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English Language Teachers' Burnout Within the Cultural Dimensions Framework

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Abstract The aim of the present study was to explore burnout among Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers within Hofstede's cultural framework. To this end, first multiple correspondence analysis was run, and the results of which revealed a significant relationship between the cultural dimensions and the burnout components. Next, multiple regression analysis was employed to examine whether the cultural dimensions can predict any of the burnout components. Emotional exhaustion was found to be predicted by uncertainty avoidance and indulgence/restraint. Depersonalization was also predicted by masculinity/femininity and indulgence/restraint. Masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence/restraint were found to be the predictors of personal accomplishment. The risk of burnout among Iranian EFL teachers was also found to increase with low Indulgence, high avoidance of uncertainty, and low femininity. In the end, the findings were recommended to be infused in teacher pre- and in-service training which address the practical needs of EFL teachers.

Keywords Burnout · Hofstede's cultural model · Iranian EFL teacher

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Introduction

Teaching is commonly viewed as the safe and rewarding labor of love; it is, however, not without its own difficulties (Hargreaves 1998). Job stress represents the most prominent problem associated with this profession. Numerous studies consider teaching as a highly stressful profession around the world (e.g., Borg 1990; Cooper 1995; Dunham and Varma 1998; Hanif et al. 2011; Jing 2008; Kyriacou 2000; Travers and Cooper 1996). The amount and degree of stress a teacher experiences may have to do with the external issues such as students' misbehaviors, heavy workload, time pressure, and conflicting staff relationships in school management and administration (Milstein and Farkas 1988), or with the internal factors like negative self-perception, low morale, and the struggle to maintain personal values and standards in the classroom (Worrall and May 1989). Whatever the reason, many teachers manage to cope with high levels of stress while others collapse under the burden and experience burnout (Jennett et al. 2003).

Burnout has been defined as showing chronic symptoms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and loss of feelings of accomplishment as a result of work conditions (Maslach 1982). Teachers suffering from this syndrome start getting cynical views toward their job, their students, and even themselves (Shukla and Trivedi 2008). They also communicate less frequently with their students providing less information, praise, and agreement to their ideas (Beer and Beer 1992). The consequences transcend the classroom environment to include educational processes and even the society. A frustrated teacher who is detached from students cannot be beneficial to the workplace, the educational system, or the society (Shukla and Trivedi 2008).

From among different factors influencing the development of teacher burnout, one which has remained relatively

obscure is culture (Ullrich 2009). As a social construct, culture impacts individuals' perceptions and behaviors in distinct ways (Triandis 1995; Savicki 2001). That is, based on cultural differences, individuals may give distinct responses to daily concerns and problems and may make distinct choices of coping strategies. The investigation of the impact of culture would not be possible without figuring out how to quantify these cultural differences (Triandis 1995). This, in turn, would call for the application of a comprehensive empirical framework for the measurement of culture.

One of the outstanding models for the study of culture and cultural differences is that of Hofstede (1980). He introduced his cultural model through the dimensional approach. This approach conceptualizes culture as a multidimensional structure which can be evaluated along a set of particular dimensions. Hofstede's (1980) original model included four dimensions, namely, power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. He later expanded it into a six-dimensional model by adding two more dimensions of long-term versus short-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint (Hofstede et al. 2010).

This cultural model has proved fruitful for research in a range of different domains including cross-cultural psychology, sociology, and education (Søndergaard 1994; Steenkamp 2001). Therefore, due to the dearth of research on teacher burnout from a cultural perspective, this study investigates burnout among Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in light of Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural framework.

Theoretical Background

Hofstede's (1980) cultural model was developed using a large database collected by a multinational corporation (IBM) between 1967 and 1973. Based on a country level factor analysis, he classified 40 countries along four dimensions of national cultures. The four dimensions were power distance (PD), individualism versus collectivism (IC), masculinity versus femininity (MF), and uncertainty avoidance (UA). In the 1980s, a fifth dimension, namely, long-term versus short-term orientation (LSO) was added to the four, on the basis of research by Canadian psychologist Michael Bond centered in the Far East (Hofstede and Bond 1988). And, in the 2000s, research by Bulgarian scholar Michael Minkov (2007) using data from the World Values Survey resulted in the addition of a sixth dimension, i.e., Indulgence versus Restraint (IR). These dimensions are shortly explained in the following (Hofstede 2011):

