Educational Accountability and Quality of Classroom Life in EFL Contexts: Investigating Public-and Private-Sector EFL Teachers' and Learners' Perception

Maryam Bahrami

English Department, Faculty of Literature and Foreign Languages, Islamic Azad University, Karaj Branch, Karaj, Iran
maryambahrami9534@gmail.com

Raouf Hamzavi *

English Department, Bu-Ali Sina University, Hamedan, Iran
Raoufhamzavi@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study intended to identify the status of educational accountability and quality of classroom life in Iranian public-and private-sector EFL contexts. To this end, 120 (60 public-and 60 private-sector) EFL learners and 80 (40 public-and 40 private-sector) EFL teachers of distinct ages (16-50) from different senior secondary schools and private language institutes in Kermanshah took part in the study. The participants completed the relevant questionnaires. Moreover, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 20 (ten public-and ten private-sector) EFL learners and 20 (ten public-and ten private-sector) EFL teachers. The results revealed that educational accountability was reasonably high among Iranian EFL teachers and learners, and the quality of classroom life was also acceptable in Iranian EFL contexts. Additionally, both EFL learners' and teachers' educational accountability was found to be more significant in the private-sector context. Besides, the quality of classroom life was significantly higher in the private-sector context than the public-sector context. The findings can help EFL teachers, syllabus designers, and material developers to grasp a better picture of educational accountability and quality of classroom life in Iranian public-and private-sector EFL contexts.
Keywords: Educational Accountability; Quality of Classroom Life; Senior Secondary Schools; Private Language Institutes; EFL Teachers; EFL Learners

* Corresponding Author

1. Introduction

The lack of educational accountability in the education system will be demonstrated in the poor learning accomplishments of the succeeding generations (Ahmed, 2015). Accordingly, considering the status of educational accountability among both EFL teachers and learners in public- and private-sector contexts of Iran can be an innovative avenue for further investigation.

The concept of accountability refers to a willingness or obligation to admit responsibility for an individual's actions (Merriam-Webster, 2020). As aptly pointed out by Abadzni (2017), the most critical difference between the concept of accountability and responsibility is that accountability naturally expresses responding to an exterior party and is concerning being answerable to someone else. Accountability is extensively applied within various contexts as responsibility, principally in the field of education; when different resources are allotted to public schools or private institutes, they become accountable for generating requested results (Zarei, et al., 2019). Therefore, educational accountability is associated with stakeholders' programs bearing performance, efficiency, and productivity.

As Pushpanadham (2020) asserted, educational accountability fundamentally necessitates practically confirming that institutes and schools have attained the desired results successfully. Consequently, gaining the desired educational outcomes seems to be conceivable merely through educational accountability, mainly teacher and learner accountability. Furthermore, it is believed that in education, all stakeholders should be accountable for completing a particular objective (Mathison, 2010).

Another essential concern to be considered is the notion of quality of classroom life. It is regarded as a critical issue in academic circles around the world, and has gained global investigation in different contexts in recent times (Tahan Shizari, et al., 2019). According to Kumaravadivelu (2005), teacher instructors support concepts such as teacher knowledge and quality of classroom life that have a critical role in teaching and learning. The notion of quality of classroom life is defined by three dimensions of teachers' and learners' reactions: a) contentment with their classrooms in general, b) commitment and faithfulness to classroom tasks and activities, and c) attitudes and perceptions toward learners and educators (Epstein, & McPartland, 1976).

It is believed that all stakeholders have to work together to recognize the significance of the quality of classroom life and provide various techniques to improve classroom quality since it is the best way for students and educators to make their language learning classroom lives both rewarding and beneficial (Allwright & Hanks, 2004). Quality of classroom life has been found to improve

both teachers' and learners' morale, boost institutional responsibility; support staffing and maintenance; improve objective achievement; decrease absenteeism, and make the best use of staff resources (Atkinson, 2000). Furthermore, different practices such as data-driven education, distinguished teaching, and pinpointing areas of weakness in language learners are critical to building quality of classroom life (Alibakhshi, et al., 2019).

Based on the extensive review of the related literature (e.g., Allwright, 2004; Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Astuti & Lammers, 2017; Gholami, et al., 2016; Guastello & Lenz, 2005; Kagan & Kagan, 2009; Khoshsima & Hashemi Toroujeni, 2017; Meshkat & Hassani, 2012; Tahan Shizari, et al., 2019; Zarei et al., 2019, 2021), and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no empirical study to date has investigated public-and private-sector EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions concerning educational accountability and quality of classroom life in EFL Contexts. Accordingly, this study was an attempt to fill this gap partially.

Based on the points mentioned above and due to the importance of educational accountability and quality of classroom life, the present study aimed at investigating the status of the educational accountability and quality of classroom life in Iranian public-and private-sector EFL contexts and also compare the difference between public- and private-sector contexts concerning their educational accountability and quality of classroom life. The purpose of the current study is translated into the following research questions:

RQ$_1$: What is the level of Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' educational accountability?

RQ$_2$: What is the level of quality of classroom life in Iranian EFL contexts?

RQ$_3$: Is there any significant difference between the educational accountability of EFL teachers and learners of senior secondary schools and private language institutes?

RQ$_4$: Do senior secondary schools and private language institutes differ concerning the level of quality of classroom life?

RQ$_5$: What remedies are suggested to improve both educational accountability and quality of classroom life in Iranian EFL contexts?

