A Comparative Study of English as a Foreign Language Teachers' Emotion Regulation and Well-Being in Iran and Iraq

Laya Tahami Zarandi [1]
Mehry Haddad Narafshan [2] Corresponding author)
Peyman Seyfaddini[3]

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The spread of English as an international language has made it essential for Iran and Iraq to have effective teachers. The emotions experienced and the emotion-regulation strategies used by 659 (349 in Iran and 310 in Iraq) English language teachers enrolled in high-schools were investigated in 2021. This was a cross-sectional survey, studied Iranian school teachers from Kerman Province and Iraqi teachers from Basra Province. To collect the data, three online questionnaires on emotion regulation, psychological well-being at work, and teacher emotional labor strategies were submitted to English language teachers either in person or via email. Correlations showed that emotion regulation and its aspect (cognitive reappraisal) and emotional labor strategies correlated positively with teachers' well-being both in Iran and Iraq. Furthermore, the preferred mode of emotion regulation in both contexts was cognitive reappraisal. Iranian and Iraqi teachers experienced the same level of emotion regulation and well-being, implying a common sense of emotions among teachers. The level of emotional labor strategies employed by Iranian and Iraqi teachers, however, differed significantly. In comparison with Iraqi teachers, Iranian teachers used more emotional labor strategies. In brief, curriculum and educational planners should take steps to support teachers in regulating their emotions, which contributes to their well-being.

[1] PhD Student, Department of Foreign Languages, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran, Email: laeya.tahami2150@gmail.com

[2] Assistant Prof, Department of Foreign Languages, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran, Email: hnarafshanmehri@gmail.com

[3]. Assistant Prof, Department of Foreign Languages, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran, Email: peyman_seaf@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Teachers are regarded as playing a pivotal role at both the classroom and school levels, as they are required to manage and organize the classroom, implement instruction (Stronge, 2007), set high educational expectations, be innovative (Walker, 2008), and promote learning (Cardelle-Elawar & Lizarraga, 2010). As a result of the numerous prominent roles that teachers play in the educational arena, teachers' mental state is viewed as critical. The emotional ambiance of the classroom is influenced by the teacher's mental health, which in turn influences students' educational experiences (Vesely et al., 2013). Since emotional components are at the heart of educational achievement, an emphasis on teachers' psychological responses has gained traction in education (Braun et al., 2020; Greenier et al., 2021). The methods through which humans "manage their emotions; emotional experiences, and emotional manifestations are referred to as emotion regulation" (Gross, 1998, p.272). Emotion regulation is critical for teachers because it allows them to connect to their experiences in a present-centered and reliable manner rather than in reactionary, past, or future-oriented ways (Berkovich-Ohana, Jennings, & Lavy, 2019). Expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal are the two most researched emotion management methods (Gross & John, 2003). The suppression of emotion-expressive behavior is aimed at inhibiting, reducing, or hiding this behavior; it has been shown to have controversial effectiveness and adverse health effects. Cognitive reappraisal involves reinterpreting a situation to reduce its emotional impact, and cognitive reappraisal is an attempt to inhibit, reduce, or hide emotional expression. The effectiveness of cognitive reappraisal is controversial and has negative health outcomes (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Gross & John, 2003). Although both procedures entail psychological costs (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011; Chang, 2013; Lavy & Eshet, 2018), research demonstrates that cognitive reappraisal relates to more successful emotion control processes with fewer negative impacts on the individual doing the regulation.