1. PD is related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality. Although power and inequality are inevitable facts of any society, some are still more unequal than others. Accordingly, one way of distinguishing between nations can be based on how they tend to deal with these inequalities.
2. IC is related to the integration of individuals into primary groups. In individualistic cultures, everyone is expected to look after himself and his immediate family. In collectivist societies, however, people are integrated into cohesive in-groups, often extended families that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.
3. MF concerns the division of emotional roles between women and men. It opposes *tough* masculine to *tender* feminine societies. In masculine societies, men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, caring, and concerned with the quality of life. In feminine societies, both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender.
4. UA involves the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future. It deals with a society's tolerance for ambiguity and is not the same as risk avoidance. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of unstructured situations by strict behavioral codes, laws, and rules, disapproval of deviant opinions.
5. LSO is related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present and past. Long-term-oriented cultures show a pragmatic future-oriented perspective and underscore the values of thrift, perseverance, and adaptiveness. In short-term-oriented cultures, on the other hand, a conventional historical short-term point of view prevails and immediate need gratification and respect for traditions is encouraged.
6. IR corresponds to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life. Its main correlates were found to be happiness, life control, and importance of leisure. The indulgence pole is characterized by a perception that one can act as one pleases and indulge in fun-related activities. At the restraint pole, there is a perception that one's actions are restrained by social prohibitions and a feeling that enjoyment of leisurely activities are somewhat wrong and need to be regulated by strict social norms.

The publication of Hofstede's book, *Culture's Consequences*, in 1980 has provoked an influx of empirical studies based on the cultural theory introduced therein so that, compared to the existing cultural models, Hofstede's (1980) framework is believed to be the most influential on the related literature (Chandy and Williams 1994;

Sivakumar and Nakata 2001), and also the most widely cited in existence (Bond 2002).

A number of studies have investigated Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions in the Persian culture. For instance, Saboori et al. (2015a) constructed an emic scale (cultural dimensions scale) for the measurement of these six dimensions in the Iranian context, through which, they revealed the norm of each cultural dimension for an important Iranian subculture. In another study, Saboori et al. (2015b) explored the association between these dimensions and the three components of Iranian identity (national, religious, and modern). To this end, the cultural dimensions scale and the cultural attachment scale were administered to a sample of university students. The results revealed a significant relationship between cultural dimensions and the identity components. In the same vein, the present study employs this cultural framework for an examination of burnout among EFL teachers in the Iranian context.

Burnout

The concept of burnout was born in the 1970s as a metaphor referring to a state or process of the psychological deterioration or mental exhaustion similar to the extinguishing of a candle (Maslach et al. 2008). In its current sense, *burnout* was first used by the clinical psychologist, Herbert Freudenberger (1974), who borrowed it from the illicit drug scene, where it referred to the physical effects of chronic drug abuse. He defined burnout as "the state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from conditions of work" (Freudenberger 1974, p. 160).

This concept was first operationalized by Maslach and Jackson (1981) as a psychological syndrome composed of three components: emotional exhaustion (stress component), tendency to depersonalize others (evaluation of others component), and reduced sense of personal accomplishment (evaluation of self component). This three-dimensional portrayal is generally used as the basis for any discussion on teacher burnout, along with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, Maslach and Jackson 1981), which is the most widely-used self-report questionnaire or the *gold standard* for work on burnout (Maslach et al. 2008).

The first dimension is emotional exhaustion which represents the basic individual stress component of burnout (Maslach and Jackson 1986; Maslach et al. 2008). It refers to the draining of emotional and physical resources or the feeling of being overextended by one's job. Its notable diagnostic criteria are wearing out, loss of energy, depletion, debilitation, and fatigue. Depersonalization, as the second dimension, represents the interpersonal distancing component. It hinges on cynical and negative

attitudes or a feeling of indifference toward the recipients of one's services. Feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job as well as irritability, loss of idealism, and withdrawal comprise the diagnostic criteria for this dimension. Finally, lack of Personal Accomplishment represents the self-evaluation component of burnout. It is the tendency to assess one's work with people negatively involving a sense of incompetence, ineffectiveness, and inefficacy. It is also described as depression, low self-esteem, low morale, reduced productivity or capability, and an inability to cope.

