Delving into EFL Teacherpreneurship: The Perceptions of Iranian EFL Teacherpreneurs and their Followers in Social Affinity Spaces

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Abstract

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacherpreneurship, a branch of entrepreneurship, is a pioneering practice in the teaching profession that makes use of innovation and technologies. This study, using a basic interpretive design, aimed to explore the motivating factors of EFL teacherpreneurs as well as the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers' motivating and demotivating factors to follow them. EFL teacherpreneurs are self-driven teachers who refuse traditional school environments and harness technology to gain autonomy in social affinity spaces as an educational platform. Two groups of participants consisting of 25 Iranian EFL teacherpreneurs and 100 followers of the EFL teacherpreneurs following them in social affinity spaces, such as Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, Eitaa, and Instagram, were selected via purposeful sampling. To collect the data, two semi-structured interviews in individual and focus group forms were implemented with the two groups of participants. Data analysis was conducted via the manual thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews. The results indicated that the motivating factors of EFL teacherpreneurs were making financial gain, providing innovative opportunities for others, experiencing professional development, using technology, sharing knowledge, coping with teaching burnout, practicing creativity and criticality, and enhancing self-efficacy and self-confidence. Moreover, the motivating and demotivating factors for the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers were finding new ways of EFL teaching/learning, building new working and social relations, becoming aware of the latest developments in EFL teaching/learning, learning self-directed EFL learning, finding a new identity, enhancing EFL teaching/learning effectiveness, along with suffering from shortage of time, financial problems, shortage of facilities, students' unwillingness and demotivation to learn, and low digital literacy.

Keywords: EFL learning/teaching, EFL teacherpreneur, EFL teacherpreneurship, social affinity spaces.

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Introduction

Teacherpreneurship, in general, and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacherpreneurship, in particular, are branches of entrepreneurship that have taken increasing attention from teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) scholar within the last ten years. The term teacherpreneur was first proposed by Davis (2006) and was defined as a teacher who does trans-classroom partnerships to achieve shared goals and useful learning opportunities for their students (Keyhani, 2020; Nova, 2015). Likewise, an EFL teacherpreneur is a teacher who is engaged in the processes of EFL teaching and learning to teach students to act creatively and competitively in the global village (Obar & Wildman, 2015).

EFL teacherpreneurship is an interesting field with many proponents and users. It is a channel through which EFL teachers can transform the monotonous state of their job, add novelty to it, earn extra income, teach cooperatively and collaboratively, and experience risk-taking (Asaoka, 2020). This is documented by the increasing attention paid to this issue by a multitude number of scholars (Buckley & Futonge, 2016; Kemdikbudristek, 2020; Pilkita et al., 2022). However, it is still in its infancy in social affinity spaces, such as Instagram where people affiliate with others based primarily on shared activities, interests, and goals, not shared race, class culture, ethnicity, or gender (Gee, 2004). EFL teacherpreneurship in social affinity spaces is an opportunity to add new flourishing dimensions to EFL teaching and learning, taking advantage of educational technologies as well as universal entrepreneurship strategies (Pilkita et al., 2022).

Further, as documented in the literature (Caulat, 2022), power distribution asymmetry in mainstream vs. affinity spaces has compelled EFL teachers to use social affinity spaces as a ground for EFL teacherpreneurship; that is, affinity spaces provide more opportunities for EFL teachers to achieve what they seek with more satisfaction and gains and fewer limitations. It seems that social affinity spaces have emerged as a heaven for EFL teachers escaping the cramped confines of traditional face-to-face classrooms. Real teaching spaces, as put by Barkhoda and Karami (2022), deprive teachers from useful

power dynamics which can make EFL teaching more productive and fertile. The so-called virtual era has empowered EFL teachers beyond the limitations of in-closures of face to face classes (Cai & Wang, 2020). The outcome of this asymmetrical power distribution has been the attractiveness of social affinity spaces for extra activities of EFL teachers in the name of EFL teacherpreneurship. According to Carpenter et al. (2016), Lasekan and Alarcon (2021), and Kemdikbudristek (2020), EFL teacherpreneurship in affinity spaces is a way to influence education beyond the immediate educational contexts. This is why the EFL teacherpreneurship has emerged in the World as a realm that calls for various competencies on the part of EFL teacherpreneurs.

Additionally, EFL teacherpreneurs who are active in social affinity spaces have some followers having several motivating and demotivating factors that can encourage them to continue or discontinue following EFL teacherpreneurs. This leads us to accept that the two main parties in EFL teacherpreneurship in social affinity spaces are EFL teacherpreneurs and their followers, both of whom are motivated by some factors which are worth uncovering. Indeed, if such motivating factors remain in an aura of uncertainty, the main nature of EFL teacherpreneurship will remain unknown. Obviously, uncovering EFL teacherpreneurs' and their followers' perceptions of the factors that motivate or demotivate them may decode many aspects of EFL teacherpreneurship in social affinity spaces. However, EFL teacherpreneurship in social affinity spaces is among those research areas that suffer from research scarcity in the context of Iran. In particular, to the best knowledge of the researcher, the perceptions of EFL teacherpreneurs and their followers in social affinity spaces in terms of motivating and demotivating factors have not been explored yet. This is why the researchers could not find any eye-catching materials on why EFL teacherpreneurship is implemented in social affinity spaces in Iran. To fill this gap, this study sought to explore the motivating factors of EFL teacherpreneurs and the motivating and demotivating factors of EFL teacherpreneurs' followers in social affinity spaces.

