

Understanding Teacher Resilience: Perception of Novice and Experienced English Teachers on Prominent Components

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Abstract

Teacher resilience has become an important international concern in recent years, especially amid the rapid growth in research on positive psychology. Yet, despite the growing body of international research on teacher resilience within the framework of positive psychology, empirical studies that systematically examine the specific components of resilience across different career stages, particularly within non-Western and EFL contexts such as Iran, remain limited. Adopting a descriptive-survey design, the present study aimed to examine the perceptions of novice and experienced Iranian English teachers regarding the prominent components of resilience and the possible differences between the two groups. For this purpose, 400 Iranian English teachers, both novice and experienced, were selected by convenience sampling from language institutes in Isfahan, Iran, and the data were collected using the English Language Teacher Resilience Instrument (ELTRI) and analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and an independent-samples t-test. The findings revealed that internal motivation and social skills were the most prominent resilience components for novice and experienced English teachers. Furthermore, comparing the two groups revealed that experienced teachers obtained higher scores in social skills and internal motivation components of resilience. The implications of the findings and the suggestions for further research are discussed in this paper.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher resilience has been increasingly recognized by numerous researchers as a crucial attribute of teacher dedication and well-being (Day et al., 2006; Hascher et al., 2021; Mansfield et al., 2016). The concept of resilience is perceived as empowering educators to effectively handle the daily obstacles inherent to their role (Day, 2016) and to flourish in the educational field (Beltman et al., 2011). Gu and Day (2013) defined teacher resilience as “the ability to maintain stability and a sense of dedication and control in the day-to-day environments where teachers operate” (p. 26).

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The significance of resilience in teaching, especially for EFL teachers, as [Liu and Chu \(2024\)](#) state, is highlighted by three main rationales. Firstly, educators must exemplify resilience to encourage students to develop similar resilience. Secondly, shifting the emphasis from burnout to resilience is crucial to sustained teacher commitment. Thirdly, the capacity to bounce back indicates a sense of control and drive that fosters success across various aspects of students' lives ([Gu & Day, 2007](#)).

[Mansfield et al. \(2012a\)](#) contended that teacher resilience encompasses four dimensions, as observed in the experiences of new and graduating teachers: professional, emotional, social, and motivational. Each dimension incorporates competencies and capabilities that enhance the endurance of teacher commitment and drive within the profession. The professional dimension entails proficiency in teaching, classroom management, learning facilitation, and flexibility and adaptability. The motivational dimension encompasses self-assurance, persistence, realistic expectations, and a positive mindset ([Mansfield et al., 2012a](#)). Emotionally, teachers need a sense of humor, resilience, emotional regulation, and the ability not to internalize negative experiences. Socially, teachers benefit from seeking assistance, developing interpersonal skills, being open to feedback, and building a network of personal and professional support ([Mansfield et al., 2012a](#)).

Similarly, [Li et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Daniilidou et al. \(2020\)](#) have reached the same conclusion regarding the multidimensional nature of teacher resilience. [Li et al. \(2019\)](#) suggested a multidimensional model with three underlying factors in a study involving primary and secondary Chinese teachers: professional commitment and motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. The impact of school leaders on teacher resilience components was found to be more significant than that of work conditions ([Li et al., 2019](#)). Meanwhile, [Daniilidou et al. \(2020\)](#) examined primary teachers in Greece using [Mansfield et al.'s \(2016\)](#) framework and confirmed the multidimensional model, highlighting emotional resilience as the most prominent factor and a full mediator in the relationships among teacher self-efficacy, burnout, and stress.

While there is broad consensus on its importance, the operationalization and measurement of resilience remain contested, with multiple conceptual frameworks proposed in the literature. Prominent models include [Mansfield et al.'s \(2016\)](#) four-dimensional framework (professional, motivational, emotional, and social) and [Li et al.'s \(2019\)](#) model, which emphasizes the interaction between personal resources and contextual influences. For the present study, we adopt the four-component model comprising internal motivation, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support ([Liu et al., 2024](#)). This model was selected for its specific applicability to the current research context for three key reasons. First, it provides a comprehensive yet discrete categorization of factors that bridges personal attributes (e.g., motivation and skills) with the essential environmental component of support, offering a holistic lens for analysis ([Wang et al., 2025](#)). Second, its development and validation within language teacher populations ([Liu et al., 2024](#)) make it particularly suited for investigating resilience among English language teachers, our focal group. Third, its alignment with the English language teacher resilience instrument ensures methodological coherence, while the framework itself offers the critical analytical lens required to dissect the complex, multifaceted nature of resilience in specific educational settings.