Teacher Burnout

Just as burnout was first and foremost visible in human service occupations, much of the research on this syndrome has continued to be conducted within such people-oriented jobs perhaps due to the striking contrast between the negative stereotyping of the clients and a commonly considered professional attitude (Maslach and Schaufeli 1993). It is, then, not surprising that teaching, as an emotionally challenging and intensively interactive people work, has devoted a considerable share of burnout literature to itself (Schaufeli and Enzmann 1998). Teachers constitute the largest professional group represented in burnout research, comprising 22 % of all samples (Schaufeli and Enzmann 1998; Vanderberghe and Huberman 1999).

The reason could be that teaching is commonly believed to be a stressful profession (Guglielmi and Tatrow 1998; Kyriacou 2001; Maslach et al. 2001). Some sources of stress in teachers include lack of motivation in students (French 1993), administrative or policy-related issues, workload and time constraints, lack of instructional resources, lack of administrative support, and relationships with others (Cooley and Yovanoff 1996; Kyriacou 2001; Lambert and McCarthy 2006; Montgomery and Rupp 2005; Moriarty et al. 2001).

The investigation of burnout in teaching profession is of particular importance since the damage done by teacher burnout is not confined to his/her own wellbeing but might have repercussions for the teaching-learning processes in which he or she is immersed and even the educational system in general. Prior research testifies to the negative impact of burnout on student performance and quality of teaching (e.g., Vanderberghe and Huberman 1999), and on the interpersonal relations between student and teacher (e.g., Yoon 2002). Also, job dissatisfaction, work alienation, and teachers' leaving the profession are among the possible consequences of burnout (Vanderberghe and Huberman 1999).

As a major social dysfunction, burnout has been given proper attention in the empirical domain and its different aspects including its correlates (e.g., Ghazinour et al.

2003), causes (e.g., Schaufeli and Enzmann 1998), symptoms (e.g., Maslach 1982), and consequences (e.g., Maslach and Leiter 2005) have been excessively researched. Also, in the pedagogical arena, the empirical literature is far from scarce (e.g., Evers et al. 2005; Hakanen et al. 2006). The existing studies have addressed this phenomenon in relation to demographic variables (e.g., gender and age; Greenglass et al. 1990), personal traits (e.g., the Big Five model; Cano-Garcia et al. 2005), work-related factors (e.g., teaching experience and school type; Dorman 2003), and educational issues (e.g., methods of teaching and assessment; Pishghadam et al. 2014a). However, the contribution of cultural factors to burnout has remained considerably under-researched.

In a study on the role of demographic variables in burnout, Lau et al. (2005) investigated the relationship between teachers' gender, age, and the rate of their burnout in Hong Kong. Based on the results, gender was found to have significant association with all three burnout components, whereas age was the strongest predictor for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Regarding the relationship between personality traits and teacher burnout, Pishghadam and Sahebjam (2012) studied the effects of personality and emotional intelligence (EI) on teacher burnout in Iran. Their results indicated that the best predictors for emotional exhaustion were neuroticism and extroversion, for depersonalization were intrapersonal competency and agreeableness, and for Personal Accomplishment were interpersonal competency and conscientiousness. On the role of work-related and organizational factors, Van Horn et al. (1999) study on Dutch school teachers revealed that an imbalance between investments and outcomes (i.e., lack of reciprocity) in organizational exchange relationships was a significant cause of burnout among teachers. Considering educational issues, Pishghadam et al. (2014b) investigated if L2 teachers' life-responsive conceptions of teaching may have any the predictive power for teacher burnout. The results exhibited a significant relationship between the subscales of life-responsive language teaching perceptions and two dimensions of burnout. Specifically, the scores of life-wise empowerment were the best predictors for depersonalization among teachers and the scores from adaptability enhancement were the sole predictors for their personal accomplishment.

To reiterate, while teacher burnout has been extensively researched over the past 40 years, the impact of culture on this concept has received scant attention (Ullrich 2009). In the Iranian context, likewise, the contribution of cultural factors to burnout has remained considerably under-researched. To bridge this gap, the current study embarked on an investigation of Iranian EFL teachers' burnout in light of the cultural dimensions framework.