In the realm of the teaching profession, emotional display rules govern the emotional expression of teachers by identifying what is appropriate and allowed to be expressed in the school and what is not (Kitching, 2009; Zembylas, 2002). These rules are cultural, social, and professional-specific being set up based on defined expectations, standards, and norms in each setting and "direct teachers' emotional labor either in the form of internalized self-regulation or external control" (Yin & Lee, 2012, p. 58). Teachers' long-term commitments to stay positive, teach passionately, and conceal their negative emotions are examples of culture-specific rules which dominate the emotional expressions and behaviors of Chinese teachers' work (Yin & Lee, 2012). In parallel to indicate the social and cultural nature of emotional work rules, boredom is reported to

be banned for Irish primary teachers at work (Kitching, 2009) highlighting two facts that rules function as the controller of teachers' emotions (both felt and expressed emotions) in the workplace and are cross-culturally different necessitating individuals to employ different emotion regulation strategies in each particular place. Research on the nature of emotional work rules has accentuated the issue of investigating emotion regulation to identify the more demanding and effective strategies concerning the cultural and social particularity of each setting. As it was found and revealed, the distinction between Asian and Western values, appreciating harmony and dependence Vs. self-assertion and independence, for instance, demand choosing different emotion regulation strategies (Matsumoto et al., 2008; Sutton & Harper, 2009; Yin, 2016). There is limited empirical evidence on the role of sociocultural contexts on teacher emotion regulation and they have mainly focused on Western societies. We know little about how the Asian values may influence teachers' emotional labor and emotion regulation strategies (Chen, 2019; Uitto et al., 2015).

Despite its significance in different fields of research, emotion regulation has been the focus of a few investigations in English language studies (e.g., Bielak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020; Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019; Gkonou & Oxford, 2016; Greenier et al., 2021; Littleton, 2018; MacIntyre et al., 2016; Talbot & Mercer, 2018). Language teaching is an emotionally demanding task and English language teachers experience both positive and negative emotions, with positive emotions enhancing learning and negative ones diminishing it. As a result, language instruction needs increased emotional understanding by language teachers in comparison to those teaching other subjects (King & Ng, 2018). As shown in several studies, due to the stress-provoking and demanding nature of the teaching profession, the teachers who can manage their thought and employ effective strategies to regulate their emotions are more successful and productive and have an optimized level of well-being (Law et al., 2004; Locke & Latham, 2002) and overcome their occupational strain (Pomaki et al., 2004; Slaski & Cartwright, 2002). In reality, however, recent comparative studies have revealed the presence of negative emotions than positive ones in Asian teachers and their unawareness and inability to employ effective emotion regulation strategies which in turn lead to psychologically and occupationally detrimental outcomes like unprofessional teaching behavior, undesired learning outcome, and job dissatisfaction and burnout (Chen, 2019; Yin, 2016).

Furthermore, understanding language teachers' well-being is of utmost significance for effective teaching due to the nature of the subject they are teaching which requires great emotional engagement and interpersonal relations as well as the additional stressors they possibly encounter such as language anxiety, emotional labor, and intercultural encounters (King & Ng, 2018). Unlike

emotion regulation, there is no consensus about the conceptualization of wellbeing due to the diverse aspects by which this term can be defined. From the psychological dimension, wellbeing covers the concepts of mastery, subjective satisfaction, goal setting in life, supportive relationships, and autonomy (see Deci & Ryan, 2008; Su et al., 2014), while the other aspects operationalize it as being physical health (see Sheffield, Dobbie, & Carroll, 1994) or regard it equivalent to the quality of life. Inspired by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008), well-being is substantially pertinent to the sense of belonging, autonomy, self-efficacy, and empowerment over own life (Su et al., 2014). Referring to the work of Deci and Ryan (2008), well-being is considered a multifaceted concept including the factors of social, emotional, and mental health which can be categorized into two states: hedonistic and eudaimonic. The former, hedonistic, refer to the subjective sense of well-being which is associated with feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, enjoyment, and happiness. This state, in addition, is conceptualized predominantly by the depletion of negative feelings and/or the proliferation of positive ones (Deci & Ryan, 2008) requiring individuals to be aware of and regulate their emotions (Larsen & Prizmic, 2008). Coming to the teaching profession, hedonic well-being means the subjective enjoyment and sense of pleasure teachers experience particularly in the class and with the students, and generally in the school. Being individually distinct, therefore, the sense of well-being can be derived differently as well. Entering the class, interacting personally or academically with the students, learning outcomes, and being self-confident and prepared all are examples of different states in which teachers can induce the desired feelings of well-being. Being aware of own emotions and hedonic states is considered significant for teachers to employ effective emotion regulation strategies (See Reyes et al., 2012).