However, a critical limitation in applying such models is the tendency to treat teacher resilience as a static construct, thereby overlooking how it may evolve across a career. Prior research has disproportionately focused on novice teachers, implicitly framing resilience as a concern primarily for the induction phase ([Shields & Mullen, 2020](#)). This creates a significant gap, as the experiences and resources of seasoned educators are neglected. Consequently, the field lacks a nuanced understanding of whether the salience and interplay of key resilience components differ between career stages. For instance, theoretical reasoning suggests that while novice teachers,

including novice EFL teachers, might depend more heavily on external contextual support and the development of basic pedagogical skills to navigate initial challenges, experienced teachers may draw more deeply on internal motivation and refined social networks for professional sustenance and leadership (Day & Gu, 2014; Hiver, 2018). Yet, such propositions lack robust quantitative investigation. Therefore, the novel theoretical and practical value of this study lies in its specific comparative, quantitative approach using the four-component model. Simply replicating the ELTRI in a new context (Iran) offers limited advancement. Our study's significance is sharply defined by its aim to empirically test and compare the structural dynamics of resilience between novice and experienced teachers. Theoretically, we ask whether the four-component model holds equally across career phases, or whether the relative weights and intercorrelations of internal motivation, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support differ significantly. This inquiry challenges the assumption of a one-size-fits-all resilience structure and contributes to a more dynamic, career-phase-sensitive theory of teacher resilience.

Practically, this comparative design generates actionable insights. By identifying distinct resilience profiles, the findings can inform the development of targeted, stage-specific support programs. For example, if results confirm that novice teachers' resilience is more tightly linked to contextual support, interventions for this group can focus on strengthening mentorship and school resources. Conversely, if experienced teachers' resilience is more closely tied to internal motivation, professional development can shift to foster leadership roles and renewed purpose. This moves beyond generic resilience promotion to offer precise guidance for teacher educators, school administrators, and policymakers (Mansfield et al., 2016).

In sum, despite the recent surge in interest surrounding teacher resilience (Gu, 2018; Mansfield et al., 2018; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018), the conceptual and empirical exploration in this area is still in its early stages (Fan et al., 2021; Gu, 2018; Wosnitza & Peixoto, 2018). Language teacher resilience (LTR) has been relatively neglected (Hiver, 2018; Kostoulas & Lämmerer, 2018; Liu & Chu, 2022). While some initial qualitative studies have examined English language teacher resilience, focusing on resilience strategies (Kostoulas & Lämmerer, 2018; Fan et al., 2021), there is a call for more extensive quantitative research to uncover the internal structure of language teacher resilience. Scrutinizing the measurement of language teacher resilience not only helps teachers overcome challenges and nurture their professional growth but also elevates the overall research landscape on this topic. Moreover, existing resilience studies predominantly involve novice teachers, overlooking experienced educators who wield significant influence and transformative power (Shields & Mullen, 2020). To bridge this research gap, the present study employs a quantitative approach to examine how novice and experienced Iranian English teachers perceive the pivotal elements of resilience.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the major findings of prior studies (e.g., Beltman et al., 2011), teacher resilience emerges through a multifaceted, constantly evolving, interactive process that encompasses personal and contextual elements across different stages of the teacher's professional journey. However, this interactive model is often described theoretically, with empirical studies tending to list factors rather than meticulously trace their dynamic interplay over time. The personal aspects contributing to teacher resilience comprise elements such as drive and effectiveness (Morgan, 2011), positivity, social and emotional skills (Ee & Chang, 2010), possessing a moral calling and a sense of mission (Gu, 2014; Gu & Day, 2013), bravery (Le Cornu, 2013), optimism and high anticipations (Huisman et al., 2010), and recognizing the inherent value in the enjoyment derived from teaching (Hong, 2012). Shirazizadeh and Abbaszadeh (2023) conducted semi-structured

interviews with 14 Iranian EFL teachers, complemented by a review of the relevant literature on teacher resilience, to develop an instrument to assess teacher resilience. The findings revealed five factors: internal motivations, social skills, emotional management, pedagogical skills, and contextual support. While comprehensive, this cataloguing approach risks presenting resilience as a static inventory of traits rather than a process, and it seldom ranks or explores the relative weight of these factors under different stressors. Further explanation of motivation will be provided herein.

