On the Development of a Model for Teaching English as a Vocation among Iranian Teachers

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Abstract

Teachers' perspectives towards teaching are still a hotly-debated topic that often divide opinions. Some teachers, believe that teaching is a profession and a sole source of income, while many other teachers claim that teaching is an inside spiritual call and a vocational and moralistic duty. This study, following a qualitative grounded theory approach, looked deeply into the interrelationship of data extracting from teachers' perspectives toward teaching as vocation to propose a model in this regard. Consequently, twenty-six Iranian English teachers, teaching at schools and Farhang language institute were asked to brainstorm their ideas as to how they view teaching as a vocation. The 3-session semi-structured interviews with 20 participants and focus-group interviews with 6 participants were conducted. The data was then transcribed and codified based on Corbin and Strauss (2014) systematic steps for grounded theory. The findings led to an eight-factor model encompassing 39 categories. The factors include: a) financial concerns and insufficient salary, b) love and passion for teaching, c) low social status, d) high demands for becoming a teacher, e) devotion and high sense of responsibility, f) limitations and lack of freedom, g) setting a pattern and gaining experience, h) equivocal images of teachers. The proposed model is conducive for training centers, policy makers, ministry of education, and those who care about quality education, and students' academic achievements to seriously take into account teachers' real concerns, and improve their social status to avoid falling them into a state of socioeconomic inequality and feeling marginalized.

Keywords: Teaching; Teachers; Vocation; Model; Grounded theory

1. Introduction

There seem to be different perspectives toward teaching in general and teachers in particular. Many teachers and education experts view teaching as a simple job and mere source of income, whilst many others believe that teaching is beyond a simple job and a sole source of income; On the contrary, they view teaching as a spiritual and moralistic duty and a call from deep within which is practiced with love, devotion, and commitment. Chikering and Gamson (1987) advocated for teachers who believed, education is a shared process creating knowledge between learners, a lifelong endeavor, not just a job. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2017) in a study on the teachers' beliefs in English language teaching and learning came to this conclusion that teachers' beliefs affect what they accomplish in their classroom, their attitudes, and their learners' beliefs and that investigating teachers' belief will help them change their methods to teaching and learning over time in order to bring about more improvement for language learners (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Game and Metcalfe (2008) argued that pedagogic authority relies on love, not actions and subjects. Loving authority is a matter of spontaneous and simultaneous calling and vocation. Atkins (2009) contended that twenty-first century education is largely vocational. Lohman (2016) believes that the thirst for knowledge remains unchanged, as

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technologies change, and ideally, people who teach college students do so because they consider it to be their vocation.

According to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, vocation is a type of work that you feel you are suited to doing and to which you should give all your time and energy or the feeling of suitability itself. Vocation is a theological word. It has been defined as a career with a spiritual calling from deep within. As Dbanj (2009) states teaching is closer to an art than it is to a craft or technique, in other words teaching is a basic human activity, before it is a professional one. Sammons, Davis, Day and Gu (2014) argued that despite likely connections between self-efficacy, well-doing, commitment, emotional energy, resilience and standards of teaching and learning, there have been few empirical studies which have focused upon understanding why, for some teachers, teaching becomes just a job whilst for others it remains a passionate calling.

Reviewing the body of literature on the challenges which teaching in general and teachers in particular face with recently, direct the researchers' attention to the major issues, including financial, attitudinal, personal, ideological perspectives toward teaching, academic achievement, and education quality. As Biddle, Good, and Goodson (1997) argued in their article that there are two classic views toward teachers. The first view considers teachers as workers in other type of formal organizations, who are either motivated by their assigned responsibility and salaries, or by their loyalties on the entity that employs them. The second classic view focuses on teachers' role in classrooms, schools, and school systems. This view puts the teachers on the dilemmas that are created for teachers by limited budgets, unbending curricula, public disputes about education, diffuse goals for schools, unruly students, and the fact that teachers have normally low social status in the bureaucratic organization of the school system.

The purpose of this study is manifold. The study, both contributes efficiently to the body of knowledge and deepens our understanding of the main concepts of teaching as a vocation. Firstly, through a qualitative grounded study approach, the study explores teacher's perspectives and insights toward teaching as a vocation and, investigates the real challenges teachers are facing in their working conditions and the society as a whole. Secondly, probes the nature of vocation as a teaching concept, and via investigating the genuine data extracted from the participants of the study, tries to find the developmental process of forming factors, categories and themes which lead to the final model of teaching as vocation. The Iranian context of the study focuses on, English teachers at schools, from nearly all parts of Iran, including Amol and Ramsar in the north, Kermanshah and Malayer in the west, Mashhad in the east, Shiraz in the south west, Lamerd, Kahnouj, Manoujan, Ghale Ganj, and Faryab, in south and Farhang private language institute in Kahnouj. The main concern of the study is to find out what perspectives Iranian teachers share toward teaching as a vocation when they view it as a vocational and moralistic career and a call, and duty from deep within, and what kind of a model comes out as the result; therefore, the researcher aims to find deep, sound, and convincing answers to the questions raised in the research, and explore ,using face to face interviews and focus group discussions, the perspectives of English teachers as the participants of the study toward teaching as vocation. Consequently, theorize the model in this regard, as a result of qualitative grounded theory study.

2. Literature Review

Teaching and learning are the center of focus and attention in education, and research centers. Many concepts are matters of concerns in the field of teaching in general and teachers in particular. The present work particularly focuses mainly on teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards teaching as vocation. Reviewing the literature, shows that few or nearly none is done in an Iranian context seemingly, but considerable works are done so far in the concerned area. Nagahara (2009) in an article, argued that teaching needs tremendous effort, commitment, hope, grace, and hospitality amid the obstacles, and problems existing in the career. Dbanj (2009) came to this conclusion that despite problems, defects, and shortcomings in the teaching career, teaching is a vocation and human task rather than a profession or source of income. In a research, Holf, Strupler, and Wolter (2011) in a case study on career changers in teaching jobs based on the Swiss, vocational educational system contended that teacher career changer expects to earn significantly more as a teacher than in the former career. Differentiating between vocations and careers, Gullen (2011) argued that conception of vocation is a

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religions calling that overcomes economic, social, and cultural change, and working in a vocation is a process that involves continually improving and expanding field of knowledge and experience.