The latter state of well-being, eudaimonic, according to the study of Deci and Ryan (2008), is associated with seeking meaning and purpose in life, blossoming out in potentialities, and having meaningful connections with others to feel deeply a sense of gratification and happiness (Davis, 2014). Teaching for some teachers, for instance, brings a deep sense of enjoyment as they followed their passionate interest to teach (Buskist et al., 2005), while for some other teachers, this state of well-being means contributing to students' success, and their personal and academic attainments which bring the teachers denotation and intention to their life and amplify and reinforce their efficacy and job satisfaction (see Buskist et al., 2005; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Putting these states of well-being into two categories, hedonistic and eudaimonic, it should be noted that they are conceptually interconnected and correspond to each other pervading the feelings contributed to wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Regarding the significance of well-being and positive psychology (Seligman, 2012; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), we can see a recent interest in well-being

studies (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Buric & Macuka, 2018). In the language teaching context, we can see several studies on EFL/ESL teachers' burnout (e.g., Khajavy et al., 2017; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011; Sadeghi & Khezrlou, 2016; Zhaleh et al., 2018), but well-being, a positive experience of English language teachers, has been ignored (e.g., Amini Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018).

Since Iran has longstanding ethnic, religious, and political ties to Iraq, we covered the issue in the countries of Iran and Iraq. The teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Iraq has a lengthy history. English lessons are available in all Iraqi schools, public and private. Although French and Kurdish are taught in most Iraqi schools, English has long held a favored position in the educational system. Initially, English was taught in Iraq's schools in 1873, but after the First World War, English-language primary education was introduced to all Iraqi towns (Kareem, 2009). In the past, English as a foreign language was taught in Iraqi public schools from the fifth to the twelfth grades. Recently and after the conflict of 2003 that Iraq endured, teaching English became obligatory from the first year of schooling (Rashid Saeed, 2015). Students learn to read, write, and talk using fundamental grammatical principles during the years of primary school. In middle and high school, they acquire more complex English, along with more advanced grammar and pronunciation. In addition, they read lengthier and more challenging parts, such as shorter tales and novels.

English teachers in Iraq are generally non-native English speakers. The Ministry of Education hires most instructors with bachelor's degrees in English literature or English education. While most teachers can speak English, they are not well equipped to teach it to students of all ages and abilities. Graduating teachers from the School of Education, for example, are permitted to teach students of any age, but there are not any training programs that deal with teaching methods and pedagogy for second language acquisition. As a result, Iraqi instructors may struggle to develop lesson plans since they lack the expertise and experience in applying various instructional styles to their pupils based on their age. Teachers are consequentially the pedagogical designers who adopt the best methodologies in relevant ways that are meaningful for their unique community of learners (Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2007). Because the curriculum is provided by the Iraqi Ministry of Education, English instructors have little discretion over the resources they use or the teaching style they utilize. They are guided by the textbook and curriculum that have been assigned to them. Furthermore, they are unable to select extra materials for teaching English since their curriculum and syllabus are constrained by the Ministry of Education's fixed schedule (Kareem, 2009).