Several studies also suggest that the nature of motivation for selecting the teaching profession and engaging as a teacher influences resilience (Flores, 2006; Gu & Day, 2007). Chiong et al. (2017), in their study on experienced teachers in England, propose that teachers' motivation encompasses their sense of purpose, categorizing it as intrinsic motivation (passion for the job) and altruistic motivation (undertaking a socially significant job), and observed that these rationales, along with perceived professional proficiency, collectively constituted the majority of the explanations regarding teachers' initial entry and continued presence in the profession. This finding underscores the role of motivation in retention, yet it raises a critical question: how resilient are these different motivational types when confronted with the harsh realities of teaching, such as administrative overload or student behavioral challenges? It has been widely documented that a vocational drive and a sense of purpose are pivotal factors that draw individuals to teaching (Weiner, 1990), and it is argued that upholding these convictions is crucial to teachers' dedication (Day, 2019; Greenfield, 2015). The literature here often assumes a linear relationship, but a critical gap exists in understanding how these initial convictions are challenged, reshaped, or sustained.

Empirical investigations into teachers' career preferences have consistently revisited the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic incentives (e.g., Fuller, 2022; Sinclair, 2008). This persistent binary, while useful, can be reductive, as motivations are often complex and blended. Hence, intrinsic and extrinsic elements have been delineated. Sinclair (2008) identifies factors such as interacting with children, intellectual stimulation, altruism, authority and leadership, self-assessment, and personal and professional advancement among the intrinsic motivators. Conversely, factors such as career shifts, work environments, work-life balance, external influences, and the characteristics of the teaching role are classified as extrinsic motivators. Notably, some factors, such as "personal and professional advancement," straddle this dichotomy, suggesting the framework's limitations.

According to research, the primary motivations for individuals pursuing a career in teaching are intrinsic and altruistic (Chong & Low, 2009; Kwa & Kim, 2022). Rothland (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of career decisions made by teachers in Germany, revealing that a prevalent rationale across studies was the desire to nurture children and adolescents, as well as the satisfaction derived from collaborating with them. The decision to enter the teaching profession is predominantly steered by intrinsic motives, particularly those centered around individuals and relationships (Rothland, 2011). The prevalence of intrinsic incentives is viewed positively because of the correlation between high intrinsic motivation and enhanced self-esteem, increased drive for accomplishment, greater competence evaluation, and substantial competence development during teacher training (Rothland, 2011; Uysal, 2023). This correlation is significant, but it primarily speaks to the initial training phase. A critical review must question whether this "positivity bias" towards intrinsic motivation adequately prepares us for understanding resilience later, when extrinsic factors like poor pay or difficult working conditions become pressing demotivators. Notably, strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for career selection can coexist harmoniously. Opting for a career in teaching seems primarily driven by intrinsic factors rather than extrinsic ones, possibly influenced by the favorable image of the teaching profession and reflective of the

enthusiasm and idealism among aspiring educators (Lipowsky, 2003). This observation highlights a potential vulnerability, i.e., whether resilience is built on idealism or what happens when that idealism meets systemic constraints.

Contextual elements play a vital role in upholding and fortifying teacher resilience. These elements encompass support within the school environment, including assistance from colleagues, effective leadership, a positive school climate, and nurturing relationships with peers (Diab & Green, 2024; Le Cornu, 2013). Additionally, external personal support from family and friends also contributes significantly to a teacher's resilience (Mansfield et al., 2014). The literature correctly positions context as a scaffold, but often treats it as a backdrop rather than an active, sometimes oppressive, force. Studies indicate that inadequate support from school leadership and strained relationships with colleagues, students, or parents can impede teachers' resilience capabilities (Gu & Li, 2013; Wang & Lo, 2022), underscoring the significance of contextual aspects (Cefai, 2007; Mansfield et al., 2012b) and personal as well as professional relationships in effectively navigating challenges and maintaining dedication to the teaching profession (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Papatraianou & Le Cornu, 2014). This is a crucial point, as it implies that contextual factors can not only support but also actively undermine personal resilience traits, a dynamic that needs more explicit exploration. The resilience literature emphasizes the importance of seeking assistance as a coping mechanism when educators encounter challenges in managing diverse stressors in the school setting (Castro et al., 2010; Sharplin et al., 2011) and frames help-seeking as a reactive strategy, whereas a more critical perspective might also examine how school cultures proactively foster or inhibit such seeking behaviors.

Developing strong, positive relationships is widely recognized as a valuable skill that enhances resilience, as highlighted in numerous academic publications. For instance, Doney (2013) observed in her case study that novice educators benefited from establishing support systems with individuals both within and outside the educational institution. Similarly, Castro et al. (2010), viewing resilience as a dynamic process rather than an inherent trait, noted that new teachers demonstrated effective coping mechanisms by seeking assistance and fostering connections with their colleagues. Patterson et al. (2004) also emphasized the significance of proactive measures and strategies in their examination of educators in urban settings. While these studies valuably shift the focus from trait to process, they predominantly focus on early-career teachers. A significant gap in the critical literature is how relationship-building as a resilience strategy evolves, becomes more strategic, or faces different challenges for mid- and late-career teachers.