Purpose of the Study

The present study strived to delve into the concept of teacher burnout from a cultural perspective. To this end, it aimed, first, to explore the relationship between a group of EFL teachers' cultural dimensions and their burnout, and next, to examine whether the cultural dimensions can predict any of the burnout components. Accordingly, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between burnout components and the cultural dimensions?
2. Are the burnout components predicted by the cultural dimensions?

Methodology

Participants

The sample used in this study consisted of 173 EFL teachers working at private language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. As the second most populous city in the country, Mashhad is a multicultural city which is home to different ethnic groups such as Persians, Kurds, Khorasanis Turks, Turkmens, Arabs, and Afghans (Mashhad University of Medical Sciences 2015).

The participants answered both the validated scale and a questionnaire on burnout. This sample constituted about 25 % of the target population, namely, an estimated 700 EFL teachers in Mashhad. The participants were 114 female and 59 male teachers aged between 19 and 58 years (Mean = 28) with a range of between 1 and 24 years of teaching experience (Mean = 6.5). Most of the teachers had majored in English teaching (TEFL, $n = 109$) and others in English translation ($n = 43$) and English literature ($n = 21$) at BA ($n = 60$), MA ($n = 91$) or PhD ($n = 22$) level. The average length of their work hours was 24 h per week.

Instrumentation

To collect the required information, two instruments were administered to the sample: cultural dimensions scale (CDS, Saboori et al. 2015a) and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, Maslach and Jackson 1981).

Cultural Dimensions Scale

In order to measure the six cultural dimensions outlined in Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural model, namely, power distance (PD), individualism versus collectivism (IC), masculinity versus femininity (MF), uncertainty avoidance

(UA), long-term versus short-term orientation (LSO), and indulgence versus restraint (IR), CDS (Saboori et al. 2015a) was utilized (See Online Appendix 1). Certain features of CDS prompted the researchers to choose it over Hofstede's value survey module (VSM) for the purpose of this study. First, it was designed to be used at the individual-level of analysis, whereas VSM, according to Hofstede (2001), can only be used at the national-level. Second, CDS is an emic scale particularly designed and appropriate for the Iranian context. Third, VSM was developed, in the first place, to be answered by International Business Machines (IBM) employees; hence, it mostly contains work-related questions and, unlike CDS, is not quite suitable for general use purpose.

The validity of CDS was substantiated via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and its reliability was .79. This scale consisted of 26 four-point Likert scale items, ranging from (1) 'strongly agree' to (4) 'strongly disagree.' The scoring of some of the items needed to be reversed as the items included statements on both poles of each dimension. The scale was in Persian, the mother tongue of the participants. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient estimated for this study was equal to .82.

Maslach Burnout Inventory

The instrument employed in the second phase, along with the CDS, for the measurement of the participants' level of burnout was the Persian adaptation of Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, Maslach and Jackson 1981; See Online Appendix 2). The reason we did not use the original inventory (the English version) was to keep consistency between the two scales which were completed by the participants at the same time (both being in Persian) and hence increase the reliability of the results.

The Persian adaptation of MBI displays accurate indexes of reliability and validity (BadriGargari 1995). The reliability of the instrument varied from .74 to .84, and the factorial structure was congruent with the original version. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient estimated for this study was equal to 0.87. The 22-item inventory measures three subscales: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The items are rated in two fashions. First, based on frequency, in which the items are scored on a 7-point frequency scale ranging from (0) 'never' to (6) 'everyday.' Second, according to intensity, in which the items are scored on an 8-point scale ranging from (0) 'none' to (7) 'very much.' The higher the scores in both frequency and intensity, the more the participants experience the feeling of burnout. Since Maslach and Jackson (1981) affirmed the higher efficiency of the frequency scale over intensity scale for measuring burnout, this model was utilized in the current study.

