, an (*N*) if the item did not represent that aspect, and a (?) if they could not decide. This item is illustrated in Appendix B.

Procedure

This study was conducted in several private institutes in Mashhad, a city in northeast Iran, between February 2015 and May 2015. The institutes were selected according to credibility and feasibility criteria; the selected institutions were among the most creditable language institutes in Mashhad. After a brief explanation of the aim of the research, all participants received the TAS, combined JDI and JIG, and SAT scale assessments. Participants completed the questionnaires at home and returned them to the researchers in the next session. To obtain reliable data, the researchers explained the aim of completing the questionnaires and reassured them that their replies would be kept confidential; furthermore, the participants were required not to write their names on the questionnaires. They were simply asked to write demographic information (e.g., gender, age, teaching experience, and education level). Additional questionnaires were sent to the researchers' colleagues who then distributed them to their students.

Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of EFL teachers' attributions. As the table indicates, among the four attributions, teacher effort received the highest mean (*M*= 42.79, *SD*=8.15) and institution supervision obtained the lowest mean (*M*=36.40, *SD*=7.47).

Table 2 illustrates descriptive statistics of job satisfaction and its subscales. As the table demonstrates, among the six subscales, JIG resulted in the highest mean (*M*=16.29, *SD*=5.54), while payment was the lowest (*M*=5.37, *SD*=4.65).

Table 3 summarizes the descriptive statistics around the idea of stress at work. As the table exhibits, the mean and standard deviation equal 14.27 and 5.53 respectively.

To examine the structural relations, the proposed model was tested using the LISREL 8.50 statistical package. A number of fit indices were examined to evaluate the mode: a) the chi-square magnitude, which should not be significant; b) the Chi-square/*df* ratio, which should be lower than 2 or 3; c) the normed fit index (NFI), the good fit index (GFI), and the comparative fit index (CFI), with the cut value greater than .90; and d) the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of about .06 or .07 (Schreiber et al., 2006, as cited in Ghanizadeh & Ghonsooly, 2014).

As demonstrated by Figure 1, the chi-square value (48.89), the chi-square/*df* ratio (1.95), the RMSEA (.081), the NFI (.90), the GFI (.93), and the CFI (.94) all reached the acceptable fit thresholds. This implies that the model had a perfect fit with the empirical data.

To check the strengths of the causal relationships among the variables, the *t*-values and standardized estimates were examined. As indicated in Figure 1, two estimates were displayed on the paths. The first one is the standardized coefficient (*β*) which explains the predictive power of the independent variable. The closer the magnitude to 1.0, the higher the correlation and the greater the predictive power of the variable is. The second measure is the *t*-value (t); when it is higher than 2 (+ or -) we call the result statistically significant.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Attributions

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TC	134	16.00	60.00	42.4701	8.24319
TE	134	18.00	60.00	42.7985	8.15893
SE	134	14.00	60.00	40.2090	8.00101
IS	134	17.00	60.00	36.4030	7.47941
Valid *N* (listwise)	134				

Note. TC = teaching competence, TE = teacher effort, SE = student effort, IS = institutional supervision

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction and its Subscales

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
JS	134	17.00	107.00	67.6269	20.84914
PEOPLE	134	.00	20.00	12.5522	4.55801
JIG	134	3.00	24.00	16.2910	5.54249
WORK	134	.00	19.00	12.2836	4.44619
PAY	134	.00	20.00	5.3731	4.65610
OPP	134	.00	19.00	9.2612	5.03959
SUP	134	.00	18.00	11.9030	5.07518
Valid *N* (listwise)	134				