In a comprehensive research, Monica and Cristian (2012) worked on teaching vocation today in the opinion of students based in psychological and pedagogical module and concluded that redefining and rethinking of the role of teacher, and teacher training is needed due to disappointing problems facing teachers like¸ lack of motivation, poor selection for the teaching¸ decreasing numbers of those attracted to teaching career, decline in quality of supply and many more. Sammons, Davis, Day and Gu (2014) in their books, argued that in spite of self-efficacy, commitment, well-being, and emotional energy, there is a big gap focusing on teaching as a profession or a vocation among teachers. Henderson (2014) in an article reporting different teacher views toward teaching, as a vocation believed that teaching is a divine commission and teachers like angels occupy the hearts and minds of students. Monsfield, Beltman, Broadley, and Weatherby-Fel (2016) in an article on teacher resilience ¸ argued that personal and contextual resources along with use of particular strategies all contribute to resilience outcomes of teachers.

After reviewing the literature, there seems to be no existing model grounded in the teachers' viewpoints in generating a model for teaching as a vocation, so as to put forth a model of teaching as vocation in the context of Iranian teachers. As a result, the present study investigated this overlooked area as the researchers assumed few or no studies were conducted to fully investigate teachers' perspectives on teaching as a vocation to theorize a model for it. Consequently, this research addressed the following research question:

1. What kind of model comes out as a result of perspectives shared by Iranian teachers toward teaching as a vocation?

3. Method

The present study followed a qualitative grounded theory approach. It deeply looked into the interrelationship of data inquiring from English teachers' perspectives toward teaching as vocation to propose a model in this regard.

3.1. Participants and Settings

Twenty-six English teachers, teaching at schools from different parts of Iran and Farhang private language institute were cooperated as the participants of this study. To fulfill the demands of transferability and generalizability, the participants were chosen from nearly major parts of Iran, including Amol and Ramsar in the north, Kermanshah and Malayer in the west, Mashhad in the east, Shiraz in the south west, Lamerd, Kahnouj, Manoujan, Ghale Ganj, and Faryab, in south. Since the potential population was too large, for the reasons of time, distance, traveling, resources, and to increase the credibility of the study, participants were selected according to random purposeful sampling from among English teachers. English as a foreign language is too hard to teach and requires more time and energy; therefore, better and more realistic elicitation of data was expected. Although there were more teachers who were interested and showed their willingness to take part in the study, due to the yardstick of data saturation, and after analyzing the data, the researcher came to this conclusion that no new forthcoming information and theme were likely to come out of subsequent interviews. As a result, the number of participants were restricted to this particular number.

3.2. Instruments

Semi-structured interviews were realized as the best choice to collect data about the perspectives of the teachers toward teaching as vocation. Prior to holding the first semi-structured interview, the certain general guiding questions or in other words, the interview protocol/guide was developed by the researcher. McCracken (1998) cogently argues that the open ended nature of interviewing renders it highly consistent with the ethos of qualitative research. He also contends that the long interview can be devised in order to understand respondents in their own terms, the use of prompt to follow up questions being a particularly important features. In the process of developing the interview questions, the researcher took advantage of related papers in the domain for reviewing and grasping a general insight

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of teaching as vocation, and finally managed to formulate seven open-ended extensive questions to be included in the interview guide.

The questions were piloted in advance with four interviewees accessible in Kahnouj Shahed high school, and Farhang language institute in Kahnouj at the next stage. Consequently, two questions were modified and one more question was added to the interview guide. Thanks to the potentiality and particular nature of qualitative grounded theory approach, the researcher benefited from simultaneously collecting and analyzing the data and follow up memos which were transcribed after each interviews' talks. Moreover, final evolved interview guide emerged over time (see appendix A). By developing an interview guide, firstly, the researcher came to assurance that the whole domain had been covered and no key issues and concepts were put behind, and secondly proper and appropriate questions, not impromptu ones, were included in the study.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

Twenty participants were interviewed in the form of face to face talks, and focus group discussions interviews with six participants were conducted to collect the required data. Seidman (2006), puts forth a framework for in-depth phenomenologically-based interviewing that involves conducting a series of three interviews spaced days or weeks apart; therefore, the data of the present study were collected in three steps.

Step 1: A tentative interview guide/protocol was developed. Body of relevant research on teaching as vocation was reviewed efficiently and finally seven open-ended appropriate questions were included in the interview guide.

Step 2: The developed interview guide was piloted with four participants prior to be used in the main study. Piloting the interview guide resulted the modifications of two questions and additions of one more question.

Step 3: A 3-session interview was held with the same participants to extract meaningful data. The first session was somehow a familiarization and briefing session between the interviewee and interviewer. Interviewees also were informed about the areas to be interviewed. The space between the first session and the second gave the participants the opportunity to reflect upon the matter and prepare themselves for the next session. The researcher also found enough time to update the interview guide. The real interview was conducted with each participant face to face and in the form of focus group discussions in the second session. For the reasons of distance, traveling, and limitations of resources, some interviews were conducted virtually and synchronously via the live connections with the participants in Instagram, and WhatsApp internet- based applications. As Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Walker (2014) maintain that benefits to conducting online interviews include removing barriers to participation such as time, traveling, and scheduling. He also argues that "one of the most efficient way to collect interview data is to use an audio or video recorder. Smart phones, and other new technologies are often inexpensive, compact, and easy to use in recording video." (Ary. et al, 2014 p.467).

The following steps were also taken into consideration by the researcher in the interview sessions:

a) In order to feel free, the participants were allowed to use any language either L1 or L2 with which they felt comfortable most.

b) Participants were kept informed about the purpose of the study, and made assured that their viewpoints would remain confidential, and only used for the purpose of the study.

c) The participants became aware of recording their voices and, on their permission and agreement the recording key was pushed.

d) The researchers remained neutral and conducive during the interview process, and actually did not interfere in participants talks, unless the entrance was needed to put the interviewees in the right path.

e) To meet the demands of a hot and running dialogue, the researchers gave back channeling signals like; yeah, uhmm, nods, uuh, and the necessary feedback to the participants.

Chabahar Maritime University
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f) At the end of the interview, the researchers took notes of the main points and asked the clarification questions to make the points straightforward for themselves.

g) The participants were given the necessary motivation to continue the interview and freely express their ideas.

h) The researchers signaled the end of each interview by saying; If there is anything else to share with us, please let us know?

At the third and the final interview session, the researcher found the opportunity to focus on the lame data, misunderstandings and confusing points extracted from the participants and analyzed during the last two sessions. As a result, the researcher required the participants to return to the issue and shed more lights on it. A summary of the significant points analyzed and transcribed by the researcher were copied and distributed to the participants. Consequently, the participants reviewed their own viewpoints and added or remove any inconsistency.