In so doing, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What are the motivating factors of the EFL teacherpreneurs in affinity

spaces as an educational platform?

2. What are the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers' motivating and demotivating factors to join/follow teacherpreneurs in social affinity spaces?

Literature Review

Theoretical Background of Teacherpreneurship

Three main viewpoints are prevalent in teacherpreneurship. With regard to the first viewpoint, some researchers, such as Heinonen and Poikkijoki (2006), Shelton and Archambault (2019), Lasekan et al. (2021), and Carpenter et al. (2016) emphasized the need for teachers to be entrepreneurial themselves to properly foster entrepreneurial mindsets in their students. In this viewpoint, a heavy emphasis was placed on what competencies were transferred to the students as a result of who the teacher was and what they did (Peltonen, 2015). The second viewpoint looked at teacher entrepreneurs in a more traditional sense by linking their work to a form of business development. For example, Wu (2018) studied rural Chinese teachers who had started a business, such as a Bed and Breakfast to increase their income. The third category considered teacher entrepreneurs as in-service teachers who had entrepreneurial competencies and used them in direct relation to their classrooms or the education system they worked in (Oplatka, 2014). This category itself was divided into two subcategories: those who viewed teacher entrepreneurship as a negative and externally determined behavior (Groundwater-Smith & Sachs, 2002), and those who viewed it as a more positive and innovative phenomenon (Martin et al., 2018). Some competencies were enumerated for teacher entrepreneurs in this viewpoint, including being democratic, reflective, creative, and accountable.

Empirical Studies

Some studies have been conducted on teacherpreneurship in terms of the strategies used and the roles of teachers and students in teacherpreneurship. For example, Shalini et al. (2017) conducted a study to see

whether teachers' entrepreneurial orientations could lead to the enhancement of students' problem-solving abilities. It was unraveled that teachers who are proponents of the entrepreneurial stance taught strategies to students that directly or indirectly improved their higher-order problem-solving competence. With a view to the role of problem-solving in EFL achievement, this study shows that teachers' entrepreneurial orientations could lead to promising results in students' EFL achievement. Thapanee (2017) explored the most prevalent instructional strategies used by teacherpreneurs. The results led to the identification of the following strategies as the most frequent ones in teacherpreneurs' activities: plan-based learning, problem-solving, creative learning, creative thinking, research-oriented learning, problem-laden learning, project-based learning, creative teaching, and critical thinking. This can be enlightening for teachers willing to start entrepreneurial practices. However, revealing the motivation behind such activities is not without its benefits. Aladağ (2017) explored the relationship between teachers' views and the strategies they used to enact entrepreneurship abilities. Content analysis of the interviews confirmed a strong association between teachers' stances and opinions and entrepreneurship strategies used by them. This is convincing enough to conclude that entrepreneurship strategies can be taken at the service of changing teachers' views in positive directions which can contribute to their professional success. Linkhauer (2016) set out a study to explore students' perceptions of successful entrepreneurship. In so doing, interviews were implemented with creative students. The outcomes showed that the interviewees perceived that the four necessary elements of successful entrepreneurship are amusement, freedom, experience, and flexibility. While students' perceptions provide valuable insights, their limited experience in entrepreneurship suggests that incorporating teachers' perspectives could enhance the robustness of the findings. Garomssa's (2016) qualitative study probed the state of entrepreneurialism in public universities. The researcher reported weak self-monitoring ability and low entrepreneurial culture, the load of procedures, low compensation, lack of real space for bottom-up initiatives, lack of incentive, lack of financial and technical support for innovative ideas,

poor financial recording, and management system as the factors contributing to inapplicability of entrepreneurialism in public universities. These factors can be taken as demotivating ones in discouraging teacherpreneurs. Therefore, the findings of our study can increase the validity of the results of this study. In a piece of research undertaken by Ruskovaara and Pihkala (2015), the role of teachers in delivering teacherpreneurship practices in schools was investigated. The outcomes suggested that the teachers and their training had a lot to do with how they practiced entrepreneur education. The findings suggest that teacher education programs should be equipped with training on teacherpreneurship practices so that future teachers can deliver teacherpreneurship practices in the classes.

Moreover, motivating and demotivating factors in EFL teacherpreneurship have been the concern of some studies. For instance, some studies on this research area (e.g., Garomssa, 2016) enumerated seeking innovation, experiencing creativity (Shalini et al., 2017), achieving professional development (Chilvers, 2018), gaining economic advantages (Kalas & Raisinghani, 2019), and being involved with technological achievements (Onuma, 2016) as motivating factors in EFL teacherpreneurship. In addition, self-efficacy and self-confidence enhancement was reported by Kalas and Raisinghani (2019) as motivating factors in EFL teacherpreneurship. Cochran-Smith et al. (2018), Garomssa (2016), and Kalas and Raisinghani (2019), Naegels et al. (2018) tackled the same issue and reported social relations, time and money shortage, digital illiteracy, lack of financial and technical support as effective on (de)motivation of individuals to participate in EFL teacherpreneurship.