In Iran, before the establishment of the Islamic administration, the English language was primarily prevalent under the reign of Pahlavi. Between 1934 and 1970, English was taught as a foreign language for the last six years of Iranian K-12 curricula, and then for seven years beyond that (Bagheri, 1994). The Iran-American Society was founded in 1950, and it was the first recognized language institution in Iran to teach English. As part of the US attempt to expand its active participation in teaching English as a foreign language in Iranian schools, American English teachers were sent to different regions of the country to host courses and workshops for native Iranian teachers, and study-abroad programs, such as Fulbright activities (1950-1959), were actively promoted (Khatami, 1977). Furthermore, English was a must for military service. Most high-ranking officers were transferred to the United States to study military sciences as part of the military modernization effort. As a result, students had to complete certain English classes as a precondition (Tollefson, 1991). The Iranian pupils' interest in learning English was also quite significant; according to Strain and the New York State English Council (1971), more than 90% of Iranian school students chose English as a foreign language. As a result of all these elements, modernization has been entwined with Iranian culture. "If Iran had a mostly Persian identity before Islam and an Islamic-Iranian identity after Islam, Iran after exposure to the West developed a threefold identity: Islamic-Iranian Western" (Riazi, 2005, p. 102). This mixing, on the other hand, was not well received by most of the Iranian society, who felt that the society's Islamic character would be jeopardized. In 1979, an Islamic fundamentalist, Ayatollah Khomeini, launched a revolt against secularization and Westernization, with the primary goal of weakening Western norms and promoting Islamic principles, which he believed had been suppressed throughout Iran's modernization period.

Following the Islamic Revolution's victory in Iran in 1979, ELT materials were strictly censored and devoid of any Western standards or ideas. Furthermore, the Islamic educational system assigned locally trained nonnative English language instructors with the task of creating indigenized textbooks devoid of any references to English or Western culture. In conclusion, the Iranian educational system underwent an Islamization procedure that may be regarded as a "de-modernization" process (Paivandi, 2012) to form a type of localized English which is devoid of western culture and ideology (Iranmehr & Davari, 2018). As a result, instructors who opposed Islam's philosophy and the Islamization of the educational system were fired. Institutions and pupils were subjected to certain limitations; co-education, which was common before the Revolution, was replaced with single-sex schools. A range of religious activities was implemented in the school system in addition to those adjustments. The Iranian public, on the other hand, was not

entirely supportive of the quick reforms. Despite the Islamic regime's anti-English stance (Dahmardeh & Hunt, 2012), the community began to respond to its requirements by building a growing number of privately owned ELT institutions. The debate about reducing Iran's reliance on the oil sector and promoting alternate industries such as tourism has intensified. Iranian traders and industry owners, as well as employees and company owners, understood that their future depended on their ability to communicate in English, particularly in tourist locations such as Tehran, Kerman, and Tabriz (Khajavi & Abbasian, 2011). English may potentially be able to penetrate the core of the Islamic educational system. To transmit its ideological ideas and news, the Iranian government developed Press TV and a few other TV stations, as well as various printed media in English (Khajavi & Abbasian, 2011). Due to recent education policies created to meet the demands of globalization, education in Iran is treated as an instrument to keep up with it. As a result, English has been transformed into a language of prestige and power, especially in the educational system (Aghagolzadeh & Davari, 2017). Accordingly, the present study sought to answer the following research questions:

- Is there any relationship between teachers' emotion regulation and well-being in Iran and Iraq?
- What form of emotion regulation do language teachers use most often in Iran and Iraq?
- Is there any difference between Iranian and Iraqi teachers in regulating their emotions?

2. Research Method

The present cross-sectional survey was conducted on 700 English language teachers, but a sample of 659 (349 in Iran and 310 in Iraq) English language teachers participated in this study. Others did not answer the questionnaires. Using three questionnaires with a convenience sampling design produced a large data set. The Iranian participants were from Kerman Province and four of its counties (Zarand, Shahbabak, Rafsanjan, & Jiroft). The Iraqi teachers were from Basra Province and four of its counties (Al-Qurna, Al-Zubair, Shatt Al-Arab, & Abu Al-Khaseeb). 64.7% were female, and 35.3% were male. Almost half of the participating teachers held B.A.s (41.9%) and 43.9% of teachers had M.A.s, with smaller percentages holding Ph.Ds. (14.2%). Over 49.6% of participants had been teaching for 11 years or more, 12.8% for more than five years, and 37.6% were in their first years of teaching. Participants indicated they came from public (79.6%) and private (20.4%) schools. As a teacher in both countries, one of the researchers had direct contact with both Iranian and Iraqi teachers. Being a member of a research society involves the trust that exists between researchers and participants.

