

## Fluctuations in Motivational Strategies EFL Teachers Use in Virtual and In-Person Classes across Context

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**Abstract :** The purpose of the present investigation was to probe the main motivational strategies Iranian school vs. institute teachers use in virtual and in-person classes to motivate students in learning the English language. Yet another purpose was to understand teachers' perceptions about any modifications in their use of motivational strategies before and during/after the pandemic. For the purpose of this investigation, a total of 63 EFL teachers (35 female, 28 male) were conveniently sampled from schools and institutes in the cities of Mahabad and Sardasht. Moreover, for the interview phase of the study, 20 percent (n=16) of the sample was selected conveniently. The required data was gathered through a modified questionnaire (Cheng & Dornyei, 2007) consisting of 42 items and a set of semi-structured interviews. The outcomes of a set of non-parametric Mann-Whitney U tests demonstrated that presenting tasks properly in online classes and familiarizing learners with L2-related values in in-person classes came out as the most influential source of motivational strategies practiced by EFL school teachers. Additionally, it was found that proper teacher behavior (showing enthusiasm) in both in-person and virtual classes and presenting tasks properly in in-person classes were overwhelmingly endorsed by EFL institute teachers. The study also portrayed no statistically significant mean difference between school and institute EFL teachers' overall use of motivational strategies in virtual and in-person classes. The interview results indicated that the strategies of designing tasks through technological aids, provision of videos, gamification techniques, assigning projects, and delivering formative online feedback were held in high regard during/after the pandemic due to the high reliance of teaching on the Internet connection. Meanwhile, the research has indicated that the spread of COVID-19 was the main reason for teachers' modifications in motivational strategies, in response to the crisis of the pandemic, all educational contexts at all levels resorted to online education as a result their strategies were adapted to the new situation. The findings brought to light through this investigation provided initial evidence of the unintended consequences of the pandemic on teachers' strategic choices. Therefore, to deliver a better education for the future, the study suggests more concentration on the quality of teaching as well as reframing the status quo of teaching.

**Keywords :** virtual teaching, motivational teaching strategies, teaching context, online education

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