In sum, the reviewed studies show that teacherpreneurship as done in social affinity spaces is among under-investigated topics. Further, the perceptions of EFL teacherpreneurs and their followers in social affinity spaces in terms of the motivating and demotivating factors behind their practices have not been explored yet. This acts as the main motif behind conducting the present study.

Method

Research Design

To serve the purpose of the study, a basic interpretive design within the qualitative paradigm (Ary et al., 2019) was used to extract the motivating factors of the EFL teacherpreneurs in affinity spaces as an educational platform, as well as the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers' motivating and demotivating factors to join/follow EFL teacherpreneurs. According to Ary et al. (2019), a basic interpretive design can unearth how humans make sense of their subjective reality and attach meaning to it. The basic interpretive design was appropriate for conducting this study because this approach is appropriate for the exploration of people's perceptions (Ary et al., 2019).

Participants and Context

Two groups of participants were selected to take part in the present study based on the purposive sampling method. The first group, teacherpreneuers, as information-rich cases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), was selected based on the criterion of having hands-on experience in teaching English in social affinity spaces as an EFL teacherpreneur. These teachers were reported to have practiced several strategies of teacherpreneurship in social affinity spaces, including but not limited to Plan-based learning, problem-solving, creative learning, creative thinking, research-oriented learning, problem-laden learning, project-based learning, creative teaching, and critical thinking. They consisted of 25 (10 males and 15 females) Iranian EFL teacherpreneurs who held B.A, M.A, and Ph.D. in different branches of the English Language field. English as a Foreign Language teacherpreneurs made videos on new and innovative ways of EFL teaching/learning; planned new online courses for teaching English skills; prepared e-books to be taught in EFL classes; developed innovative teaching methods to teach EFL to specific groups of learners, including those with learning problems and developed game-based English learning methods. Such games were developed by the teacherpreneurs based on promoting active learning and critical thinking skills (Navarrete, 2013). The games, simulating talk shows and acting in role plays of interviews

among learners, aimed at enriching learners' cognition, and communicative skills. They were in the 30-60 age range.

The second group of participants included 100 (50 males and 50 females) Iranian followers of the EFL teacherpreneurs who were sampled from among the identity information (ID) which were in the list of the followers of the EFL teacherpreneurs in social affinity spaces, including virtual platforms, such as Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, Eitaa, and Instagram. In this group, there were 50 (25 males and 25 females) EFL teachers teaching English at different levels. This group of participants were in the 40-55 age range and had at least 15 years of educational experience. The criterion for the selection of these participants was whether they were available and willing to participate and if they could communicate their experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner (Spradley, 1979). Moreover, the teachers had to have followed the teacherpreneuers in social affinity spaces for five years to be reflective enough to provide their opinions. Moreover, among this group (i.e., followers of the EFL teacherpreneurs), there were 50 (25 males and 25 females) Iranian EFL learners who were learning EFL at different universities or private language institutes with an age range of 28-40. In order to maintain the probabilistic nature of the samples to ensure the generalizability of findings and minimize the potential for bias, the learners were chosen from among different levels of English proficiency (i.e., intermediate, upper-intermediate, advanced). It is worth noting that in line with the qualitative nature of the study, the size of the sample of the present study was determined based on the data saturation point. It is the point where no new thing is added to the findings by further data collection. To observe ethical issues, the consent of the participants was taken for participation in the study. Moreover, they were ensured about the anonymity and confidentiality of their personal information. It should be mentioned that some participants did not respond quickly to the researcher's request and he was obliged to send them his request for two or three times. The context of the study was Iran. Demographic information of the participants is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Participants

Teacherpreneuers	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	10	40%
Female	15	60%
Education		
B.A	10	40%
M.A	10	40%
Ph.D.	5	20%
Age		
30-40	8	32%
41-50	10	40%
51-60	7	28%

Followers	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	50	50%
Female	50	50%
Job		
EFL teachers	50	50%
EFL learners	50	50%
Education of teachers		
B.A	25	50%
M.A	15	30%
Ph.D.	10	20%
Age of teachers		
40-45		
46-50	12	24%
51-55	20	40%

Instruments

The present study benefited from two semi-structured interviews both in individual and focus group forms (Ary et al., 2019). The interviews were developed to uncover and clarify the two groups of participants' motivating factors in affinity spaces as an educational platform. It is worth mentioning that interview questions were designed based on social entrepreneurship theory according to which individuals resort to teacherpreneurship practices through the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyze change and/or address the needs of themselves and others (Kalas & Raisinghani, 2019). All interview sessions were audio-taped for transcription

and further analysis. The interviews included five open-ended questions. Both of the interviews were implemented by the researcher in English with no time limitation. To establish the dependability and credibility of the interview data, low-inference descriptors and member checks were used. Low-inference descriptors involved presenting direct quotations from the interviews which let the reader experience the participants' world by seeing the actual words of the respondents (Ary et al., 2019). Using member checks involved the researcher's sharing his interpretations of the data with the participants to avoid any miscommunication, identify inaccurate interpretations, and show courtesy to the participants by letting them read what has been written about them (Ary et al., 2019).