The significance of relationships extends to interactions among teachers, between teachers and students, and with school administrators, as indicated by Beltman et al. (2011), Gu (2014), Gu and Day (2007), Johnson et al. (2014), Mansfield et al. (2014; 2016). Each of these relationships is believed to offer unique support to teachers. Teacher-teacher connections, for example, are primarily characterized by providing encouragement (Gu, 2014; Mansfield et al., 2016; Papatraianou & Le Cornu, 2014). Nevertheless, it has been suggested that peer relationships can also yield additional benefits, such as collaboratively accessing resources (Ebersöhn, 2012) or fostering a sense of belonging (Johnson et al., 2014). Furthermore, personal and professional support networks, including family and social connections, are considered advantageous (Papatraianou & Le Cornu, 2014). Considering these aspects, the current research endeavors to address the following research questions.

1. Which of the teacher resilience components (i.e., internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support) are more prominent from the novice Iranian English teachers' perspective?

2. Which of the teacher resilience components (i.e., internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support) are more prominent from the experienced Iranian English teachers’ perspective?
3. Are there any differences between novice and experienced Iranian EFL learners in terms of resilience components?

3. METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

A descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. This design is used in studies that need to establish an accurate portrayal or account of participants’ characteristics in terms of behavior, opinions, abilities, beliefs, and knowledge without manipulating the outcomes (Burns & Grove, 1993; Neuman, 2000). The required data for this study were collected from novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers of language institutes in Isfahan, Iran.

Participants

The participants comprised 400 Iranian female and male English teachers of language institutes in Isfahan, Iran, selected by convenience sampling. Opting for a convenience sampling procedure benefits the researcher by allowing them to rely on available participants during the research process and by saving time, which is another significant benefit of convenience sampling (Mackey et al., 2006). The teachers, including novice and experienced ones, were Persian speakers; none had lived or taught in an English-speaking country. Harmsen et al. (2018) state that novice teachers have no to three years of teaching experience. Accordingly, three years of teaching experience was set as a criterion for grouping the participants of the present study into novice and experienced teachers. Demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Participants

Demographics		N	Percentage
Age	23-31	162	40.5
	32-40	148	37
	41-50	90	22.5
Gender	Male	166	41.5
	Female	234	58.5
Level of education	Bachelor’s	176	44
	Master’s	188	47
	PhD	36	9
Years of teaching experience	3<	174	43.5
	3>	226	56.5

As shown in Table 1, the most frequent age group was 23-31, and participants were mainly female. Most participating teachers held master’s degrees and had less than three years of teaching experience.

Instrument

English Language Teacher Resilience Instrument (ELTRI; Shirazizadeh & Abbaszadeh, 2023)

It is designed to assess English teachers’ resilience by the four components of internal motivations (e.g., “I am optimistic about my future as an English teacher”), social skills (e.g., “I am unable to

adapt myself to my students' culture”), pedagogical skills (e.g., “The out-of-date books and materials that I have to teach make me disappointed”), and contextual support (e.g., “I ask my family for advice when I face teaching problems such as problems in classroom management”). ELTRI also provides a total or global score of teacher resilience and includes 30 items. The responses are rated on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The internal consistency and convergent and divergent validity of the scores are confirmed by Shirazizadeh and Abbaszadeh (2023). The Cronbach's alpha reliability of this instrument was .87 in the present study.

Procedure

The data were collected from 400 Iranian English teachers of English language institutes in Isfahan. For this purpose, the participants were informed about the research goals and requested to complete the instruments. The instruments were distributed manually. Additionally, the phone number and email address of the first researcher in this study were provided to participants so they could contact her with any questions about these instruments. It should be noted that the participants signed the consent form, and the aims and objectives of the study were explained to them both orally and in written form. Finally, they were given small gifts as an appreciation.

Data Analysis

The data from novice and experienced teachers were analyzed using a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA to identify the most prominent resilience components and an independent-samples t-test was run to compare both groups in terms of the most prominent resilience components.