Procedure

A group of 173EFL teachers filled out the CDS and IBM. It took them an average of 15 min to complete both questionnaires. The responses were then entered into and analyzed with SPSS (version 18). First, multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) was conducted to investigate the relationship between the burnout components as the dependent variables (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) and the cultural dimensions as the independent variables (PD, IC, MF, UA, LSO, and IR). MCA may also be referred to as homogeneity analysis or principal component analysis for nominal data. It is a graphical representation which visualizes the salient relationships and patterns in a multivariate data structure through mapping variables with similar profiles close together (Michailidis and De Leeuw 2005). Since MCA is an explanatory data technique for the analysis of categorical data (Benzecri 1992), it was necessary to re-codify the CDS and IBM scoring. Thus, low scores (up to percentile 33), medium scores (from percentiles 33 up to 66), and high scores (percentiles 66 and higher) were achieved. Thereafter, multiple regression analysis (MRA) was conducted to find out which of the cultural dimensions best predict burnout components.

Results

In order to investigate the relationship between English teachers' levels of burnout and their cultural dimensions, MCA was conducted. Next, to find out which cultural dimensions can be considered as predictors of teacher burnout, MRA was performed. To start with, Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the factors related to the two administered instruments: CDS and MBI.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for CDS and MBI

		N	Mean	Standard deviation
CDS	Power distance	173	2.9854	0.35325
	Individualism/collectivism	173	2.2621	0.29510
	Masculinity/femininity	173	2.4524	0.36078
	Uncertainty avoidance	173	2.7087	0.39154
	Long/short-term orientation	173	2.5024	0.36464
	Indulgence/restraint	173	3.1214	0.46949
MBI	Emotional exhaustion	173	11.9126	8.41813
	Depersonalization	173	3.1165	2.98789
	Personal accomplishment	173	35.4660	9.40360

Multiple Correspondence Analysis

To answer the first research question, an MCA was run for the cultural dimensions and the burnout components. Figure 1 displays the graphic representation of the MCA for the CDS and MBI inventories. The plot demonstrates the relationships between the variables. The row and column points which seem to be close together share identical profiles, whereas the ones which are placed far from each other hold different profiles. The Cronbach's Alpha for this model was equal to 0.88, which shows a high reliability. The analysis presented a 77 % level of adjustment, which manifests the accuracy rate of categorization. Three groups have been highlighted. They are named from Group A to Group C to make the interpretation easier.

Group A includes teachers with high scores in Personal Accomplishment, PD, and IR, in association with low scores in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, IC, UA, MF, and LSO, and medium scores in emotional exhaustion, PD, IC, and LSO. Group B represents teachers with high scores in IC and medium scores in personal accomplishment, UA, IR, and MF in relation to low scores in PD. Finally, Group C stands for teachers with high scores in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, UA, MF, and LSO along with low scores in personal accomplishment and IR, and medium scores in depersonalization.

Multiple Regression Analysis

With respect to the second research question, an MRA was conducted on each of the burnout components using

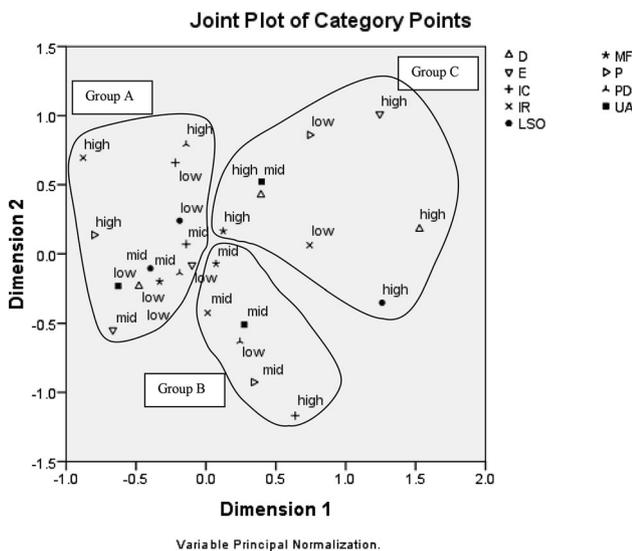


Fig. 1 Joint description of CDS and MBI (*E* emotional exhaustion, *D* depersonalization, *P* personal accomplishment, *PD* power distance, *IC* individualism/collectivism, *MF* masculinity/femininity, *UA* uncertainty avoidance, *LSO* long/short-term orientation, *IR* indulgence/restraint)

cultural dimensions as predictors. Prior to conducting MRA, correlations between the dependent and independent variables were checked. Table 2 shows the results.