Note. JS = job satisfaction, PEOPLE = people in your present job, JIG = The Job in General Scale, WORK = work on present job, PAY = pay, OPP = opportunities for promotion, SUP = supervision.
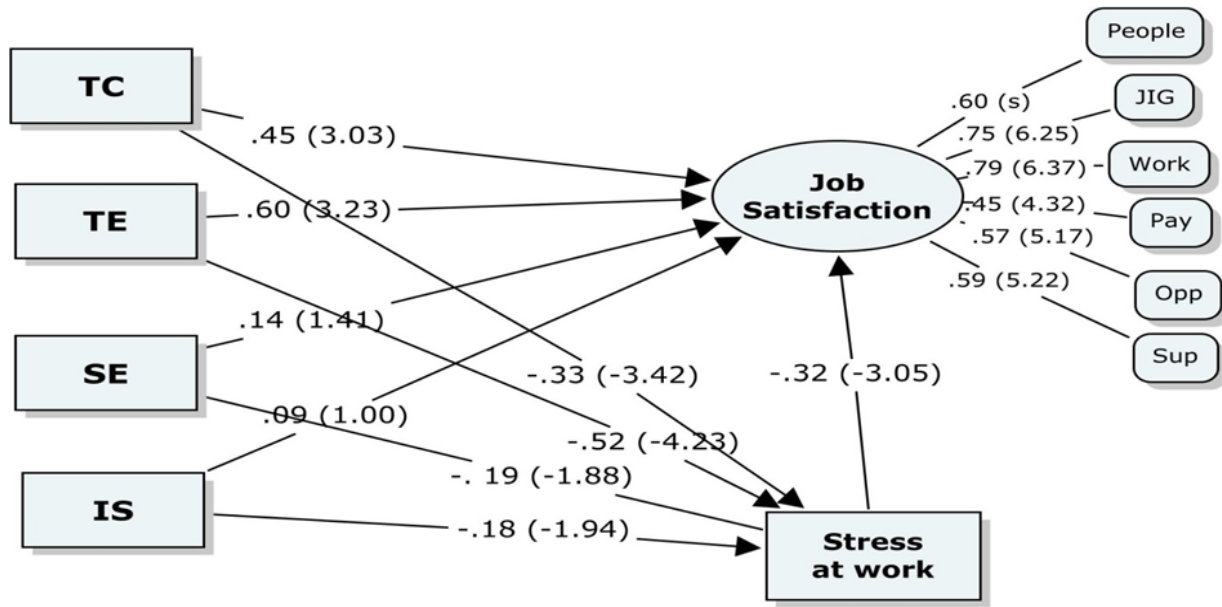
Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Stress at Work

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Stress at Work	134	1.00	24.00	14.2761	5.53511
Valid *N* (listwise)	134				

The results demonstrated that TC (β= .45, *t*= 3.0) and TE (β= .60, *t*= 3.23) are positive and significant predictors of job satisfaction, with TE having a greater influence. These two teacher attributions negatively and significantly predicted stress at work: TC (β= -.33, *t*= -3.42) and TE (β= -.52, *t*= -4.23). The other two attributions (SE and IS) had significant impact neither on job satisfaction nor on stress at work. It was also found that stress at work significantly but negatively influenced job satisfaction (β= -.32, *t*= -3.05).

The correlation coefficients among EFL teachers' attributions, job satisfaction, and stress at work are presented in Table 4. Among the teacher attributions, the highest correlation is

χ^2= 48.89, *df*= 25, RMSEA=. 081, GFI=.93, NFI=.90, CFI=.94

Figure 1. *The schematic representation of the relationships among teacher attributions, job satisfaction, and stress at work.*
Note. TC = teaching competence, TE = teacher effort, SE = student effort, IS = institutional supervision, PEOPLE = people in your present job, JIG = The Job in General Scale, WORK = work on present job, PAY = pay, OPP = opportunities for promotion, SUP = supervision.