4. RESULTS

The first research question sought to identify the teacher resilience components that are more prominent from the perspective of novice Iranian English teachers. A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to compare novice teachers' scores across the four components of resilience. It is noteworthy that the ANOVA assumptions were checked before conducting the analysis.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Resilience Components in Novice Teachers

	Mean	SD	N
Internal motivation	48.73	7.45	174
Social skills	35.8	3.85	174
Pedagogical skills	28.62	4.2	174
Contextual support	21.03	4.44	174

The mean scores for the resilience components differed. However, the multivariate test results indicate whether the differences are statistically significant (Table 2).

Table 3: Multivariate Test for Resilience Components in Novice Teachers

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	.96	761.7	3	171	.00	.79
Wilks' Lambda	.03	761.7	3	171	.00	.79
Hotelling's Trace	27.2	761.7	3	171	.00	.79
Roy's Largest Root	27.2	761.7	3	171	.00	.79

The result of Wilk's Lambda $F(3, 171) = 761.7, P = .00$ indicates a statistically significant difference among the resilience components' scores (Table 3). The pairwise comparison results, conducted by the Bonferroni Post-hoc test (Table 4), show the components whose difference was significant.

Table 4: Pairwise Comparisons of Resilience Components in Novice Teachers

(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Internal motivation	Social skills	12.93*	.63	.000
	Pedagogical skills	20.11*	.85	.000
	Contextual support	27.7*	.65	.000
Social skills	Pedagogical skills	7.18*	.48	.000
	Contextual support	14.77*	.4	.000

***Mean difference is significant at the .05 level**

The pairwise comparisons table shows that the difference in the mean scores for the resilience components was significant for the novice teacher group ($p < .05$). In other words, internal motivation and social skills were the two most prominent resilience factors for novice teachers. The second research question sought to identify the teacher resilience components that are more prominent from the perspective of experienced Iranian English teachers. For this purpose, a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to compare experienced teachers' scores across the four components of resilience. The results are presented below.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Resilience Components in Experienced Teachers

	Mean	SD	N
Internal motivation	51.46	5.65	226
Social skills	37.62	4.41	226
Pedagogical skills	29.04	3.68	226
Contextual support	23.73	4.54	226

The mean scores for the resilience components of experienced teachers differ. However, the multivariate test results indicate whether the differences are statistically significant (Table 5).

Table 6: Multivariate Test for Resilience Components in Experienced Teachers

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	.97	1307.35	3	223	.00	.83
Wilks' Lambda	.02	1307.35	3	223	.00	.83
Hotelling's Trace	35.65	1307.35	3	223	.00	.83
Roy's Largest Root	35.65	1307.35	3	223	.00	.83

The result of Wilk's Lambda $F(3, 223) = 1307.35, P = .00$ indicates a statistically significant difference among the scores of the resilience components for experienced teachers (Table 6). The pairwise comparison results, conducted by the Bonferroni Post-hoc test (Table 7), reveal the difference among components.

Table 7: Pairwise Comparisons of Resilience Components in Experienced Teachers

(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Internal motivation	Social skills	13.83*	.37	.000
	Pedagogical skills	22.41*	.49	.000
	Contextual support	28.08*	.44	.000
Social skills	Pedagogical skills	8.58*	.41	.000
	Contextual support	14.25*	.41	.000

*Mean difference is significant at the .05 level;
* Bonferroni Post-hoc test was run for pairwise comparisons

The pairwise comparisons table shows that the difference in the mean scores for the resilience components was significant for the experienced teacher group ($p < .05$). In other words, internal motivation and social skills were the two most prominent resilience factors for experienced teachers.

Finally, the third research question aimed to identify differences between novice and experienced teachers in the two most prominent resilience components, namely social skills and internal motivation. An independent-samples t-test was conducted, and the results are presented below.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Social Skills and Internal Motivation Per Groups

	group	N	M	SD
social skills	novice	174	35.8	3.84
	experienced	226	37.62	4.4
internal motivation	novice	174	48.73	7.43
	experienced	226	51.46	5.64

As shown in Table 8, experienced teachers obtained higher scores in the social skills ($M = 37.62, SD = 4.4$) and internal motivation ($M = 51.46, SD = 5.64$) components of resilience. The

independent-samples t-test results (Table 9) indicate whether the difference between the means is statistically significant.