As can be seen in table, significant relationships were found between cultural dimensions and burnout components (ranging from .20 to .46). First, emotional exhaustion turned out to have a significant and positive correlation with UA and a significant and negative correlation with IR. Moreover, depersonalization was found to have a significant and negative correlation with IR as well as significant and positive correlations with MF, UA, and LSO. Finally, personal accomplishment had significant and negative correlations with MF and UA in addition to significant and positive correlations with PD and IR. It is noteworthy that the highest significant correlation was between Personal Accomplishment and IR ($r = .46$).

Prediction of Emotional Exhaustion

As evident in Table 3, there is one significant model ($F = 3.7$, model sig = .000, $p < .01$) with UA and IR as the predictors. It also shows that R^2 equals .19 indicating that, in this regression model, about 20 % of the variance can be predicted from the independent variables. That is to say, the scores of UA and IR account for nearly 20 % of the variance in emotional exhaustion.

Furthermore, the standard error of estimate displays the precision of a prediction model. The smaller the standard error of estimate, the more reliable the prediction. In this model, it is 3.80 which is an acceptable value. Regarding Beta coefficients, the relationship between emotional exhaustion and UA is significantly positive ($B = .21$, $p < .01$), while the one for IR is significantly negative ($B = -.37$, $p < .01$), with IR appearing as a stronger predictor for this dimension of burnout. It is, accordingly, implied that having high scores in UA and low scores in IR best predicts high scores in emotional exhaustion. In other words, teachers who highly avoid ambiguous and unknown situations and lead rather restraint lives are more likely to become emotionally exhausted by their profession and experience burnout.

Prediction of Depersonalization

Table 4 demonstrates that there is only one significant model ($F = 5.1$, model sig = .000, $p < .01$) with again two predictors. It also indicates that depersonalization has a significant and positive correlation with MF ($B = .25$, $p < .01$) and a significant and negative correlation with IR ($B = -.33$, $p < .01$), the latter being a stronger predictor for this burnout component.

As evident in this table, R^2 of the model is .24 which means, in this regression model, 24 % of the variance in

Table 2 Correlations between dependent and independent variables (*PD* power distance, *IC* individualism/collectivism, *MF* masculinity/femininity, *UA* uncertainty avoidance, *LSO* long/short-term orientation, *IR* indulgence/restraint)

	PD	IC	MF	UA	LSO	IR
Emotional exhaustion	.089	-.078	.029	.223*	.158	-.334**
Depersonalization	.064	.043	.297**	.203*	.217*	-.375**
Personal accomplishment	.213*	-.014	-.228*	-.256*	-.167	.467**

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 3 MRAs for emotional exhaustion (*UA* uncertainty avoidance, *IR* indulgence/restraint)

Model	Predictors	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>	SD error of the estimate	<i>P</i>	<i>B</i>
1	UA	.436	.190	.140	3.761	3.80789	.000	.219
	IR							-.374

Table 4 MRAs for depersonalization (*MF* masculinity/femininity, *IR* indulgence/restraint)

Model	Predictors	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>	SD error of the estimate	<i>P</i>	<i>B</i>
1	MF	.492	.242	.195	5.106	2.68155	.000	.254
	IR							-.336

depersonalization can be predicted from the independent variables, namely, MF and UA. The standard error of estimate is 2.68 warranting the high accuracy of the prediction. Altogether, this regression model implies that teachers with dominant masculine qualities and relatively less indulgent lives are probably expected to become indifferent toward their learners and experience burnout.

Prediction of Personal Accomplishment

Based on Table 5, a single significant model ($F = 10.57$, model sig = .000, $p < .01$) was found holding MF, UA, and IR as the predictors. Based on table, R^2 equals .39, which means that these three cultural dimensions can altogether account for about 40 % of the variance in Personal Accomplishment.