Data Collection

Concerning the first research question 'What are the motivating factors of the EFL teacherpreneurs in affinity spaces as an educational platform?', the first interview was implemented with EFL teacherpreneurs. With regard to the second research question 'What are the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers' motivating and demotivating factors to join/follow teacherpreneurs in social affinity spaces?', the second interview was implemented with the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers.

The interviews were run in two stages, namely individual and focus group interviews. The individual semi-structured interview was done in a one-to-one form by the researcher. That is, the interviewees were interviewed individually and separately from each other in WhatsApp and Telegram. The interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewees for further analysis. Finally, the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Then, the focus group interview was run wherein 8 members of each group voluntarily participated in a group interview. Similar to the individual interview, the focus group interview was done virtually via WhatsApp and Telegram for the ease of the interviewees. Only one focus group was constructed. To avoid the influence of interviewees on one another in the focus group interview, the participants were asked to elaborate their views in more

detail. The focus group interview lasted 45 minutes. The role of the researcher in the focus group interview was the facilitator or moderator of the discussion. The interview was also audio-recorded for further analysis as permitted by the interviewees. Eventually, the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the transcribed versions of the interviews were subjected to manual thematic analysis in four steps. In the first step, which is the familiarization step, the researcher sought to know the data, and get an overview of all the data that were collected before he started analyzing the data. More specifically, he tried to be familiar with the data through taking notes or looking through the data.

 In the second step, that is the coding step, the data were coded. It involved making some phrases and sentences of the text bold or highlighted and coming up with some codes which represented the content of the bold or highlighted parts. In this step, the researcher highlighted all the sentences or phrases that were perceived as relevant. In this way, some codes were extracted which allowed the researcher to get an overview of the recurrent points and meanings in the data.

In the third step, which is generating themes, the codes were looked over to identify the recurrent patterns in them and extract the themes. In so doing, related and similar codes were combined to reach a single theme since themes are usually broader than codes. Moreover, the codes which were non-relevant were omitted. The outcome of this step was the extraction of the following themes: making financial gain, providing innovative opportunities for others, experiencing professional development, using technology, sharing knowledge, coping with teaching burnout, practicing creativity and criticality, and enhancing self-efficacy and self-confidence, finding new ways of EFL teaching/learning, building new working and social relations, becoming aware of the last developments in EFL teaching/learning, learning self-directed EFL learning, finding a new identity, enhancing EFL teaching/learning effectiveness,

along with suffering from shortage of time, financial problems, shortage of facilities, students' unwillingness and demotivation to learn, and low digital literacy.

In the fourth step, which is reviewing themes, the extracted themes were reviewed by the researcher to ensure their accuracy and usefulness. To this end, the researcher returned to the data to compare the themes against it. If any problems were identified with the themes, they were broken down, combined, or omitted. In sum, in this step, the researcher tried to make themes more useful and accurate. For inter-coder reliability considerations, the researcher did the thematic analysis jointly with a trained colleague on the thematic analysis. In cases where a consensus was not achieved, a third party who was an expert in this type of research area was consulted.

Results

Concerning the first research question 'What are the motivating factors of the EFL teacherpreneurs in affinity spaces as an educational platform?', the thematic analysis of the data led to the emergence of the following themes and sub-themes concerning the motivating factors of the EFL teacherpreneurs in affinity spaces as an educational platform:

Personal Factors

The first main theme emerged was "personal factors" which encompass factors which are personally relevant to the EFL teacherpreneurs. It includes the following sub-themes: Making financial gain, experiencing professional development, coping with teaching burnout, practicing creativity and criticality, and enhancing self-efficacy and self-confidence.

Making Financial Gain. The first sub-theme that emerged was making financial gain. It was enumerated as a motivating factor of EFL teacherpreneurs by Kalas and Raisinghani (2019). It revolves around the monetary advantage of teacherpreneurship for the EFL teacherpreneurs. The following quotations show this:

One of the important aspects of life is financial matters. Without money,

life is really difficult. I cannot manage my family costs without extra income. Teacherpreneurship is an opportunity to gain money. (Participant 8)

To me, teaching wage is not enough. One way to supplement my extra expenses is teacherpreneurship. I experience financial satisfaction with teacherpreneurship. (Participant 2)

Experiencing Professional Development. The second sub-theme that emerged was experiencing professional development. It means that teacherpreneurship helps EFL teacherpreneurs achieve professional development. Chilvers (2018) also found professional development as a motivating factor of EFL teacherpreneurs. The following quotations corroborate this:

To develop professionally, I decided to choose this direction. Teachers cannot attain job satisfaction without professional development. Teacherpreneurship is an appropriate channel for the goal of professional development. (Participant 4)

As an English teacher, I like to improve in my job. Stagnancy acts like calamity in teaching job. After much search, I finally found teacherpreneurship as very helpful in improving my status in the teaching job. (Participants 1)

Coping with Teaching Burnout. The third sub-theme that emerged was coping with teaching burnout. It implies that EFL teacherpreneurs participate in teacherpreneurship to deal with burnout. No study was found wherein resisting burnout has been found as a motivating factor of EFL teacherpreneurs. The following quotations confirm this:

I was experiencing a burnout feeling. A sense of demotivation irritated me. After working on teacherpreneurship, this negative emotion was reduced in me. (Participant 24)

Teaching is a job which is associated with high risk of burnout. Teacherpreneurship activities are diverse enough to degrade the severity of this syndrome. (Participant 19)

Practicing Creativity and Criticality. The fourth sub-theme that

emerged was practicing creativity and criticality. It says that EFL teacherpreneurs resort to teacherpreneurship to enhance their creative and critical thinking. Practicing creativity was found among the motivating factors of EFL teacherpreneurs in the study by Shalini et al. (2017). The following quotations show this:

> *I became interested in teacherpreneurship because it requires creative thinking. In fact, teacherpreneurship is nothing but injecting creativity into the routine procedures. This creativity-stimulating feature of teacherpreneurship motivated me. (Participant 22)*
>
> *Questioning the status quo through the lens of critical thinking empowers teachers to take new roles beyond mere presenters of educational materials. I set out teacherpreneurship to exercise criticality in my job. (Participant 20)*

Enhancing Self-efficacy and Self-confidence. The fifth sub-theme that emerged was enhancing self-efficacy and self-confidence. It echoes that EFL teacherpreneurs use teacherpreneurship to improve their sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence. Self-efficacy and self-confidence were confirmed by Kalas and Raisinghani (2019) as motivating factors of EFL teacherpreneurs. The following quotations indicate this:

> *Self-efficacy is a must for effective English teaching. Entrepreneurial extra tasks make me feel this self-efficacy. They help me think I can achieve my pre-set goals.* (Participant 14)
>
> *A byproduct of teacherpreneurship was enhancement of self-confidence. I deeply improved in my confidence in my capabilities as a consequence of teacherpreneurship.* (Participant 8)

Social Factors

The second main theme emerged was social factors. It refers to the factors that are by nature social rather than personal. The sub-themes associated with this theme are prooviding innovative opportunities for others, using technology, and sharing knowledge.

Providing Innovative Opportunities for Others. The first sub-theme

that emerged was providing innovative opportunities for others. It confirms that teacherpreneurship provides some new opportunities for EFL teacherpreneurs. Garomssa (2016) presented practicing innovation as a motivating factor of EFL teacherpreneurs. The following quotations indicate this:

> *The main impetus behind my entrepreneurial practice is to make others more innovative. I like other teachers and students learn innovative ways of teaching and learning English.* (Participant 21)
>
> *Humanity is concerned with generating innovation opportunities for our mates. I cannot claim that it was the only present motif for my teacherpreneural activities. But I'm sure that it remarkably pushed me forward.* (Participant 25)

Using Technology. The second sub-theme that was unearthed was using technology. It echoes the sentiment that teacherpreneurship allows EFL teacherpreneurs to use technology. Being engaged in technological achievements was among the motivating factors enumerated by Onuma (2016). The following quotations document this:

> *Today, technological advancements have encompassed us in education. To benefit from these technologies, different substrates are available one of them is entrepreneurship in teaching. Digital world has many things to deliver EFL teachers. Teacherpreneurship is a place where digital potentials can be operationalized.* (Participant 13)
>
> *Educational technologies have been successful in transforming teaching EFL. Virtual space and social networks are manifestations of technological tools. To be a teacherpreneur is a means of taking technology at the service of teaching.* (Participant 10)

Sharing Knowledge. The third sub-theme that was identified was sharing knowledge. It corroborates that EFL teacherpreneurs are engaged in teacherpreneurship to share their knowledge with others. This theme was not mentioned in any study as a motivating factor. The following quotations reflect this:

> *Knowledge leadership is important in growth of knowledge. An effective way to do this is to share knowledge. Through teacherpreneurship, I*

could share my acquired knowledge with my colleagues and students in different parts of the World. (Participant 15)

 I think knowledge is valuable as far as it is conveyed to others. If kept in the hands of one person, knowledge loses its value. I believe that teacherpreneurship is a main place through which knowledge can be efficiently shared. (Participant 12)

For more clarity, the extracted themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes and Sub-themes of Motivating Factors of EFL Teacherpreneurs

Themes	Sub-themes
Personal factors	making financial gain
	experiencing professional development
	coping with teaching burnout
	practicing creativity and criticality
	enhancing self-efficacy and self-confidence
Social factors	Providing innovative opportunities for others
	Using technology
	Sharing knowledge

On the second research question 'What are the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers' motivating and demotivating factors to join/follow teacherpreneurs in social affinity spaces?', the following themes and sub-themes were identified as EFL teacherpreneurs' followers' motivating factors to join/follow teacherpreneurs in social affinity spaces:

Personal Factors

The first main theme emerged was personal factors which refer to the factors that are personally related to the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers. The subthemes of this theme were finding new ways of EFL teaching/learning, becoming aware of the last developments in EFL teaching/learning, learning self-directed EFL learning, finding a new identity, and enhancing EFL teaching/learning effectiveness.