The above mentioned process was done to assure the accuracy of findings known as validity or credibility of findings. Ary et Al. (2014) hold that consistencies viewed as the extent to which variation can be tracked or explained. This is referred to as dependability or trustworthiness. Three steps were taken to assure the reliability or dependability of the study. First the researcher himself continuously compared the data with the assigned codes and the follow up memos to make sure that the codes and their definitions resemble the stretches of phrases or sentences. Second, twenty percent of the data were independently cross-checked by two more coders and compared in terms of stability and consistency on the given codes. As a result, consistency was achieved by more than 80% among the coders. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended that consistency among coder be in accord at least by 80% for an acceptable qualitative dependability index. Third, the researcher and the coders held documented meetings and exchanged their independent coding in an attempt to reach agreement.

Ary, et al (2014) holds that the integrity of qualitative research depends on attending to the issue of validity. Validity or credibility in fact concerns the accuracy or truthfulness of the findings. To convince the readers about the accuracy of findings, the researcher applied a variety of procedures to assess the validity or credibility of findings: A) the final draft of findings were given back to the participants to judge whether the data are actually derived from the participants' viewpoints. Necessary to mention that a three-session interview was conducted for each participant and in the final session a synopsis of each participants' transcription was given to him to comment on the findings. This strategy is known as member checking). An expert as a peer debriefer was asked for help to check the genuineness of the data. The researcher also asked an external auditor or an independent investigator to investigate who were unaware of the identity of the researcher and the whole project to review the study meticulously. He inspected the transcriptions and scrutinized the relationship between the research questions and the collected data. Eventually, he confirmed that the data are genuinely collected, transcribed and interpreted.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

With the assistance of MAXQDA software the data analysis was carried out. MAXQDA is an analytical software for data of qualitative nature. The program privileged the researcher to analyze the data faster and more accurately. The first step in the analysis of data was familiarity and organization. The researcher transcribed the audio files recorded during the interview sessions and read them several times. Moreover, the field notes and the follow up memos were added and matched to the transcriptions attached to each and every individual. After familiarization with the data and building a long list of transcriptions, they were imported into MAXQDA software. Each transcription was assigned a name denoting to the person and the place the interview session was held. Wholly, 26 datasets were given and sorted out in the software. Having organized the data, as Samimi, Sahragard, and Razmjoo (2016) mentioned in their qualitative work, the researcher began the coding and the reducing process in the grounded theory according to Corbin and Strauss (2014) containing three distinguished stages, namely, open coding, axial coding and selective coding. In the first stage, each transcription file was coded separately and the researcher coded important words or phrases in either vivo codes or label that best

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presented the main point of each segment. Briefly, many labels were assigned to the data and the data were broken into small segments. The memos which are indicative of the researcher thoughts and feelings and play key role in summarization and organization of data were inserted into the software and added to the coded data. What came out finally from this stage was a large number of codes and their frequency of occurrences (249) codes.

After termination of initial coding, the broken data in the previous stage were linked and compiled into workable categories (39) categories. To acquire a better understanding of data, the reduction of a large number of codes and subcategories into smaller categories were done. Constant comparative method was applied to the data to combine the codes and group them into similar and/or different groups. In the final stage, the most difficult of the three stages, namely the selective coding was conducted. Selective coding, as the final integration of data connects and amalgamates the categories into themes. It is regarded as a very big step toward the establishment of the overall model of teaching as vocation. Generally, based on the existing data and body of literature, the researcher went and thought far beyond the data and reorganized the categories into eight themes. Consequently, the probable model of teaching as vocation comprised eight themes.

4. Results

In short, eight main factors were pulled out as the outcomes of grounded theory. The factors and the follow up instances are presented in details as follows:

A: Financial concerns and insufficient salary

Based on the participants' viewpoints, this theme encompasses considerable subcategories, which naturally reflects real teachers' concerns. They range from failure in affording their simple and ordinary needs in everyday life to low salary and high expenses and compelling teachers to choose a second job to make a living. The other main category elicited from participants in face to face and focus group interviews contains sense of smallness and deprivation among many teachers, compared with other beneficial jobs. The following contains comments taken from participants' viewpoints:

*1. In our country, **teachers are neglected and put aside** (a1), and **teaching cannot be considered as a source of income** (a2).*

*2. The big defect with teachers is that **their salary is very low** (a3) compared with other jobs.*

*3. Teachers' **financial problems (a4) hinders them to fulfill their duties (a5)** correctly.*

*4. Due to extreme low salary, **some teachers have chosen a second job** (a6) to afford the expenses of their families.*

*5. **My salary did not match the endeavor and sweat that I gave to my job** (a7), and as a result **sense of smallness and negligence** (a8) covered my whole body.*

*6. **Focus group:** Teachers are **in hardship financially** (a9), and are regarded as **the insecure and average strata of the society** (a10).*

Chabahar Maritime University
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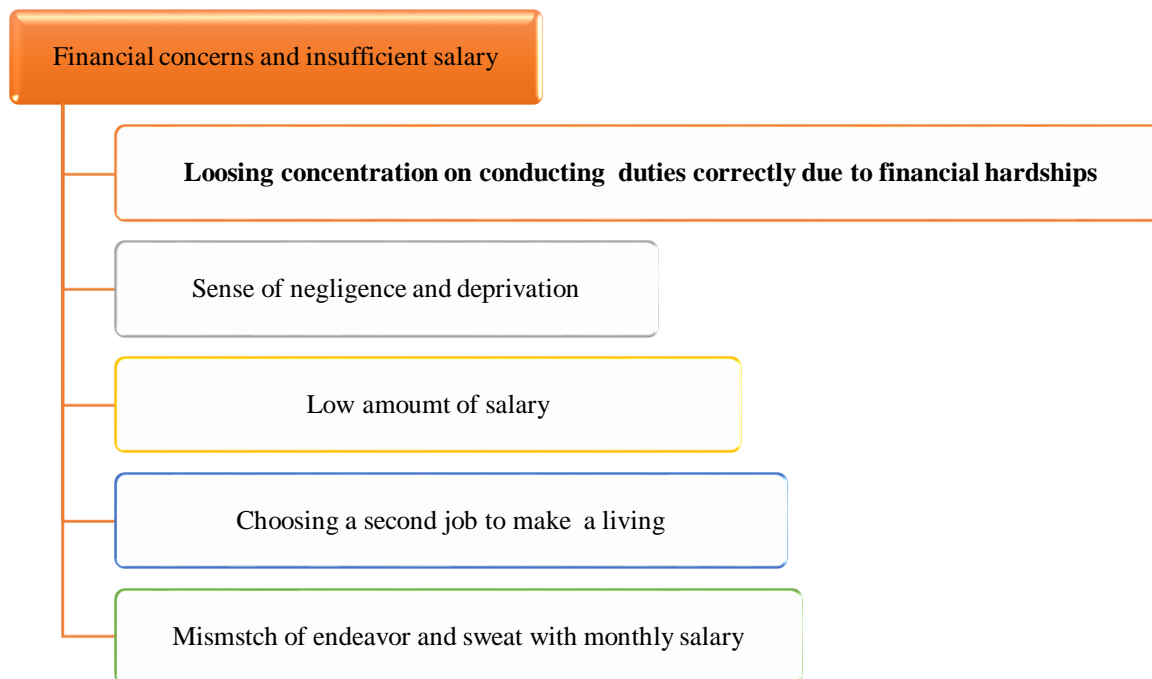IJEAP, 2019, 8(2)   (Previously Published under the Title: Maritime English Journal)