Besides, the standard error of estimate is 1.5 which alludes to the accuracy of prediction. Based on Beta coefficients, the relationship between Personal Accomplishment and IR is significant and positive ($B = .41$, $p < .01$), while

those for MF ($B = -.26$, $p < .01$) and UA ($B = -.29$, $p < .01$) are significant and negative. Also, IR turned out to be the strongest predictor for this dimension of burnout. It follows that having low scores in MF and UA along with high scores in IR best predicts high scores in Personal Accomplishment. That is to say, teachers who have dominant feminine qualities are tolerant of unorthodox ideas and situations, and lead more indulgent, happier lives, holding positive feelings of competence, meaningfulness and achievement, and are less likely to experience burnout.

Discussion

The present study had two goals. The first one was to explore the relationship between Hofstede et al.'s (2010) six cultural dimensions and the three components of burnout. The results of the MCA showed that the six cultural dimensions were significantly correlated with the EFL teachers' burnout.

Table 5 MRAs for personal accomplishment (*MF* masculinity/femininity, *UA* uncertainty avoidance, *IR* indulgence/restraint)

Model	Predictors	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>	SD error of the estimate	<i>P</i>	<i>B</i>
1	MF	.631	.398	.360	10.575	1.52117	.000	-.268
	UA							-.293
	IR							.419

The joint description of CDS and MBI revealed three groups, two of which had particular importance in illustrating the association between the cultural dimensions and the high and low burnout levels. As was indicated, high scores in Personal Accomplishment, PD, and IR are in association with low scores in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, IC, UA, MF, and LSO, and medium scores in emotional exhaustion, PD, IC, and LSO. That is, EFL teachers are generally less likely to experience burnout (in all its three dimensions) if they feel happy with their lives, value self-stability and self-enhancement, are collectivist, comfort with authority and hierarchical order, do not avoid unknown situations and ideas, and have dominant feminine qualities. Moreover, it was found that high scores in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, MF, UA, and LSO are significantly correlated with low scores in personal accomplishment and IR, and medium scores in depersonalization. It follows that these teachers are more susceptible to burnout (again in all its three dimensions) in case they do not lead happy lives, unwelcome ambiguous, and unknown situations, and do not have stable and consistent beliefs. This result was further confirmed by the results of the MRA.

The second goal was to examine whether any of the cultural dimensions can predict EFL teachers' burnout. Based on the results, high scores in emotional exhaustion were predicted by high scores in UA and low scores in IR. That is, teachers who avoid unorthodox ideas and situations and lead rather restraint lives are more likely to become emotionally exhausted by their profession than their colleagues who are tolerant of uncertainty and underscore happiness and leisure in their lives.

The explanation seems to be clear. Emotional exhaustion represents "the basic individual stress dimension of burnout" (Maslach et al. 2008, p. 90), and high UA produces high levels of anxiety and stress (Hofstede et al. 2010). Hence, the greater avoidance of uncertainty would most probably lead to stronger Exhaustion. This finding confirmed Savicki (2001) indicating that higher uncertainty avoidance contributed to the prediction of emotional exhaustion. Also, the feelings of unhappiness, helplessness, and lack of personal life control are the basic manifestations of low IR (Hofstede et al. 2010). These feelings, when extended to one's work, are naturally much likely to make the person feel overextended and exhausted by his/her job.

The best prediction of high scores in depersonalization was provided by high scores in MF and low scores in IR. In other words, EFL teachers with dominant masculine qualities and relatively restraint lives are probably expected to become indifferent and lose concern toward their learners. Regarding MF, the predictive role seems to be quite logical since high masculinity and low femininity means greater emphasis on ego than on social relationships

(Hofstede et al. 2010). Meanwhile, the concept of depersonalization builds heavily on the demanding relationship between the caregiver and the recipient (Maslach 1982). Hence, it is not surprising that in teaching, as a people's job (Shukla and Trivedi 2008), predominant masculinity leads to a lack of care for and undermining the relationship with the learners, i.e., depersonalization.

Also, the prediction by low scores in IR can be justified on the grounds that happiness entails easy sociability and appropriate interaction with others (Antonio 2000). In contrast, leading a less happy and more restraint life fosters various forms of negativism and societal cynicism, including more frequent experiences of negative emotions in general and toward other people (Bond et al. 2004). Accordingly, EFL teachers with low IR are more prone to taking a cynical stance toward individuals for whom they are working, i.e., to depersonalization (Maslach and Jackson 1981).