Finding New Ways of EFL Teaching/Learning. The first sub-theme that emerged was finding new ways of EFL teaching/learning. According to this sub-theme, followers follow EFL teacherpreneurs to teach or learn EFL in new ways. This sub-theme was supported by Garomssa (2016). The following quotations are reflective of this:

I seek new English teaching methods in posts of EFL teacherpreneurs. Some techniques provided in these posts are really effective for me. (Participant 83, teacher)

Learning English has become very easier after joining the pages and channels of EFL teacherpreneurs. Short learning strategies were very good. (Participant 69, learner)

Becoming Aware of the Last Developments in EFL Teaching/ Learning. The second sub-theme that was extracted was becoming aware of the last developments in EFL teaching/learning. According to this sub-theme, followers follow EFL teacherpreneurs to remain conscious of the latest achievements in EFL teaching/learning. Chilvers (2018) also implicitly referred to this factor as a motivating one. The following quotations echo this:

EFL teacherpreneurs present, among other things, the most recent findings of the field of teaching. Textbooks are not much informative in this regard. I think that their materials are very informative. (Participant 53, teacher)

One thing I like about EFL teacherpreneurs is that they attach the most recent improvements on English learning. I could learn conversation in a short time through a package bought from the channels. (Participant 27, learner)

Learning Self-directed EFL Learning. The third sub-theme that emerged was learning self-directed EFL learning. This sub-theme revolves around the fact that followers follow EFL teacherpreneurs to practice self-directed learning. This sub-theme was unique to the present study and was not supported by the previous studies. The following quotations document this:

EFL teacherpreneurs are expert at teaching autonomous English language learning. They have good hints in their hands which have been

hidden from my eyes as a teacher. I learnt how to teach my students in a way that my students learn with less dependence to textbooks. (Participant 100, teacher)

A stimulus which served as an impetus for me to join EFL teacherpreneurs' networks was my friends' accounts of how they could learn English independently after implementing the educational instructions of them. This led me to join them. (Participant 82, learner)

Finding a New Identity. The fourth sub-theme that emerged was finding a new identity. According to this sub-theme, followers follow EFL teacherpreneurs to acquire a new identity. Similar to the previous sub-theme, this one was not found in the previous studies. The following quotations confirm this:

When you learn a new thing, you feel that your identity as an English teacher is being re-constructed. You enjoy a sense of teacher identity reconstruction. This motivated me to remain a member of EFL teacherpreneurship groups. (Participant 45, teacher)

I learnt to self-present myself due to my newly acquired English knowledge in new ways. Accordingly, my sense of being did changed considerably. I experienced a personal transformation. (Participant 78, learner)

Enhancing EFL Teaching/Learning Effectiveness. The fifth sub-theme that emerged was enhancing EFL teaching/learning effectiveness. Based on this sub-theme, followers follow EFL teacherpreneurs to teach or learn EFL more effectively. Chilvers (2018) reported this sub-theme as a motivating factor. The following quotations represent this:

English teaching is a job which needs constant success or effectiveness if a teacher wants to achieve job satisfaction. EFL teacherpreneurs provide a bed for reaching teaching effectiveness. (Participant 14, teacher)

I believe that I learnt English more effectively after familiarity with EFL teacherpreneurs. I debt long-term retention of materials in my mind to the strategies proposed by EFL teacherpreneurs. (Participant 39, learner)

Social factors

The second main theme emerged was social factors, referring to the factors that are socially oriented. The only sub-theme regarding this theme is building new working and social relations.

Building New Working and Social Relations. The only sub-theme that emerged was building new working and social relations. This sub-theme displays that followers follow EFL teacherpreneurs to construct new ties in working and social circles. Cochran-Smith et al. (2018) enumerated this factor as a motivating one in their study. The following quotations document this:

> *Social networks are a good place to find new friends and colleagues. I found this a favorite experience. Acquaintance with others is a positive thing.* (Participant 91, teacher)
>
> *I found many new friends in teacherpreneurship accounts. It is a good opportunity to broaden the circle of your friends*. (Participant 11, learner)

The extracted themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Themes and Sub-themes of Motivating Factors of EFL Teacherpreneurs' Followers

Themes	Sub-themes
Personal factors	finding new ways of EFL teaching/learning
	becoming aware of the last developments in EFL teaching/learning
	learning self-directed EFL learning
	finding a new identity
	enhancing EFL teaching/learning effectiveness
Social factors	building new working and social relations

Moreover, the following themes and sub-themes were identified as EFL teacherpreneurs' followers' demotivating factors to join/follow teacherpreneurs in social affinity spaces:

Personal Factors

The first main theme emerged was personal factors. The sub-themes of

this theme were shortage of time, financial problems, personal problems, and low digital literacy. Kalas and Raisinghani (2019), and Naegels et al. (2018) referred to these factors as the omes that demotivate persons.