Figure1: Financial Concerns and Low Pay

B: Love and passion for teaching

Another highly reported relevant to the above theme were the love, interest, commitment and great passion which teachers award to teaching and learners. Seemingly the only reason why teachers still remain teachers and despite the hardships and defects teach passionately is the true love and high interest of them to this mostly vocational phenomenon rather a sole profession. The following items are some natural and genuine viewpoints mentioned by English teachers as participants of the study.

*1. I had little interest in teaching first, but **later I fell in love with teaching** (b1).*

*2. **I Love teaching and feel wonderful** (b2) as I give useful information to my students.*

*3. **I become teacher with love and interest (b3)** and still believe it.*

*4. **Even my pregnancy did not affect my quality of teaching** (b4) and my love for teaching.*

*5. **Focus group:** After nearly a decade of teaching, we are **still highly motivated and similar to the first days and years of teaching** (b5).*

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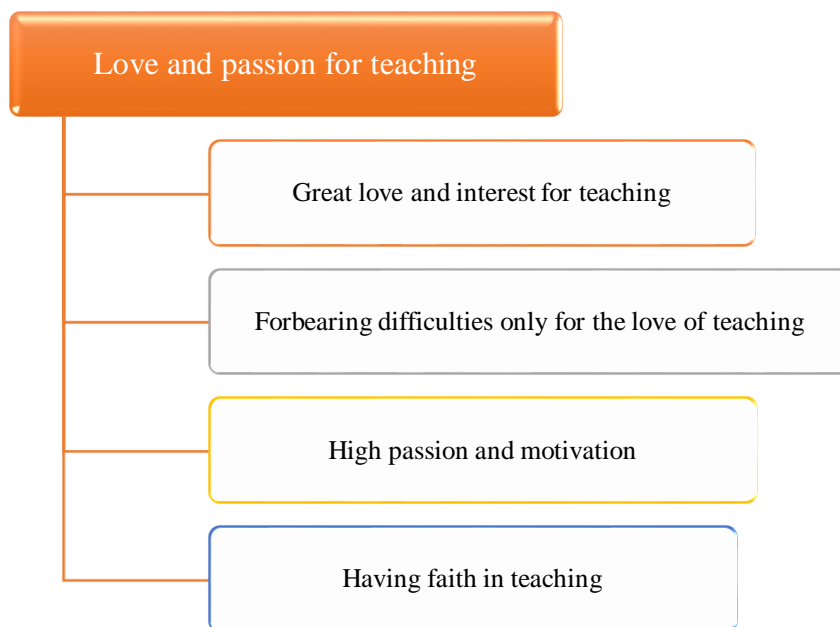IJEAP, 2019, 8(2) (Previously Published under the Title: Maritime English Journal)

Figure 2: Love and Passion for Teaching

C: Low social status

The viewpoints extracted from participants in interviews denote to this important theme that the society nowadays has a low opinion of teachers. Some people think of teachers as poor, moneyless workers with a cheap car and plain cloth. Teachers in particular and teaching in general are not families' center of attention and the first agenda. As elicited from teacher's viewpoints, the society as a whole has a negative attitude towards teachers. Below comments extracted from participants' viewpoints are presented:

*1. **Society's attitude** toward teachers are **humiliating and underestimating (c1)***

*2. Our society is **aloof, reluctant, and static to teachers and education. (c2)***

*3. The society should award teachers a high social status and view them as the **trainers of a successful generation. (c3)***

*4. People view **teaching as a second degree job**. (c4)*

*5. **Focus group: Our society** is suffering from an **inner and outer constructive disease in terms of teachers' true value and status in the society. (c5)***

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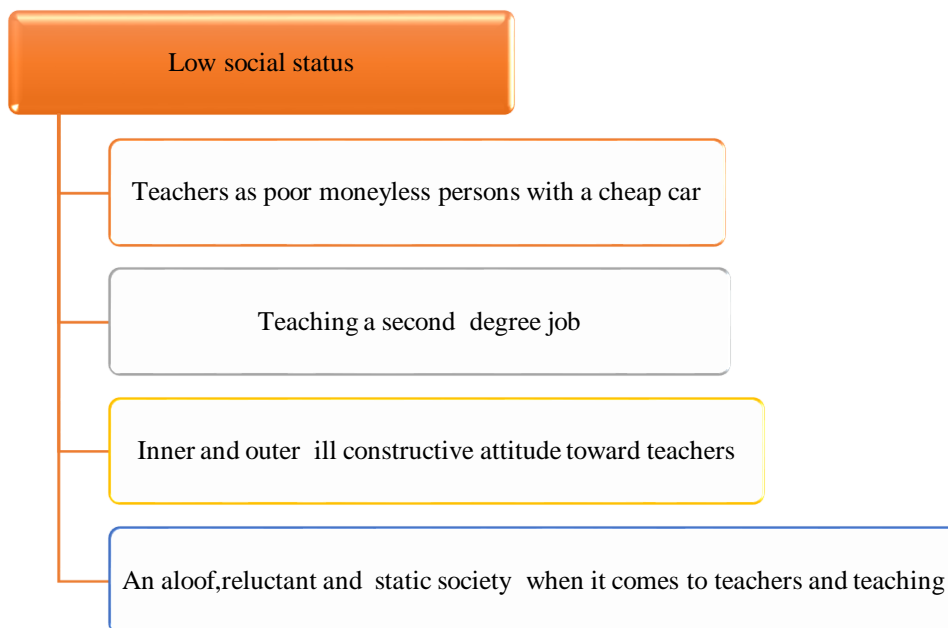
Figure 3: Low Social Status