Finally, high scores in Personal Accomplishment were found to be predicted by low scores in MF and UA and high scores in IR. It follows that, EFL teachers with feminine qualities who are tolerant of the ambiguous and unknown and lead more indulgent lives tend to hold positive feelings of competence, meaningfulness, and achievement. Regarding MF, the result seems rather surprising since one would expect Personal Accomplishment to have more to do with ego-oriented masculine qualities of competitiveness, advancement, and being the best rather than feminine qualities stressing interpersonal relationships and care for others. However, a closer look at the situation of language teaching in Iran may clear the air. In this country, teaching English in language institutes primarily applies communicative methods so that teacher's rapport and relationship with, and care for learners is underscored in these classes. It follows that English teachers who possess this asset (feminine features) can better fulfill the demands of this job and are consequently more likely to feel competent and successful in their work.

Furthermore, UA prediction can be justified considering the fact that when one does not feel threatened by ambiguous and unknown situations s/he experiences lower levels of stress and anxiety and is, thus, more likely to have a feeling of Personal Accomplishment. This finding is line with Oettingen (1995) and Sanchez-Francho and Lopez (2009) arguing that lower avoidance of uncertainty can lead to stronger self-efficacy.

As for IR, similar to its two aforementioned predictions, it can be argued that high indulgence entails a perception of life control, happiness, and positive attitude (Hofstede et al. 2010). A person with these characteristics is more apt to have a feeling of competence and meaningfulness in his work with people.

To conclude, the three cultural dimensions found to significantly increase the risk of burnout of Iranian EFL teachers were IR, UA, and MF. The contributing role of the first two is self-evident with an eye toward the main causes of burnout, namely, job stress and depression (Maslach 1982). In other words, low IR results in unhappiness and depression and high UA leads to high levels of stress and anxiety (Hofstede 2001) and these two factors, in turn, are among the primary provokers of burnout (Maslach 1982). It is notable that the remarkable predictive power of IR for teacher burnout (in its all three dimensions) was also revealed by two other studies conducted in Iran, namely, Vaezi and Fallah (2011) and Shams et al. (2014). Moreover, the fact that teaching is basically a people's job occurring in an interpersonal context and that teacher's rapport and relationship with learners and care for them is particularly emphasized in language institutes in Iran alludes to the great importance of possessing feminine qualities for competent Iranian English teachers. It follows that EFL teachers with dominant masculinity and low femininity are more prone to experiencing burnout. This is in line with Sale (2004) pointing out the same association between MF and burnout. All in all, the results of this phase agree with Ullrich (2009) and Savicki (1999) stating that cultural factors can play a role in the development of teacher burnout.

The findings of the present study contribute to the current literature on EFL teacher burnout in several ways. First, identifying factors that may trigger burnout symptoms can improve supports for teachers, learners, and educational centers (Cooley and Yovanoff 1996). A better understanding of the cultural factors and dimensions that are associated with and predict burnout in EFL teachers can inform efforts to prevent or reduce burnout and increase coping strategies and skills in teachers. Exploring these factors may also contribute to stronger professional development and efficacy of teachers (Makkonen 2005; Richin et al. 2003).

Furthermore, these findings should be infused in teacher pre- and in-service training which address the practical needs of EFL teachers. It may be beneficial to raise their awareness of the process of burnout and providing opportunities to reflect on relevant cultural characteristics and coping resources early in the teacher training process. Teachers with the solid content knowledge who are ignorant of helpful behaviors that promote their professional efficacy will be ineffective in their teaching and are more at risk of burnout (Ullrich 2009). It is, then, important to figure out how these behaviors can be learned. There are also a number of studies which prove the effectiveness of interventions and in-service training fed by information from research on the promoting and preventing factors of burnout (e.g., Chan 2010; Seligman et al. 2005).

Results of this study should be interpreted in light of some limitations. First, such factors as age, gender, and education level were not controlled for in this study. Future research can examine whether controlling for these variables can yield different results. Moreover, survey was the only method applied for the data collection. In order to conduct a more comprehensive examination of culture, future studies need to collect data through other methods such as interview and observation. Finally, as the findings revealed a relationship between culture teacher burnout, future studies could explore the effectiveness of culturally devised interventions in preventing or eliminating the symptoms of burnout.

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