Shortage of Time. The first sub-theme that emerged was shortage of time. This sub-theme reveals that followers are demotivated to follow EFL teacherpreneurs due to lack of enough time. The following quotations indicate this:

My free time is so short that you cannot pay much attention to EFL teacherpreneurship. Extra activities are missing links of my life. I am very busy with teaching. I cannot check the posts of EFL teacherpreneurs regularly. (Participant 24, teacher)

Problem of time is really serious. I should work eight to nine hours a day. Two days a week, I should participate in language classes. Naturally, a short time remains for buying and reading the programs of EFL teacherpreneurs. (Participant 70, learner)

Financial Problems. The second sub-theme that emerged was financial problems. This sub-theme shows that followers are demotivated to follow EFL teacherpreneurs because of monetary problems. The following quotations show this sense:

My salary is so low that it cannot even afford my life in the first ten days of one month. Monetary problems demotivate teachers in joining EFL teacherpreneurs because our wage is very low. When teachers are demotivated, teacherpreneurship is not a big concern for them. (Participant 55, teacher)

The biggest problem for me is high costs of the products of EFL teacherpreneurs. It is really unaffordable. If they were not very expensive, it was better. For example, a pack called English for KIDS costs 2 million. (Participant 99, learner)

Personal Problems. The third sub-theme that emerged was personal problems. According to this sub-theme, followers are demotivated to follow EFL teacherpreneurs because of their own personal problems. The following quotations corroborate this:

My family members are not satisfied with my work. As repeatedly said by

them, they like travelling, shopping, etc., but these things are not compatible with teaching job. This irritating condition leaves no energy for practicing EFL teacherpreneurship. (Participant 28, teacher)

My husband doesn't like my job. He always nags and complains about my work. This makes English learning more boring for me. I do not have a peaceful life out of work place. Problems related to children, problems in matrimonial life, etc. make me tired and inattentive to EFL teacherpreneurship. (Participant 51, learner)

Low Digital Literacy. The fourth sub-theme that emerged was low digital literacy. Based on this sub-theme, followers are demotivated to follow EFL teacherpreneurs because they are not digitally literate. The following quotations indicate this:

Following EFL teacherpreneurs needs computer literacy. You should be competent in electronic devices. This is a problem for me because I'm weak in these things. (Participant 13, teacher)

When you are accustomed to traditional systems, adaptation to modern and digital education is difficult. I am not familiar with many softwares. This is disappointing for me to join EFL teacherpreneurs. (Participant 9, learner)

Social Factors

The second main theme was financial factors. The sub-themes of this theme were shortage of facilities and students' unwillingness and demotivation to learn.

Shortage of Facilities. The first sub-theme that emerged was the shortage of facilities. This sub-theme indicates that followers are demotivated to follow EFL teacherpreneurs due to a lack of enough facilities. The following quotations document this:

Our physical resources are limited. Running some developed applications by EFL teacherpreneurs need improved facilities like high storage capacity mobiles. This is while we suffer from basic facilities in English classes such as internet and computer. This does not permit us to use these applications. (Participant 42, teacher)

A main problem is lack of facilities. This makes me to learn English through traditional methods. EFL teacherpreneurs usually market high-tech programs. A mind which is preoccupied with lack of facilities does not seek to join EFL teacherpreneurs. (Participant 17, learner)

Students' Unwillingness and Demotivation to Learn. The second sub-theme that emerged was students' unwillingness and demotivation to learn. According to this sub-theme, followers are demotivated to follow EFL teacherpreneurs due to the unwillingness and demotivation of students. The following quotations show this:

Students don't show tendency to learn English. They complain that English is a hard lesson and they don't understand it. I feel students are not eager to learn English. They are always tired in English classes. These make me demotivated to join EFL teacherpreneurs' channels. (Participant 90, teacher)

Lack of interest in English learning is the main challenge that leaves no motivation for me to follow teacherpreneurs. I don't want to learn English. My motivation to study English is weak. (Participant 18, learner)

The extracted themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Themes and Sub-themes of Demotivating Factors of EFL Teacherpreneurs' Followers

Themes	Sub-themes
Personal factors	shortage of time
	financial problems
	personal problems
	low digital literacy
Social factors	shortage of facilities
	students' unwillingness and demotivation to learn

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was set out to answer two research questions. In regard with the first research question 'What are the motivating factors of the EFL teacherpreneurs in affinity spaces as an educational platform?', the following

motivating factors were identified for the EFL teacherpreneurs in affinity spaces as an educational platform: making financial gain, providing innovative opportunities for others, experiencing professional development, using technology, sharing knowledge, coping with teaching burnout, practicing creativity and criticality, and enhancing self-efficacy and self-confidence.

To interpret the findings, it is expectedly natural that the overall motivation of the EFL teacherpreneurs is shaped by a variety of domains, such as monetary benefits, altruism, professionalism, interpersonal interactions /relations, reduction of negative emotions and syndromes, and enhancement of positive ones. Based on this argument, it can be proposed that EFL teacherpreneurship is a notion which is not generated in a vacuum, but it is formed within the boundary of different personal and social factors. In fact, EFL teacherpreneurship is not a simple uni-faceted concept that is simply shaped in a formulaic sense. Nevertheless, it is a multifaceted issue which needs the interaction of several factors to be shaped.