D: High demand for becoming a teacher

Another issue worth considering is the increasing demands for becoming teachers due to job security and high rate of unemployment among the educated youths. Elicitation of data from participants testify to the fact that these days some family's priorities and inclination to becoming a teacher have increased rapidly. The reasons are, according to this study's' participants point of view, lack of sufficient job opportunity for the young with higher education, constant and fixed salary of teachers, though very low and insufficient, and the governments' failure in providing, and producing jobs for the needy applicants. Genuine excerpts from this study's participants are given below:

*1. Families are inclined to teaching's career, because of **financial support and job security. (d1)***

*2. Teaching career is welcomed by families nowadays, because of **unemployment concerns and lack of job's guarantee. (d2)***

*3. Teachers have a **fixed salary though low and insufficient. (d3)***

*4. **Lack of governmental jobs and finalized employment** (d4) are the main reasons for becoming teachers among students and their families.*

*5. **Lack of proper jobs with sufficient salary in the society** (d5) is the main reason for increasing demand for becoming teachers.*

*6, **Focus group: Government's failure in producing suitable jobs particularly educated youths**, (d6) forms the main reason for the students and their families' inclination in becoming teachers.*
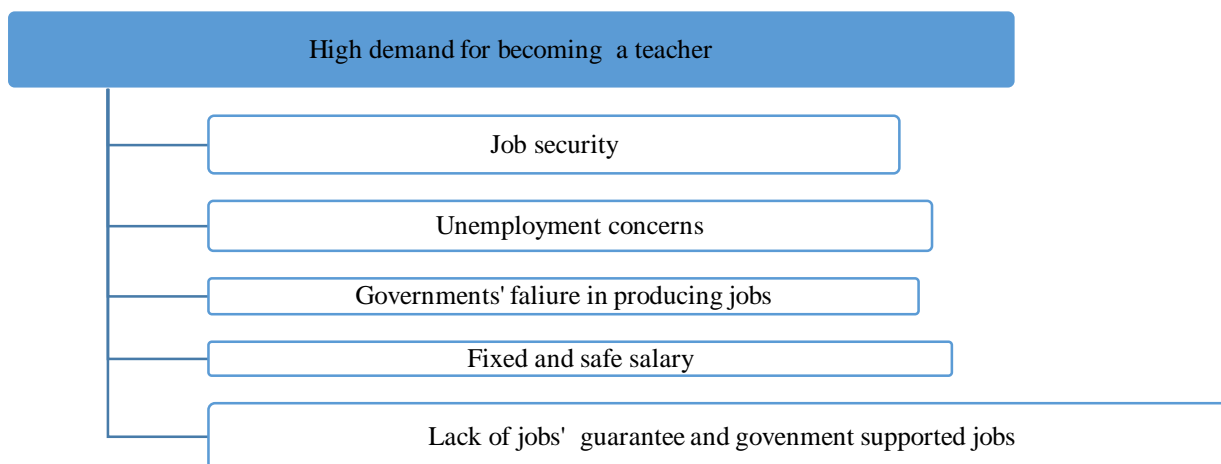
Figure 4: High Demand for Becoming a Teacher

E: Devotion and high sense of responsibility

In the interview procedure, the most prominent and consecutive view point pulled out from participants of the study was devotion and high sense of responsibility which teachers either possess or expected to have. The scope of this perspective begins from ignoring their own personal problems, and putting them behind classrooms' door, focusing on moral sense and the quality of teaching, forbearing the hardships just for the love of teaching, not influencing the quality of teaching even in the pregnancy period, and leads to being committed and morally attached to fulfilling the duties properly, and owing themselves to both students and their parents in terms of commitment and responsibility. The utterances of participants are summarized in the following lines:

1. I *do not take my personal problems with me to the classroom (e1) and leave them behind the door.*

2. Even *the pregnancy period did not affect my quality of teaching. (e2)*

3. The *materialistic* aspect of my job is not important to me and I *just think of quality in education and moral sense. (e3)*

4. Teachers are *morally committed and responsible for both students and their parents. (e4)*

5. *Sensitivity in doing my duties and high sense of responsibility (e5)* caused me sometimes *to fear my job* and *think of quitting it.*

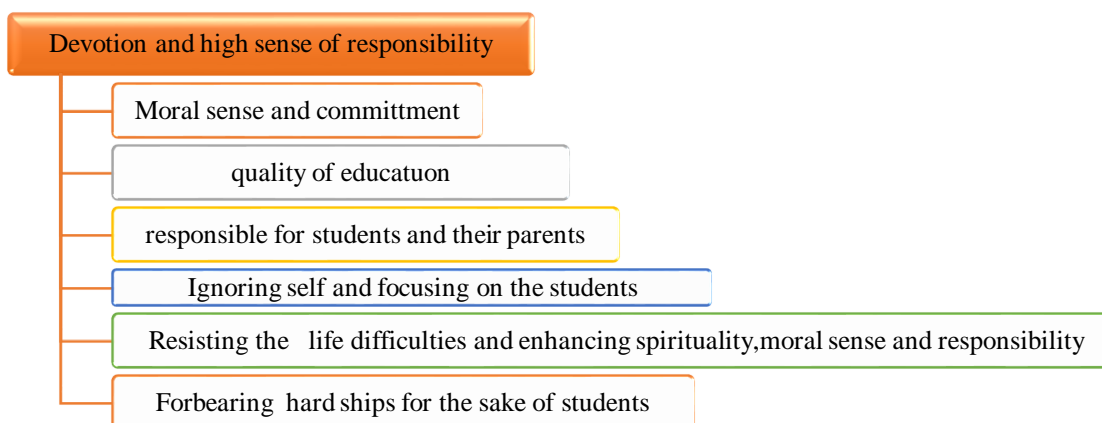6. *Focus group:* Inside teachers, *spirituality, morality and responsibility (e6)* are abundant.