Table 9: Independent Samples t-test for Social Skills and Internal Motivation Per Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
social skills	Equal variances assumed	5.04	.02	-4.33	398	.00	-1.82	.42	-2.65	-.99
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.41	392	.00	-1.82	.41	-2.63	-1.01
internal motivation	Equal variances assumed	14.56	.00	-4.16	398	.00	-2.72	.65	-4.01	-1.43
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.02	313	.00	-2.72	.67	-4.05	-1.39

Table 9 shows a significant difference between novice and experienced teachers in terms of social skills ($t(398) = 4.33, p = .00$, two-tailed) and internal motivation ($t(398) = 4.16, p = .00$, two-tailed). The magnitudes of the differences in the mean scores of social skills (mean difference = 1.82, 95% CI [2.65, .99]) and internal motivation (mean difference = 2.72, 95% CI [4.01, 1.43]) were small (eta squared = .04 for social skills and internal motivation). In general, experienced teachers scored higher on social skills and internal motivation.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to find the perceptions of novice and experienced Iranian English teachers on the prominent components of resilience, and the findings indicated that internal motivation and social skills (i.e., interpersonal skills, networks of relationships with colleagues, friends, etc.) were the two most prominent resilience factors for novice and experienced teachers. This convergence suggests that, despite differences in career stage, resilience among Iranian EFL teachers may be underpinned by shared psychological and relational resources rather than experience-dependent factors alone. In other words, resilience appears to be a dynamic construct sustained by enduring personal and social capacities throughout teachers' professional trajectories.

Within the Iranian educational context, where English teachers often work under centralized curricula, limited institutional autonomy, high workloads, and comparatively modest financial rewards, reliance on internal and relational resources becomes particularly critical for sustaining professional commitment and resilience.

Consistent with the findings of the present study, Gu and Day (2013) demonstrated, in their four-year national research project focusing on the work and lives of teachers in England, that a

significant majority of resilient teachers acknowledged that supportive relationships played a crucial role in enhancing their dedication to teaching. The alignment between these findings and the current study underscores the cross-cultural robustness of relational resilience and suggests that such support may be even more critical in contexts like Iran, where institutional and systemic support structures may be comparatively limited. Moreover, [Gu \(2014\)](#) emphasized that teacher resilience is influenced by various personal and contextual factors deeply ingrained in a teacher's network of relationships, including teacher-leader, teacher-teacher, and teacher-student interactions.

In alignment with this perspective, [Gu and Li \(2013, p. 298\)](#) argue that “teachers’ worlds are made up of multi-layered relationships” whose quality, either positive or negative, contributes to the resilience-building process. In Iran, where formal institutional support structures such as mentoring programs or systematic induction for novice teachers are often limited, informal relational networks among colleagues frequently function as primary sources of emotional, professional, and pedagogical support. Supporting teachers, particularly those new to the profession, in both emotional and practical ways has been shown to boost their self-assurance, personal efficacy, and resilience ([Le Cornu, 2013](#)). The prominence of social skills in the present study suggests that resilience is not merely an individual attribute but a socially mediated capacity that develops through interaction and reciprocal support. Additionally, [Le Cornu \(2013\)](#) highlights the essential role of relationships in fostering resilience among novice educators. [Corbell et al. \(2010\)](#) further suggest that mentorship, colleague support, administrative backing, and other related factors are crucial for enhancing teachers’ satisfaction, commitment, and retention.

Similarly, [Phelps and Benson \(2012\)](#) identified several factors that contribute to teachers’ sustainability, such as the opportunity to make a difference, positive attitudes from others, and ongoing professional development facilitated by collaboration and relationships. Moreover, the significance of creating a supportive professional community has been emphasized in comprehensive approaches aimed at promoting the well-being and resilience of both students and educators ([Cefai & Cavioni, 2014](#)). The responsibility to aid teachers, especially those new to the field, is viewed as a collective endeavor ([Caspersen & Raaen, 2014](#)). The current findings extend this argument by demonstrating that teachers themselves actively mobilize social skills to access and sustain such collective support, thereby positioning resilience as both an individual competence and a shared social practice.

Research has shown that family members who are also educators can positively influence individuals’ motivation to pursue a career in teaching ([Beltman et al., 2011](#)). This influence may stem from their familiarity with the profession’s working conditions and their close relationships with individuals who have experienced professional growth over time, leading them to believe in similar positive outcomes for themselves. Such contextualized insight may act as a protective factor, buffering teachers against early disillusionment and attrition. In the Iranian context, where family approval and encouragement play a significant role in career decision-making, such familial support may substantially reinforce teachers’ resilience and persistence.

