

Iranian English as Foreign Language Teachers' Psychological Well-Being across Gender: During the Pandemic

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Abstract : The purpose of this study was to explore the pattern of Psychological Well-Being (PWB) of Iranian male and female EFL teachers during the pandemic. It was intended to see if such a drastic change in the context and mode of teaching affects teachers' PWB. Furthermore, the possible difference between the six elements of PWB of Iranian EFL male vs. female teachers during the pandemic was investigated. The other purpose was to find out the EFL teachers' perceptions of any modifications, and factors leading to such modifications in their PWB during pandemic. For the purpose of this investigation, a total of 81 EFL teachers (59 female, 22 male) with an age range of 25 to 35 were conveniently sampled from different cities in Iran. Ryff's PWB questionnaire was sent to participant teachers through online platforms to elicit data on their PWB. As for their perceptions on the possible modifications and the factors involved in PWB during pandemic, a set of semi-structured interviews were run among both sample groups. The findings revealed that male EFL teachers had the highest mean on personal growth, followed by purpose of life, and self-acceptance and the lowest mean on environmental mastery. With a slightly similar pattern, female EFL teachers had the highest mean on personal growth, followed by purpose in life, and positive relationship with others with the lowest mean on environmental mastery. However, no significant difference was observed between the male and female groups' overall means on elements of PWB. Additionally, participants perceived that their anxiety level in online classes altered due to factors like (1) Computer literacy skills, (2) Lack of social communications and interactions with colleagues and students, (3) Online class management, (4) Overwhelming workloads, and (5) Time management. The study ends with further suggestions as regards effective online teaching preparation considering teachers PWB, especially at severe situations such as covid-19 pandemic. The findings offer to determine the reformations of educational policies concerning enhancing EFL teachers' PWB through computer literacy courses and stress management courses. It is also suggested that to proactively support teachers' mental health, it is necessary to provide them with advisors and psychologists if possible for free. Limitations: One limitation is the small number of participants (81), suggesting that future replications should include more participants for reliable findings. Another limitation is the gender imbalance, which future studies should address to yield better outcomes. Furthermore, Limited data gathering tools suggest using observations, diaries, and narratives for more insights in future studies. The study focused on one model of PWB, calling for further research on other models in the literature. Considering the wide effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, future studies should consider additional variables (e.g., teaching experience, age, income) to understand Iranian EFL teachers' vulnerabilities and strengths better.

Keywords : online teaching, psychological well-being, female and male EFL teachers, pandemic

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