Figure 5: Devotion and High Sense of Responsibility

F: Limitation and lack of freedom

The data elicited from the participants of the study, through face to face interviews and focus group discussions speaks out the limitations and lack of freedom which teachers encounter in their career and work place. These limitations range from the problems with teachers' training centers, clothing and general appearance, to constant monitoring, dictated teaching methodology in the classes and taking care of behavior permanently inside and outside of schools. Below some segments of participants' utterances are presented:

*1. **Teacher training centers train teachers in a very closed and limited atmosphere** (f1) with gender-specific classes and censored books containing poor contents.*

*2. As a teacher, **I always control my behavior to be a pattern for my students**. (f2)*

*3. In my class, **I do not have the necessary freedom of expression and methodology of teaching. (f3)***

*4. I have **to behave always in pre dictated framework**. (f4)*

*5. Because I am a teacher, **I avoid behaviors that are against my social and career status. (f5)***

*6. **Education and training office** constantly **monitors me, and this limits my whole life style. (f6)***

*7. **Focus group discussions: Kind of cloth and hair style which are personal affaires are typical and pre-determined** (f7) for us.*

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│          Limitations & Lack of freedom            │
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     ├───│      Teaching training centers limitations    │
     │   └─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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     ├───│      Constant monitoring of education office  │
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     ├───│  Lack of Freedom of expression and metohdology of teaching │
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     └───│   Particular  pre determined clothing and hair style │
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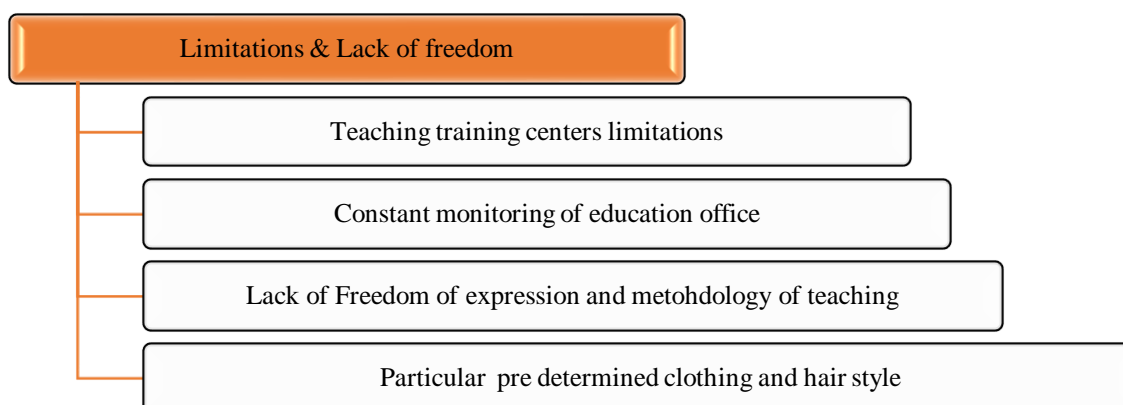
Figure 6: Limitations and Lack of Freedom

G: Setting a pattern and gaining experience

Another highly reported theme by participants of this study is to set an example, on part of the teachers for the students and acquiring priceless experience as time passes on. Teachers are real patterns for their students and their behavior affects the students directly. As one becomes a teacher his life style even his clothing and hair style seemingly changes drastically. Teachers are in fact the trainer of an educated and excellent generation in the society, as a result their life and personality changes as they become more experienced. Inasmuch as time passes, teachers become more matured, and confident in fulfilling their duties moralistically. Below are some genuine utterances mentioned by English teachers as participants of this study:

*1. **Teachers are patterns for their students** (g1) and their deeds affect their trainees.*

*2. I live **my life in a way that society expects a teacher to be**. (g2)*

*3. To show **respect for my job as a teacher I change my appearance**. (g3)*

*4. **A teachers' life is mostly affected by the job**(g4) he is doing.*

Chabahar Maritime University
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5. At first I was not able to get along with my students but as time passed I became more experienced (g5) in handling different situations.

6. After 11 years of teaching, I am akin to my first years of teaching (g6) and highly motivated.

7. Focus group discussions: In the first years of teaching you are not experienced but later you become professional in your job. (g7)
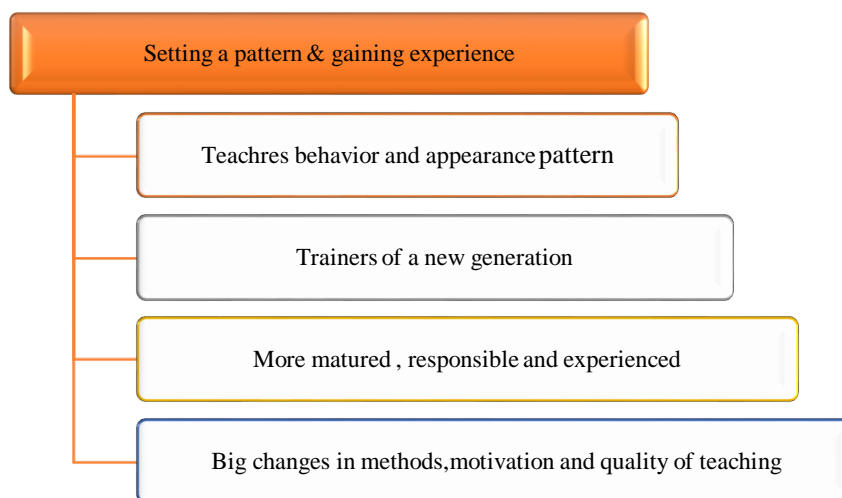

Figure 7: Setting a pattern and gaining experience

H: Equivocal image of teachers

Data extracted from the participants of the study gives an insight to two different images of teachers, one very clear and white, and another blurred and dark. Based on participant's viewpoints, some teachers are committed, responsible, accountable, and consultant. They have high moralistic duties, set examples for the students and enjoy a fixed, secured, and guaranteed salary and some others are disappointed, less motivated, limited, less paid, and misused sometimes. They object to many issues, including society's' low opinion of them, financial and welfare challenges, low attention to qualifications, unqualified teacher training centers, and having no proper and fixed plan for the present and future progress of teachers. Some genuine stretches of talk mentioned by teachers are given below:

1. Teachers are real pattern for the students and the society (h1) as a whole.

2. The training of a new generation (h2) is given to teachers.

3. I am committed and responsible (h3) in my job.

4. Teachers enjoy job security and a fixed salary. (h4)

5. Teachers are not like judges and physicians financially. (h5)

6. I feel misused when I see some relatives respect for me only because I guarantee their banking loans. (h6)

7.Focus group: Society has a negative view toward teachers, teacher training centers are not qualified, there is no plan for future progress, and many factors other than qualifications over comes the real evaluation of teachers. (h7)
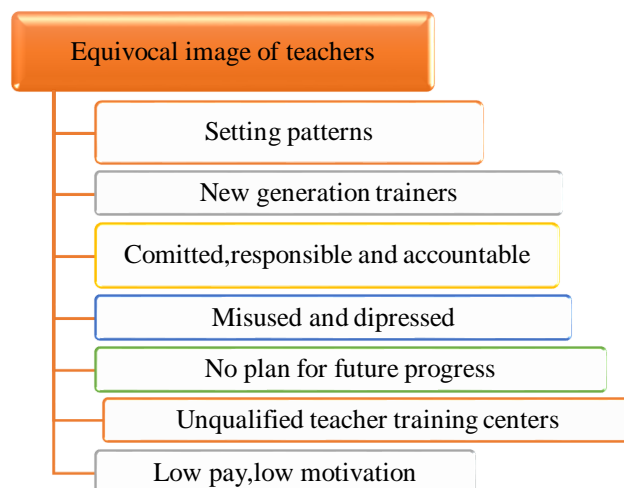
Chabahar Maritime University
Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes   ISSN: 2476-3187
IJEAP, 2019, 8(2)   (Previously Published under the Title: Maritime English Journal)