This finding aligns with [Mansfield et al. \(2014\)](#), who emphasized the crucial roles played by family and friends, as well as the significance of relationships in the resilience process of novice educators. [Howard and Johnson \(2004\)](#) similarly noted that all participants in their research had “diverse, caring networks of family and friends” (p. 412), which helped them manage workplace difficulties. [Day and Gu \(2007\)](#) contended that having a supportive family and partner could not only boost teacher commitment but also enhance their ability to tackle professional challenges. Taken together, these findings suggest that resilience extends beyond the professional domain and is deeply embedded in teachers’ broader life contexts. Support mechanisms may involve partners refraining from showing frustration if their spouse works from home ([Day, 2008](#)) or partners

actively promoting a work-life balance for their teacher spouse, ensuring that weekends are dedicated to family interactions (Delavin & Dumaguin, 2022; Gu & Day, 2007). Moreover, in line with the results, Brunetti (2006) examined the viewpoints of experienced educators (those with over 12 years of teaching experience) and found that support from school administrators, colleagues, and the institution itself was a crucial factor in their resilience. However, the present study's emphasis on social skills suggests that experienced teachers may not simply benefit from support passively but actively sustain resilience by strategically navigating institutional relationships.

The second significant factor identified in the current study was internal motivation. The motivational aspect of teacher resilience plays a pivotal role in their ability to persist in the educational setting, demonstrate effectiveness, and exhibit progress (Good & Brophy, 1994). The prominence of internal motivation among novice and experienced teachers suggests that resilience is strongly anchored in teachers' sense of purpose and personal meaning, rather than in external rewards or career advancement alone. A teacher's motivation serves to initiate and guide their work, support the cultivation of high levels of achievement, and sustain positive conduct (Gagne, 2004; Taqwim, 2024). Gu and Day (2007) exemplified the outcomes of a Four-year investigation involving 300 teachers, illustrating resilient educators and underscoring that "their inner motivation to serve called them into teaching" (p. 1310). The present findings resonate with this perspective, indicating that internal motivation operates as a psychological reservoir that teachers draw upon when facing contextual challenges and systemic pressures. They further emphasized that these internal motivations "fueled their capacities to exercise emotional strengths and professional competence and subsequently provided them with the resilience which enabled them to meet the challenges of the changing environments in which they worked" (p. 1311). This internal drive is particularly salient for Iranian English teachers, many of whom remain committed to teaching despite limited extrinsic incentives, restricted promotion opportunities, and sociopolitical constraints affecting the status of English education.

The finding regarding internal motivation is somewhat consistent with Rothland (2011), who conducted a meta-analysis of educators' career choices in Germany, and found that the primary reasons cited across all studies were a genuine interest in children and adolescents, as well as the joy derived from working with them. The decision to pursue a teaching career is primarily driven by intrinsic motives, particularly those centered around individuals and relationships (Rothland, 2011). The prevalence of intrinsic motives is viewed positively, as a strong internal drive for selecting a profession correlates with enhanced self-worth, heightened motivation for accomplishment, improved competence assessment, and substantial growth in competence during teacher training (Uysal, 2023). Similarly, Kasser and Ryan (1993) observed that individuals with high levels of intrinsic motivation exhibit greater adaptability and overall well-being than those driven by extrinsic factors. Proponents of the self-determination theory argue that striving for intrinsic objectives benefits well-being by fulfilling fundamental psychological needs (Sheldon, 2002). In this light, the present findings suggest that internal motivation not only sustains resilience but may also protect teachers from emotional exhaustion and disengagement.

The finding on internal motivation can be elucidated by Snyder's (2002) Hope Theory, which posits that hope is a key internal motivator. Hope is characterized as a constructive motivational state encompassing effective agency (willpower) and pathways (way power) toward achieving goals, often associated with positive emotions. Teachers with strong internal motivation are likely to exhibit higher levels of hope, enabling them to set meaningful goals and generate flexible strategies to overcome obstacles. Encouraging teachers to establish meaningful goals and diverse pathways for goal attainment, including scaffolding and flexibility, fosters hope. When

analyzing motivational drivers, teachers adopting a mastery-oriented approach tend to derive greater job satisfaction. In contrast, those leaning towards avoiding failure are prone to withdrawal, reduced engagement, and increased risk of burnout (Parker & Martin, 2009). Resilience is closely linked to “a strong sense of vocation, self-efficacy and motivation to teach” (Sammons et al., 2007, p. 694).

The motivational dimension is intertwined with teachers’ perseverance, patience, persistence, self-esteem, and self-assurance (Beltman, 2020). Educators with elevated self-efficacy typically report higher job satisfaction, increased motivation, and lower burnout rates (Ortan et al., 2021). Hansen (1995) highlighted the importance of intrinsic motivation, noting that experienced teachers’ internal drive significantly influences their perceptions of their roles and students, as well as their willingness to demonstrate agency and resilience in challenging circumstances to enhance the quality of their work. Mansfield et al. (2018) and Zheng et al. (2025) emphasized that novice teachers can cultivate resilience by relying on problem-solving skills, motivation, time management, commitment, and adaptive coping mechanisms.