Table 4

The Correlation Coefficients among Attributions, Job Satisfaction, and Stress at Work

	1	2	3	4	5	6
TC	1.00					
TE	.853**	1.00				
SE	.456**	.478**	1.00			
IS	.216**	.323**	.271**	1.00		
Job Satisfaction	.332**	.390**	.051	.018	1.00	
Stress at Work	-.301**	-.249**	-.096	-.035	-.395**	1.00

Note. TC = teaching competence, TE = teacher effort, SE = student effort, IS = institutional supervision.
**Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05

observed between TE and job satisfaction (r = 0.390, *p*< 0.05). The second highest correlation was found between TC and job satisfaction (r = 0.332, *p*< 0.05). Identical results were found for the association between teachers' attributions between competency and effort and stress at work: TE and stress at work (r = -0.301, *p*< 0.05), TC and stress at work (r = -0.249, *p*< 0.05). It was also found that stress at work correlated negatively and significantly with job satisfaction (r = -0.395, *p*< 0.05).

The present study also aimed at exploring the possible associations between the subscales of

Table 5

The Results of Correlation between Subscales of Job Satisfaction and Teacher Attributions

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TC	1.00									
TE	.853**	1.00								
SE	.456**	.478**	1.00							
IS	.216**	.323**	.271**	1.00						
PEOPLE	.232**	.282**	.032	-.035	1.00					
JIG	.275**	.332**	.170**	.065	.481**	1.00				
WORK	.203**	.309**	-025	.042	.457**	.648**	1.00			
PAY	.224**	.263**	-.061	.073	.349**	.213**	.308**	1.00		
OPP	.267**	.311**	.026	-.058	.282	.391**	.427**	.387**	1.00	
SUP	.205**	.227**	.020	-.041	.371**	.502**	.423**	.259**	.532**	1.00

Note. TC = teaching competence, TE = teacher effort, SE = student effort, IS = institutional supervision, PEOPLE = people in your present job, JIG = The Job in General Scale, WORK = work on present job, PAY = pay, OPP = opportunities for promotion, SUP = supervision.

Table 6

The Results of Correlation between Subscales of Job Satisfaction and Stress at Work

	Stress at Work
PEOPLE	-.341**
JIG	-.345**
WORK	-.260**
PAY	-.378**
OPP	-.285**
SUP	-.339**

Note. PEOPLE = people in your present job, JIG = The Job in General Scale, WORK = work on present job, PAY = pay, OPP = opportunities for promotion, SUP = supervision. **Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05

job satisfaction (i.e., Coworkers, the Job in General, Tasks Involved at Your Present Job, Pay, Opportunities for Promotion, and Supervision) and teacher attributions. To do this, SPSS (Version 22.0) was run, with results displayed in Table 5. The highest correlations were found between TE and JIG ($r = 0.332$, $p < 0.05$). This was followed by the association between TE and opportunities for promotion ($r = 0.311$, $p < 0.05$) and TE and work on present job ($r = 0.309$, $p < 0.05$).

   Identical analyses were performed for the subscales of job satisfaction and stress at work. The results are presented in Table 6. As the table demonstrates, the highest negative correlation was obtained between stress at work and Pay ($r = -0.378$, $p < 0.05$), with the results for Job in general ($r = -0.345$, $p < 0.05$), People on your present job ($r = -0.341$, $p < 0.05$), and Supervision ($r = -0.339$, $p < 0.05$) following.