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│       Equivocal image of teachers    │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
        │          Setting patterns         │
        └──────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
        │       New generation trainers     │
        └──────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
        │   Comitted,responsible and accountable│
        └──────────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
        │        Misused and dipressed      │
        └──────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
        │       No plan for future progress     │
        └──────────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │     Unqualified teacher training centers  │
        └──────────────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
        │       Low pay,low motivation      │
        └──────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 8: Equivocal Images of Teachers

5. The Emerging Model

This model as stated in the method section, is grounded in the data which were collected from face to face interviews and focus group discussions with English teachers from all parts of Iran including Ramsar and Amol in the north, Ivan Gharb, Kermanshah, and Malayer in the west, Mashhad in the east and Shiraz, Lamerd in the south west and Kahnouj, Manoujan, Ghale Ganj, Roodbar, and Faryab in the south. According to Corbin and Strauss's (2014) systematic approach for codification and analysis of the data, the data collected in this study then were analyzed. As a result, the final model involves eight main themes (see figure9) and 39 categories (see table 1).

Table 1: The gist of the Main Themes and Categories of the Preliminary Model of Teaching as Vocation

Theme	Category
Financial concerns and insufficient salary	1.Sense of negligence and deprivation 2.Low amount of salary 3.Choosing a second job to make a living 4.Mismatch of endeavor and sweat by teachers with their monthly salaries 5.Lossing concentration in conducting duties truly, due to financial hardships
Love and passion for teaching	6.Forbearing difficulties only for the love of teaching 7.High passion and motivation 8.Having faith in teaching 9.Great love and interest for teaching
Low social status	10.Teaching as a second degree job 11.Inner and outer ill-constructive attitude toward teachers 12.A reluctant, aloof, and static society when it comes to teachers and teaching 13.Teachers as poor, moneyless, persons with a cheap car
High demand for becoming a teacher	14.Job security 15.Unemployment concerns 16.Governments' failure in producing jobs 17.Fixed and safe salary 18.Lack of jobs' guarantee and government supported jobs
Devotion and high sense of responsibility	19.Moral sense and commitment 20.Quality of education 21.Responsible for the students and their families 22.Ignoring himself and focusing on the students 23.Resisting the life difficulties and enhancing spirituality, morality and responsibility

Chabahar Maritime University
Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes ISSN: 2476-3187
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	24.Forbearing the hardships for the sake of students
Limitations and lack of freedom	25. Teacher training centers limitations
	26.Constant monitoring of teachers by education office authorities
	27.Lack of freedom of expression and methodology of teaching
	28.Particular predetermined clothing and hair style
Setting a pattern and gaining experience	29.Trainers of a new generation
	30.Becoming more matured, and experienced as time passes
	31.Big changes in methods, motivation, and quality of teaching
	32.Teachers' behavior and appearance pattern
Equivocal image of teachers	33.Th first trainer of all strata in the society
	34.Committed, responsible and accountable
	35.Misused and depressed
	36.No plan for teachers' future progress
	37.Unqualified teacher training centers
	38.Low pay, low motivation
	39.Setting pattern for the students and their parents

As Table 1 shows, the emerging model of teaching as a vocation contains eight themes and 39 categories. Through face to face interviews and focus group discussions with Iranian English teachers, the components of the model were taken. Having analyzed the data, the proposed model of teaching as a vocation was emerged as follows in Figure 9.
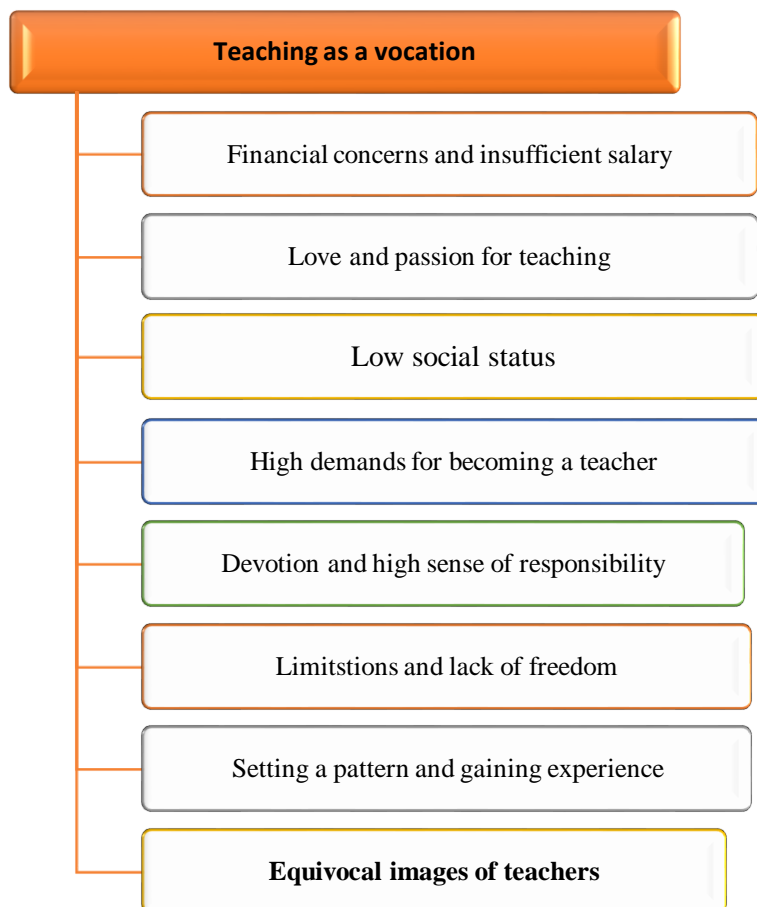

Figure 9: Presented Model of Teaching as a Vocation

Chabahar Maritime University
Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes   ISSN: 2476-3187
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6. Discussion

The results revealed eight main themes in the developed model of teaching as a vocation. As to the first factor of the present study, that is financial concerns and insufficient salary; a couple of studies testify to the fact that there is a correlation between the teachers' pay and the quality of teaching, as well as the overall viewpoints of teachers toward teaching as a whole. Briton and Proper (2016) claimed that a ten percent shock to the wage gap between local labor market and teacher wages resulted in an average loss of around two percent in average school performance in the key exams taken at the end of compulsory schooling in England. In other words, school performance was adversely affected, where wages paid to the teachers were below market rates. In another study, over the effect of teacher's financial incentives on students' scholastic outcomes, Lavy (2003) argued that teachers' monetary performance incentives have a significant effect on students' achievements in English and Math.