In line with the current study’s findings, Chiong et al. (2017) analyzed the motivations of experienced teachers in England. They aimed to identify the factors that influence experienced teachers’ decisions to remain in the profession and to determine whether these motives evolve. The study revealed that teachers’ internal drive, specifically their passion for educating students and a sense of mastery over their skills, was a key factor in their retention in the profession. Cohen (2009) posits that the desire to ‘do good’ did not emerge as a prominent motivator among experienced teachers in her research. Despite generally enjoying their work, it was their self-interest, manifested through a profound love for their academic field and the excitement of being at the forefront in the classroom, that enabled them to “derive pleasure and satisfaction from teaching despite the students (Cohen, 2009, p. 488). Finally, Flores (2006) depicted two teachers who, despite harboring negative views on school culture and management, maintained their enthusiasm and optimism. These educators were distinguished by their strong intrinsic motivation for choosing teaching as a profession: “a strong personal choice to become a teacher and the willingness to work with children” (p. 2048). This reinforces the present study’s conclusion that internal motivation functions as a stabilizing force, enabling teachers to sustain resilience even in adverse institutional environments.

Finally, the findings indicated that experienced EFL teachers obtained higher scores on the social skills and internal motivation components of teacher resilience than their novice counterparts. The finding that experienced EFL teachers exhibited significantly higher levels of social skills compared to novice teachers suggests that interpersonal competence in the classroom is a cultivated trait rather than an innate one. Over years of practice, veteran teachers develop a sophisticated “relational literacy,” enabling them to navigate the complex social dynamics of language-learning environments more effectively. Experienced educators are often more adept at seeking and maintaining professional mentorship and peer support networks, which act as vital buffers against burnout (Mansfield et al., 2016). In contrast, novice teachers may experience “reality shock,” where the immediate pressure of classroom management and lesson delivery hinders their ability to engage in the collaborative social practices necessary to bolster resilience (Farrell, 2021).

Furthermore, the superior scores in internal motivation among experienced teachers highlight a shift from extrinsic survival to intrinsic fulfillment. While novice teachers are often preoccupied with external validation and meeting administrative requirements, experienced teachers have typically reached a stage of “professional maturity” in which their motivation is driven by a deep-seated commitment to student growth and personal values (Gu & Day, 2013). This internal drive provides a stable source of energy that is less susceptible to the fluctuations of

the educational environment. As Tait (2008) notes, resilience is closely tied to a teacher's ability to maintain a sense of agency and efficacy; experienced teachers, having survived early-career challenges, possess a stronger belief in their pedagogical impact, which fuels their ongoing internal motivation.

The conclusions of this research study suggest that resilience is a complex phenomenon, as highlighted by Oswald et al. (2003). In the realm of resilience development, a profound internal drive towards a teaching career correlates with elevated self-worth, heightened motivation for accomplishment, and a more pronounced improvement in skills during teacher training. Furthermore, teacher resilience seemed strengthened through the cultivation of reciprocal, empowering, and supportive relationships, as well as through engagement in relationships characterized by these qualities.

Similar to other studies, the present study is not devoid of limitations. It relied solely on a closed-ended questionnaire to collect the necessary data. Future investigations into teacher resilience should incorporate diverse data collection methods, such as audio recordings, diary entries, and narratives. Furthermore, future studies can adopt a mixed-methods approach to explore teacher resilience alongside other variables such as teacher engagement, burnout, and professional efficacy.

The study sample was limited to Iranian English teachers in Isfahan, Iran, which limits the generalizability of the findings to English teachers or teachers in other countries; thus, caution must be exercised when generalizing the findings to English teachers or teachers of other subjects. Future research can examine the detrimental effects of teachers' low resilience on students' language acquisition, motivation, and academic achievement.

Regarding the study's implications, it is essential for educational policymakers to consider resilience as a key factor in enhancing the quality of English education, as the teaching process may be adversely affected when educators lack resilience. Collaborative efforts among teachers should be strengthened, as engaging with peers was a pivotal element in fostering resilience. Educators can establish support networks to exchange successful practices in language instruction and classroom management. The study's outcomes have some implications. Moreover, teacher training programs (for both novice and experienced teachers) should explicitly focus on ways to cultivate robust support systems and pinpoint specific individuals or social groups, whether within the school environment, outside of it, or in online communities, that can best assist teachers in overcoming professional challenges.

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