Discussion

The current study sought to investigate the role of EFL teachers' attribution in their job satisfaction and stress at work. According to Rotter's (1966) locus of control concept, locus orientation can be classified into two types: internal and external. When individuals have internal locus orientation, they believe that the ability to affect the consequences locates within themselves and emanates from their efforts, personality strength and intentions. On the contrary, individuals with external locus orientation ascribe outcomes to factors beyond their control (Rotter, 1966). With regard to teachers, similarly, those who consider their competence and effort as the main factors to efficiently influence student success and performance are regarded as having internal control, whereas teachers who believe that the environment has more impact on student learning than their own teaching skills are considered to have external control (Rose & Medway, 1981). Individuals with internal attributions have been found to be positively connected to job satisfaction and negatively to anxiety (Rees & Cooper, 1992; Schafer & MacKenna, 1991). This is due to the fact that internals believe they have input and contribution into the workplace, observe less emotional exhaustion, and obtain higher job satisfaction (Fuqua & Couture, 1986; Whitebook et al., 1982). In present study, the results indicated that among teacher attributions, TC and TE—both of which are internal attributions—predicted job satisfaction positively and significantly with TE having a greater influence. In other words, teachers who believe that the causes of success and failure resides within themselves, are under their control, and are apt to change have more job satisfaction. This is in line with Wang, Hall, and Rahimi's (2015) study on 523 Canadian teachers. The results of that study revealed that causal attributions independently predicted adjustment and quitting intentions – two indicators of job satisfaction. This finding, however, contradicts Bevis's (2008) research, indicating no relationship between locus of control and job satisfaction. Although no relationship between these two constructs was established in that study, Bevis found that 40% of teachers who were dissatisfied with their professions had an external locus of control.

The results of a correlation analysis indicated that among the subscales of job satisfaction, JIG, and opportunities for promotion have the highest correlation with TE. With the significant correlation to JIG—a scale that evaluates the overall satisfaction of individuals with their job—it would seem that teachers who attribute success and failure to internal, controllable, and unstable factors have greater job satisfaction. These findings are consistent with previous empirical studies. Deci and Ryan (1985) contended that employees who feel a sense of self-determination on the job consider themselves as the cause of and accountable for work actions, and are consequently more likely to receive intrinsic rewards and satisfaction from work. In a recent study, Basak and Ghosh (2011) found a negative association of external locus of control with all the domains of job satisfaction. This study determined that teachers with internal locus of control were more satisfied than teachers with external locus of control.

The relationship between TE and opportunities for promotion—a scale that assesses how individuals feel about the procedures that the administration follows in accordance with giving promotion—suggests that teachers who ascribe success and failure to their own ability and effort have a stronger belief in getting more opportunities for promotion in their profession. Furthermore, the SEM analysis explored the association of teacher attribution and stress at work. The results revealed that among the four attributions, TC and TE negatively and significantly predicted stress at work. Hence, it is reasonable to contend that teachers who believe the causes of success and failure emanate from intrinsically oriented attributions

experience lower stress at work. In other words, teachers who believe they can control what occurs in their everyday lives, report lower anxiety and higher self-esteem (Schultz, 2001). These teachers are less negatively influenced by stress in the workplace than teachers with an external locus. This appears to be because teachers with internal locus of control are more likely to attempt to alter whatever is causing the stress (Rydell & Henricsson, 2004).

In our proposed model, it was also hypothesized that stress plays a role in teachers' job satisfaction. Our results confirmed this hypothesis and indicated that teacher stress at work is negatively and significantly associated with job satisfaction. Therefore, it is plausible to say stress, which is typically considered as a negative motivational force among educationalists (Leung & Lee, 2006; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007), causes the teachers to undergo more burnout and emotional exhaustion in their profession (Ghanizadeh & Royaei, 2015; Yin et al., 2013) and consequently experience less satisfaction in what they do.

Identical analysis was performed for the subscales of job satisfaction and stress at work. As the findings indicated, the highest negative correlations were obtained between stress at work and pay and job in general (JIG). Survey data demonstrated that teachers, who believed the amount of salary they received is low, reported higher stress in their job. The relationship between stress at work and job in general was also explored in present study and a negative correlation was found between these two constructs. Accordingly, it is conceivable to believe that teachers who are not generally satisfied with their work have higher degree of stress. Results of this study are compatible with previous research. As Holdsworth and Cartwright (2003) stated, job dissatisfaction is one of the major sources of stress. The finding of some studies (e.g. Holdsworth & Cartwright, 2003; Sweeney & Quirin, 2009) indicated that there is a strong negative relationship between stress at work and job satisfaction. In addition, Antoniou et al. (2003) stated that low job satisfaction can be predicted through stress resources, i.e., occupation demands and excessive workload.