Many studies provided confirmatory findings to the second factor of this study that is love and passion for teaching. Loui (2006) in a study conducted on the love, passion, and the amateur teacher contended that "we professional teachers remain amateurs, who teach for the love of our subjects and the love of our students. We teach, because we are intensely, profoundly, passionately love." Hoversten (1987) argued that with constant care, nourishment, and positive thinking, teaching can be a continuing love affair. She also suggested the following five ways to stay in love with teaching: "accept the things you cannot change; get to know kids outside of the classroom; renew yourself professionally; do not give up too soon, and develop a support system within your school" (Hoversten, 1987, p. 32-34). Lakin (2007) holds that teaching and learning are essentially acts of love and this encourages teachers as they remember why they entered teaching in the first place.

Extensive body of research lend support to the third factor of this study, that to say, low social status. In a study Orlov (2000) held that "failure to pay salaries on time over the past few years has had negative socioeconomic and psychological-pedagogical consequences that has led to the decline in the prestige of the teaching profession in the society, and young peoples' desertion from the field of education, and further feminization of education owing to men's' switching to other fields"(Orlov, 2000, p. 17). He also continues that in a sample of 1000 teachers in a research, only one out of eight teachers are satisfied with their jobs and one out of two are not satisfied with the profession. The reason, he argues, is the working conditions and sense of finding themselves in a state of socioeconomic inequality.

In the present study, the reasons for high demands for becoming a teacher that is the fourth factor of the presented model are lack of job security in the society, financial problems and influencing others which are confirmatory with the findings of studies conducted on South Korean preservice teachers. Lee, Kang & Park (2019), based on Watt and Richardson (2008) FIT-choice scale that is factors influencing teaching choice, argued that South Korean preservice teachers reported relatively high values for the Influencing others and Benefits, including salary and job security, while task returns and teaching as fallback career indices were lower than other factors.

Considerable body of research lend support to the fifth factor of this study that is devotion and high sense of responsibility. Lauermann (2014) in his research argued that responsibility has important motivational implications in terms of effort investment, persistence, and commitment to students, but can also come at a personal cost such as hard work, lack of sleep, and less family time. Hubackova and Semradova (2016) working on teacher responsibility in distance education held that responsibility is often addressed in declarative documents, codes of ethics, and legal regulations, and also responsibility in traditional face to face teaching is generally higher than in distance education. Limitations and lack of freedom 'the sixth factor of the study" such as constant monitoring by education office, teacher training limitations, lack of freedom of expression and methodology of teaching in the classroom, and particular predetermined clothing and hair style are rarely reported in the literature; as a result, the findings might contribute to the advancement of the subject under study, and add a novel factor to the body of knowledge.

The seventh factor of this study 'setting a pattern and gaining new experience' is also manifested in a couple of related studies. Afshar and Farahani (2015) in their studies argued that teaching experience

significantly differentiated Iranian EFL teachers, concerning reflective teaching, i.e. high experienced teachers significantly outperformed mid-experienced teachers, who in turn, outperformed their low-experienced counterparts in this regard. Afshar, Rahimi, Gonchepour and Saedpanah (2015) in their research project concluded that there is a significant effect of experience on teachers' sense of efficacy and no significant impact on their beliefs about characteristics and differentiated them from teachers of other subjects. The researchers found no trace of the eighth factor 'equivocal image of teachers. Despite that, the findings that are genuine excerpts from participants' points of view might download a new part to the body of knowledge and open a new scope for further research.

7. Conclusion

The present study concludes by proposing a model of teaching as a vocation among Iranian teachers. Viewpoints extracted from teachers who believed that teaching is not a sole source of income, rather an inside spiritual call from deep within and a vocational and moralistic duty, prompted the researchers to come up with interesting and reflecting conclusions. Despite the fact that, financial concerns and insufficient salary, low social status, limitations and lack of freedom, and falling into a state of socioeconomic inequality, and feeling marginalized, teachers still possess a high sense of devotion, responsibility and sense of love and passion towards teaching in particular and students in general. Due to lack of appropriate jobs among the young, there seems to form a high and increasing demand for becoming teachers, but setting a pattern for students, gaining more experience and love for teaching and students as the future generation of the whole nation overcomes other aspects of the profession.

As a matter of fact, the proposed model, helps education researchers, governments' policy and decision makers, ministry of education, teacher trainer centers, and those who are thoughtful, and careful about quality education and students' academic achievements, to take serious steps in this regard, and to make all out efforts to increase the social status of teachers in the society and improve the socioeconomic position and financial concerns of teachers, and put an end to this type of inequality and feeling of being marginalized.

Although the results of this study covers nearly the four main directions of the country, i.e. Amol and Ramsar in the north, Kermanshah and Malayer in the west, Mashhad in the east, Shiraz in the south west, Lamerd, Kahnouj, Manoujan, Ghale ganj, and Faryab in the south, where many teachers teaching at high schools and private language institutes participated in the present research work voluntary, as many research specialists, and researchers focus more on the particularity rather than generalizability in qualitative studies, the present study had no intention for generalizing the findings. This model, however can be modified or repeated in a new setting by many researchers to compare the new developed models in the same domain. The present study also paves the way for the further research of the same type through quantification of the proposed model and designing a questionnaire based on the factors and the categories of the present model and testing it empirically with a large population of Iranian teachers to functionalize the present model, as a result of the grounded theory.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide/Protocol

1) Why did you become a teacher?
2) Do you view teaching as a social and spiritual responsibility, commitment, and a call from inside or   as a source of income and a tool for making living? Why?
3) What are society's perspective towards teachers and teachers toward the society?
4) Is your life affected by being a teacher or becoming a teacher has affected your life?
5) How much have you changed, compared with the first years of teaching?
6) What are the main limitations and shortcomings and strength points of your job?
7) Do you think the interest and inclination of students and their families to teacher education centers and becoming a teacher has increased or decreased nowadays?