Financial benefits penetrate different aspects of the EFL profession. EFL teacherpreneurship is not an exception in this regard. Innovation-seeking is a tendency in almost any normal human being and it is not a wonder that EFL teacherpreneurs tend to be innovative. Professional development in the light of technological advancements is an inseparable part of different jobs, including EFL teaching. Teachers are well aware that they cannot remain passive in their jobs. They are also well-conscious that technology can help them profoundly in this regard. Sharing knowledge is inherent in teaching EFL. No teaching can be imagined in the absence of knowledge sharing. Burnout is a syndrome which often jeopardizes teachers. That is why EFL teachers try to cope with it through EFL teacherpreneurship. Finally, such concepts as creativity, criticality, self-confidence, and self-efficacy are building blocks of effective EFL teaching. Therefore, they cannot be neglected by EFL teachers when practicing EFL teacherpreneurship.

The findings resonate with those of previous research illustrating innovation (Garomssa, 2016), practicing creativity (Shalini et al., 2017), professional development (Chilvers, 2018), economic advantages (Kalas &

Raisinghani, 2019), and being tuned with technological achievements (Onuma, 2016) as the main aspects of EFL teacherpreneurship. Moreover, some factors, such as self-efficacy and self-confidence improvement were enumerated by Kalas and Raisinghani (2019) as motivating factors of EFL teacherpreneurs.

On the second research question 'What are the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers' motivating and demotivating factors to join/follow teacherpreneurs in social affinity spaces?', the following motivating factors were the outcomes of thematic analysis: Finding new ways of EFL teaching/learning, building new working and social relations, becoming aware of the last developments in EFL teaching/learning, learning self-directed EFL learning, finding a new identity, and enhancing EFL teaching/learning effectiveness. Furthermore, the following demotivating factors were extracted: shortage of time, financial problems, shortage of facilities, students' unwillingness and demotivation to learn, and low digital literacy.

First of all, what was stated in interpreting the results related to the first research question is also true about the obtained results of this question. The main point is that the role of different factors in (de)motivating the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers cannot be ignored. Different factors are at play in shaping a colorful phenomenon called joining/following the EFL teacherpreneurs in social affinity spaces. Inevitably, any normal human being seeks to transform the way he/she learns or teaches EFL. This requires new relations, knowledge of the recent findings in the field, etc. Moreover, achieving autonomy or self-directedness, identity reconstruction, and teacher/learner effectiveness can reasonably be considered among the set goals by the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers when joining/following the EFL teacherpreneurs in social affinity spaces. Clearly, when a goal is set, a path should be passed. Additionally, a path without problems or challenges is hard to imagine. Parallel to motivating factors, there are almost always some factors, such as time limitations, financial constraints, demotivation of students to learn English, and electronic illiteracy of the followers of the EFL teacherpreneurs which demotivate them from joining/following the EFL teacherpreneurs or prevent them from continuing joining/following the EFL teacherpreneurs.

The findings are in the same line with the results of the studies by Cochran-Smith et al. (2018), Garomssa (2016), Kalas and Raisinghani (2019), and Naegels et al. (2018) wherein social relations, time and money shortage, digital illiteracy, lack of financial and technical support were revealed to be influential on (de)motivation of individuals to participate in EFL teacherpreneurship activities. However, factors, such as self-directed EFL learning and the formation of a new identity were unique to the present study.

Based on the results of the present study, it can be concluded that involvement in EFL teacherpreneurship needs technical knowledge and facilities to be materialized. These could be related to personal, social, and economic aspects of the life of the EFL teacherpreneurs. Moreover, it can be concluded that involvement in EFL teacherpreneurship, whether in the role of the followers of the EFL teacherpreneurs or the EFL teacherpreneurs' followers, calls for some conditions lack of which can demotivate persons in practicing EFL teacherpreneurship. Still another conclusion which can be made is that, as perceived by the participants of the present study and documented in the extant literature, because EFL teacherpreneurship is associated with positive outcomes for both the EFL teacherpreneurs and their followers in the social affinity spaces, any strategic measure by top-level authorities to make EFL teacherpreneurship more easier for the parties involved can lead to promising transformations in the current status of EFL teacherpreneurship in social affinity spaces in Iran.

In sum, the results of the present study can be beneficial for different groups of stakeholders in the field. As the first group, the EFL teacherpreneurs can improve their current practices by making changes in them, including reducing the prices of their products or supplementing their packages with preliminary technical instructions so that more followers can join and buy them. The second group for whom the findings can be beneficial is the followers of the EFL teacherpreneurs who can do their best to be ready to benefit from the programs, products, and packages marketed by the EFL teacherpreneurs.

In terms of the limitations, there were various elements that made the generalizability of this piece of study open to question. One of the limitations of this

study was obtaining the consent of the participants for participation in this study. In addition, the potential lack of honesty of the participants in answering the interview questions can threaten the validity of the findings. Last but not least, this study was cross-sectional research devoid of any longitudinal orientation.

The present study opened up a new avenue of research for researchers in the realm of EFL teacherpreneurship. There are some suggestions for future study. First of all, the instrument used in the present study was a semi-structured interview. Further studies can use other instruments, such as narrative writing, open-ended questionnaires, reflective journals, and diary writing to triangulate the data obtained in the present study. Furthermore, variables, such as age, gender, educational background, and experience of the participants were not the main concerns of this study, as these were not among the variables determined in this study. Further studies can also control any of these variables or examine their potential effect on the results. They can also examine if the results of this study converge or diverge from the studies in other countries. Finally, further studies can replicate the present study in a larger setting with a longitudinal approach.

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