To collect the required data, the researchers employed three questionnaires on emotion regulation (Gross & John, 2003), psychological well-being at work (Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2012), and teacher emotional labor strategy (Yin, 2012) as the instruments of this quantitative survey study. A description of each instrument is presented below. To examine English language teachers' emotion regulation, a questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003) with 5 Likert-type items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used. The questionnaire was used to reveal the teachers' willingness to regulate their emotions regarding cognitive reappraisal (When I want to feel more positive emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation) and expressive suppression (I keep my emotions to myself). To confirm the reliability, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87 confirmed the internal consistency of this scale. To explore teachers' well-being, the researchers used an online questionnaire of Psychological Well-Being at Work (Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2012) with 5 Likert-type items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire includes 25 items showing teachers' desire for involvement at work, interpersonal fit at work, feeling of competency at work, thriving at work, and perceived recognition at work. To guarantee the reliability, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89 confirmed the internal consistency of this scale. And to investigate teachers' emotional labor strategies, the researchers used an online questionnaire of teachers' emotional labor strategies (Yin, 2012) with 5 Likert-type items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire includes 13 items. It is a scale for assessing three types of emotional labor strategies: surface acting (SA, six items), deep acting (DA, four items), and expression of naturally felt emotions (ENFE, three items). The reliability of the used scale was .85. The questionnaires were piloted on a sample of 20 English language teachers similar to those in the main study in both countries. The questionnaires were also tested for face and content validity by four experts in the fields of education and research.

Our research, a cross-sectional survey, studied English language teachers' attitudes in Iran and Iraq at a certain point in time (February-June 2021). After introducing the research project in participating schools' staff meetings, appointments were made with all interested teachers so they could obtain more information about procedures and technical issues. Prior approval was obtained from school officials based on the ministry of education's ethical guidelines. The three questionnaires were submitted to more than 700 Iranian and Iraqi EFL teachers either in person or electronically through their emails or an already designed Google Doc link of the questionnaires for those who were physically distant from the researchers. Some teachers remained reluctant to share their responses and refused to fill out the questionnaires, but 659 Iranian and Iraqi EFL teachers completed all three questionnaires. Having direct contact with most teachers as a member of the

research society formed a bond of trust between researchers and participants. The participants were oriented to the objectives of the study, procedure, and limitations and then asked to participate voluntarily. To keep the participants' information confidential, all identifications were removed, and pseudonyms were used instead. All questionnaires were treated anonymously.

3. Findings

Table 1 presents the results of the descriptive statistics of research variables in Iran and Iraq. As the Iranian teachers' section shows the mean and standard deviation of emotion regulation was (M=34.54, SD=4.87), the mean and standard deviation of cognitive reappraisal was (M=22.38, SD=3.71), the mean and standard deviation of expression suppression was (M=12.15, SD=3.13), and the mean and standard deviation of well-being was (M= 54.57, SD=7.54). As the Iraqi teachers' section shows the mean and standard deviation of emotion regulation was (M=36.75, SD=5.83), the mean and standard deviation of cognitive reappraisal was (M=23.60, SD=3.45), the mean and standard deviation of expression suppression was (M=13.15, SD=3.03), and the mean and standard deviation of well-being was (M= 53.18, SD=12.92).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic of Research Variables

Variables	Iran			Iraq		
	N	Mean	Std.	N	Mean	Std.
Emotion Regulation	349	34.54	4.87	310	36.75	5.83
Cognitive Reappraisal	349	22.38	3.71	310	23.60	3.45
Expression Suppression	349	12.15	3.13	310	13.15	3.03
Well-Being	349	54.57	7.54	310	53.18	12.92
Emotional Labor Strategies	349	53.98	5.26	310	39.47	4.74

Table 2 shows that research variables have a normal distribution. We can use parametric variables like Pearson correlations since all scales have a normal distribution (P-value >0.05).