Conclusions

On the whole, the yielded findings of the present study lead to the conclusion that internal, controllable, and unstable attributions have a significant role in EFL teachers' job satisfaction and stress at work. Our results confirmed the significant relationship of job satisfaction and internal locus orientations. In other words, when individuals have internal locus orientation, they believe that the ability to affect the consequences locates within themselves and emanates from their efforts, competence and intentions (Rotter 1966). Therefore, it can be concluded that internal attributions are positively associated to job satisfaction and lower stress (Rees & Cooper, 1992; Schafer & MacKenna, 1991). This is due to the fact that internalizers believe they have input and contribution into the workplace, observe less emotional exhaustion, and obtain higher job satisfaction (Fuqua & Couture, 1986; Whitebook et al., 1982). Moreover, the present study investigated the role of stress at work in job satisfaction and the data analysis revealed that teachers who are not generally satisfied with their work have higher degree of stress. The information derived from this research can have important implications in teacher education: It notifies teachers of their enervating or unrealistic attributions. These findings also motivate teachers to change their attributions to positive and genuine ones which are supposed to accelerate the improvement of their incentive as well as their students' motivational mood. Teacher educators and administrators are also suggested to provide attribution training programs which try to find unrealistic attributions and assist teachers to alter them to the ones

that will result in increased motivation and greater success (Williams et al., 2004). Furthermore, survey data showed that teacher stress negatively influences job satisfaction. Thus, school authorities and institute principals are recommended to explore the prevalence of teacher stress and the main sources of stress facing teachers. They can also provide counseling services available to teachers who are feeling high levels of stress. Regarding job satisfaction, institutes are required to consider and improve the work-related factors that lead to increased job satisfaction.

There are a number of limitations for this study. First, in this research, only EFL teachers in language institutes in one city in Iran were selected as the participants. Thus, the study should be conducted with a) other samples from official schools and centers in different regions of the country, b) utilize procedures that confirm a higher degree of randomization and, c) eventually include more generalizability. Second, in the present study, questionnaires were used in order to collect data about the variables under investigation. Qualitative approaches such as interviews, case studies, and observations can also be used to explore these concepts. Third, in this investigation, teachers' demographic information was not controlled and their role on each concept was not considered.

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Appendix A: Two Examples of the TAS.

Examples come from Situations Five and Nine within our devised English Language Teacher Attribution Scale.

Situation 5
You have feel that you are making a difference in the lives of your students by empowering them and equipping them with higher-order thinking and learning skills. Please rate the role of each of the following causes involved in this situation:

1) Your high level of competence as a teacher   1☐   2☐   3☐   4☐   5☐   6☐

2) Your high level of effort as a teacher   1☐   2☐   3☐   4☐   5☐   6☐

3) Your students' high level of effort   1☐   2☐   3☐   4☐   5☐   6☐

4) The institution's role in proper supervision   1☐   2☐   3☐   4☐   5☐   6☐

Situation 9
Suppose in the end-of-term teacher evaluation report, you find yourself rated relatively lower in relation to other colleagues or in reference to your previous ratings. Please rate the role of each of the following causes involved in this situation:

1) Your low level of competence as a teacher   1☐   2☐   3☐   4☐   5☐   6☐

2) Your low level of effort as a teacher   1☐   2☐   3☐   4☐   5☐   6☐

3) Your students' low level of effort   1☐   2☐   3☐   4☐   5☐   6☐

4) The institution's role in improper supervision   1☐   2☐   3☐   4☐   5☐   6☐

Appendix B: Stress at Work (SAT) Scale

Do you find your job stressful? For each of the following words and phrases below, write:

Y for "Yes" if it describes the people with whom you work
N for "No" if it does not describe them
? for "?" if you cannot decide

___ Demanding   ___ Hassled

___ Pressured   ___ Nerve-racking

___ Calm   ___ More stressful than I'd like

___ Many things stressful   ___ Overwhelming