Table 2: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for Normal Distribution of Research variables

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Iran			Kolmogorov-Smirnov Iraq		
	Statistic	Df	P-Value	Statistic	df	P-Value
Emotion Regulation	0.985	349	0.258	0.933	310	0.133
Cognitive Reappraisal	0.969	349	0.615	0.962	310	0.530
Expression Suppression	0.980	349	0.274	0.943	310	0.360

Well-Being	0.983	349	0.390	0.902	310	0.258
Emotional Labor Strategies	0.989	349	0.606	0.980	310	0.102

To answer the first research question- Is there any relationship between teachers' emotion regulation and well-being in Iran and Iraq? - The results of the Pearson correlation analysis of research variables are presented in Tables 3, 4, 5, & 6. As Table 3 (Iranian teachers' section) shows there is a positive correlation between cognitive reappraisal and well-being. With increasing cognitive reappraisal, well-being increases, too. Additionally, the results ($p<0.01$) indicate that the relationship between these variables is significant. The Iraqi teachers' section shows a positive correlation between cognitive reappraisal and well-being. With increasing cognitive reappraisal, well-being increases, too. Also, the results ($p<0.01$) indicate that the relationship between these two variables is significant.

Table 3: Pearson correlation analysis of Cognitive Reappraisal and Well-Being

Variables	Well-Being			
	Iran		Iraq	
	R	P	R	P
Cognitive Reappraisal	0.313	0.004	0.338	0.004

**$p<0.01$

Based on Table 4 (Iranian teacher's section), there is no correlation between expression suppression and well-being ($p>0.05$). Also, based on the Iraqi teachers' section, there is no correlation between expression suppression and well-being ($p>0.05$). Based on Table 4 (Iranian teacher's section), there is no correlation between expression suppression and well-being ($p>0.05$). Also, based on the Iraqi teachers' section, there is no correlation between expression suppression and well-being ($p>0.05$).

Table 4: Pearson correlation analysis between Expression Suppression and Well-Being

Variables	Well-Being			
	Iran		Iraq	
	R	P	R	P
Expression Suppression	-0.610	0.255	0.532	0.560

*$p>0.05$

Table 5 (Iranian teachers' section) shows that there is a positive correlation between emotion regulation and well-being. With increasing emotion regulation, well-being increases, too. Furthermore, results indicate that there is a significant relationship between these two variables

(p<0.01). Moreover, Table 5 (Iraqi teachers' section) shows that there is a positive correlation between emotion regulation and well-being. With increasing emotion regulation, well-being increases, too.

Table 5: Pearson correlation analysis between Emotion Regulation and Well-Being

Variables	Well-Being			
	Iran		Iraq	
	R	P	R	P
Emotion Regulation	0.199	0.000	0.297	0.002

**p<0.01

As Table 6 (Iranian teachers' section) shows, there is a positive correlation between emotional labor strategies and well-being. With increasing emotional labor strategies, well-being increases. Additionally, Sig (p<0.05) indicates that there is a significant relationship between these two variables. As Table 6 (Iraqi teachers' section) shows, there is a positive correlation between emotional labor strategies and well-being. With increasing emotional labor strategies, well-being increases, too.

Table 6: Pearson correlation analysis between Emotion Labor Strategies and Well-Being

Variables	Well-Being			
	Iran		Iraq	
	R	P	R	P
Emotion Labor Strategies	0.135	0.000	0.242	0.002

*p<0.05

Regarding the second research question- What form of emotion regulation do language teachers use most often in Iran and Iraq? - the results of Table 7 (Iranian teachers' section) showed that between the 2 types of emotion regulation, the highest rank was assigned to cognitive reappraisal (Mean Rank = 1.98), and the second rank was attributed to expression suppression (Mean Rank = 1.02). The results of Table 7 (Iraqi teachers' section) showed that between the 2 types of Emotion Regulation, the highest rank was assigned to cognitive reappraisal (Mean Rank = 2.00) and the second rank was attributed to expression suppression (Mean Rank = 1.00).

Table 7: Friedman test for ranking Emotion regulation

			Iran			
Strategies	Mean Rank	Priority	Chi-squire	N	*df*	P-Value
Cognitive reappraisal	1.98	The First	323.29	349	1	0.000
Expression Suppression	1.02	2nd				
			Iraq			
Cognitive reappraisal	2.00	The First	22.00	310	1	0.000
Expression Suppression	1.00	2nd				

To answer the third research question- Is there any difference between Iranian and Iraqi teachers in regulating their emotions? - the results of the Levene Test (>0.05) show that both groups have the same variance regarding the research variables. Moreover, there was no difference in emotion regulation, well-being, cognitive reappraisal, and expression suppression between Iranian and Iraqi teachers (p>0.05). However, emotional labor strategies were different in the two countries, and Iranian teachers applied more strategies compared to their Iraqi colleagues.

Table 8: Independent sample T-Test of Research Variables

Variable	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		Group	N	Mean	Std.	t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig					T-Test	*df*	P-Value
Emotion Labor Strategies	1.44	0.22	Iran Iraq	349 310	53.98 39.47	5.26 4.74	-1.84	657	0.03
Emotion Regulation	2.02	0.19	Iran Iraq	349 310	34.54 36.75	4.87 5.83	2.15	657	0.06
Cognitive Reappraisal	1.58	0.44	Iran Iraq	349 310	22.38 23.60	3.71 3.45	0.18	657	0.86
Expression Suppression	3.56	0.06	Iran Iraq	349 310	12.15 13.15	3.13 3.03	2.91	657	0.10
Well-Being	2.27	0.22	Iran Iraq	349 310	54.57 53.18	7.54 12.92	-0.47	657	0.09

4. Discussion

The first objective of the current study was to examine the relationship between teachers' emotion regulation and well-being in Iran and Iraq. In this regard, the Pearson correlation was used since the normality assumptions were met. Correlations showed that emotion regulation and its aspect (cognitive reappraisal) and emotional labor strategies correlated positively with teachers' well-being in Iran and Iraq. From the positive psychology perspective, this study confirms that English language teachers' emotion regulation and well-being both in Iran and Iraq, as two examples of emotional experience, are significant issues in the language teaching profession (Dewaele et al., 2019; Gabrys-Barker & Gałajda, 2016; MacIntyre et al., 2016). Several studies have reported a positive correlation between emotional regulation and job engagement (e.g., Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017; Zhu Liu et al., 2015) and burnout (e.g., Bagheri Nevisi & Alasadi, 2022), which demonstrates that managing emotions is associated with job performance. Moreover, several studies in language teaching have emphasized the importance of emotion regulation and well-being for language teachers' effective performance and development in their professional career (e.g., Arizmendi Tejeda et al., 2016; Benesch, 2017, 2018; Bielak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020; Chahkandi et al., 2016; Gregersen et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2019).

The second objective of this study was to investigate what form of emotion regulation language teachers' use most often in Iran and Iraq. In this regard, the Friedman test was used. According to the results, cognitive appraisal was preferred and utilized by teachers more than expression suppression in both countries. It can be concluded that, by more effectively regulating their feelings, language teachers in both contexts of Iran and Iraq are more likely to become emotionally, cognitively, and psychologically involved in their teaching activities. Moreover, by being able to successfully assess, manage, and regulate their emotions, such teachers are more energetic and motivated to put fruitful efforts into their teaching activities to achieve their occupational goals and have a sense of pride, importance, and inspiration in their teaching profession. Aligned with these results, Pena et al. (2012) reported a high level of dedication, physical and mental drive, energy, engagement, and motivation in practitioners with greater emotion regulation. In the same vein, the research evinced the ability to conquer the sources of stress in the workplace in teachers who can regulate their emotions (Benesch, 2017, 2018; Pena et al., 2012; Zhu Liu et al., 2015). A positive relationship, as well, has been found between emotion regulation and the prediction of the underlying components of engagement (Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017).

The third objective of the study was to see if there is any difference between Iranian and Iraqi teachers in regulating their emotions. The Levene Test and Independent Sample T-test were used. The results showed that there was no difference in emotion regulation and well-being between Iranian and Iraqi teachers implying a common sense of emotions between these two groups of teachers regardless of the educational environment. However, there was a meaningful difference between Iranian and Iraqi teachers in the intensity of using emotional labor strategies. Iranian teachers used emotional labor strategies more than their Iraqi counterparts. Guided by the theory of social constructivism which stresses the co-construction of reality through social interactions, there are plenty of variables such as socio-cultural, contextual, and organizational along with the interactions with administrators, colleagues, and learners that are highly influential in teachers' emotions by which the immersion of emotions in EFL/ESL teachers' occupational engagement in their workplace can be justified (Ghanizadeh & Royaei, 2015; Kalina & Powell, 2009). Concerning emotion in the field of English language teaching, the current study in line with the work of Benesch (2018) confirmed the significance of teachers' emotions as an agent of mobilizing and energizing teaching activities. In addition, the results of our study are partially in congruence with those of Saks (2006) who found a positive association between both employees' well-being and engagement, their sense of satisfaction, and emotional and cognitive commitment to their profession. Research examining the link between work engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being shows that positive emotions like satisfaction can contribute to one's optimal occupational operation through broadening thought-action ranges and building the required competencies, as exemplified in the theory of broad-and-build, thereby fostering psychological well-being (Fredrickson, 2001). This significant relationship is bidirectional (Buric & Macuka, 2018; Høigaard et al., 2012; Xanthopoulou et al., 2012).

Partially in parallel to other studies working on the interplay between EFL/ESL teachers' well-being and their work engagement (Parker et al., 2012; Parker & Martin, 2009), our research revealed that emotion regulation was a stronger predictor of teachers' well-being which is justified in the light of the effective role of well-being in mental, emotional, and occupational performance of teachers in educational contexts in general and language education, in particular (Gregersen et al., 2020; Kidger et al., 2016; MacIntyre et al., 2019; Perez Valverde et al., 2016; Roffey, 2012). Drawing on Ryff's (1989) model of well-being, maturity, and mental health, teachers set and follow their professional objectives, pave the way for their further personal and occupational growth, self-regulate their emotions, and engage cognitively and emotionally in their profession, which in turn, affects their well-being and achievement (Shuck & Reio, 2014).

5. Conclusion

Imbuing teachers with a high sense of perfection and satisfaction in their workplace and profession, and an inspirational character for students' academic and personal development, the role of emotion regulation and well-being, therefore, should be of paramount importance and they require more deserving attention in teacher education and training programs to nurture and develop them (Bentea, 2015; Briner & Dewberry; 2007; Greenier et al., 2021; Mercer et al., 2020; Perez Valverde et al., 2016; Roffey, 2012; Van Horn et al., 2004). Such programs, moreover, can fully and properly contribute to teachers' sense of satisfaction, resilience, and self-efficacy (Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2014; Vesely et al., 2014). Teachers' well-being and emotion regulation, therefore, require further empirical studies to empower teachers professionally and boost the quality of class climate positively (Roffey, 2012).

The present study can help the governmental and educational policy makers in the context of Iran and Iraq to sustain and improve teaching contexts and conditions, which can encourage the teachers to self-regulate their emotions and behavior and experience high levels of well-being. An understanding of the role of emotions in the teaching profession can help teachers to be properly equipped to tackle the demands of the classroom. This enables them to achieve the goal of educating students who can take greater control of their lives. Coming to the limitations of this study, firstly, the convenience sampling design of this study does not allow one to conclude the temporal relationships between these variables. Hence, it was not random or representative since a list of all teachers allowing the participants' random sampling was impossible to produce in practice. Employing self-report instruments is the next limitation due to the issues associated with accurate recall and the impact of social desire. Additionally, these instruments were administered in English as no validated Persian and Iraqi versions have been developed.

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