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1. Educational Accountability

The concept of accountability is regarded as one of the utmost significant structures in each education system for addressing maintainable objectives and consistent service distribution to the community (Zarei et al., 2019). The history of accountability discloses the different approaches to fashioning various educational accountability systems. Fuhrman (1999) stated that although the aims of accountability types were preserving obedience with principles, the novel types have given a severer concentration on bettering learner performance about satisfactory results, including positive graduation outcomes or high test scores.

According to Perie, et al. (2007), educational accountability principally contributes to inclusive thinking about education, supporting learning, and guaranteeing school efficiency. Moreover, accountability systems indicate that acceptable performance is linked with organizational objectives, which means the notion of accountability is an objective-oriental action and activity (Dangara, 2016). Consequently, as stated earlier in the introduction section of the present study, the lack of educational accountability in the education system is naturally demonstrated in poor learning attainments of the subsequent generations (Ahmed, 2015).

Additionally, as noted by Dangara (2016), the concept of accountability in schools is naturally associated with managing properties and assets to certify the achievement of the main objectives. The incorporation of accountability with management donates to control unruliness and amplify effectiveness in the educational system. Furthermore, Dangara (2016) added that the policymakers should be conscious of the importance of accountability in education to evade low excellence of school outcomes, imperfect decision-making processes, and lack of educational accountability in institutes and schools.

It is believed that policymakers, syllabus designers, and material developers, along with language institutes and school principals, educators, parents, and learners, are accountable for learners' accomplishments and achievements. However, increasing educators' accountability for learners' behavior and performance is not supposed to be officially and psychologically a suitable strategy for the reason that it leads to unfertile instruction, and undesired concentration in learning, and lessened accomplishment (Frymier, 1998). It is believed that individuals have to be answerable for their activities and actions, not for what other individuals must do (Frymier, 1998). Consequently, educators should take their accountability for their careers, not for their learners' responsibility realm, or it further deteriorates learners' answerability for their language learning (Frymier, 1998).

Different studies have been conducted on the accountability of learners and teachers. For example, in a recent study, Zarei et al. (2021) investigated accountability of learners in Iran. To be precise, the researchers examined the difference between the accountability of leaners in high schools and those of

language institutes. The findings of their research showed that learners in the language institutes had a higher accountability level than those in the high schools. Moreover, Gholami et al. (2016) explores the practices of private institute, public school, and private-public educators. The results specified that the aforementioned educators differed concerning their practices and performances. It is worth mentioning that in the same instruction setting of high school, the performances and practices of instructors with and without private instruction experience were different apart from in the interval of pair work tasks. In a qualitative study, Astuti et al. (2017) examined Indonesian EFL learners' individual accountability in cooperative learning. The results of the study indicated that the accountability had a significant role in cooperative learning and EFL students had more openings to speak in the classes.

2.2. Quality of Classroom Life

Classroom life quality is, in fact, an all-inclusive construct principally considered by Allwright (2004) that mainly focuses on mechanisms such as the quality of teaching along with classroom management. How different language schools and institutes make an effort to deal with quality of classroom life is of much practical and academic importance. Consequently, it is believed that it is not astonishing that numerous research studies on the notion of anxiety and job satisfaction and as central notions have been done (Dolan, et al., 2008).

The classroom life quality was demonstrated to vigorously contribute to teachers' thoughtfulness to learning in EFL milieus and it is believed that quality of classroom life conceptually signifies the effect of the social standards, and normative attitude of the academic community to language learning (Tahan Shizari et al., 2019). Quality of classroom life and its relationship with teachers' and learners' performance and health have become a clear objective for various human resources' policies in different developed officialdoms, institutes, and establishments (Singh, 2000).

It is believed that an issue thoroughly associated with job motivation is the concept of quality of work-life. The construct of quality of work-life is defined as the conditions and features of work that donate to inspiration, presentation, and job contentment (Walton, 1973). The differentiation between job motivation and work-life quality seems to lie in the circumstance that work-life quality is a provider to inspiration and motivation. That is to say that the higher the work-life quality, the more interested language teachers will be.

As stated earlier, the concept of quality of classroom life is defined by three dimensions of teachers' and learners' reactions: a) contentment with their classrooms in general, b) commitment and faithfulness to classroom tasks and activities, and c) attitudes and perceptions toward learners and educators (Epstein

& McPartland, 1976). All stakeholders have to work together to provide various techniques to improve classroom quality. It is the best way for students and educators to make their language learning classroom lives both rewarding and beneficial (Allwright & Hanks, 2009).

According to Tahan Shizari et al. (2019), exploratory practice is particularly stimulating given the existing shift of concentration towards improving the quality of English language teaching in different public and private sector ESL/EFL settings. It is believed that exploratory practice has three main aims. The first goal of experimental course is to prioritize and highlight the life quality of our learning-teaching setting above any concern for educational effectiveness and productivity (Tahan Shizari et al., 2019).

Another objective of the exploratory practice is to develop and increase our understandings and tolerance of the learning-teaching life quality instead of merely seeking forever better-quality instructional techniques (Tahan Shizari et al., 2019). The third aim of the exploratory practice is to recognize the essentially social disposition of the mutual search for understanding and tolerance, wherein both educators and students can genuinely develop (Tahan Shizari et al., 2019).

Different studies have been conducted on classroom life quality. In a study, Tahan Shizari et al. (2019) examined Iranian learners' and educators' level of quality of life in the classroom. The results of their investigation revealed that both Iranian learners and educators had a highly affirmative perception towards classroom life quality. In another study, Dahmardeh (2009) investigated in what way textbooks in the context of can be made more and more communicative. The findings brought to light that there were numerous inconsistencies between the students' requirements, and the course book that are accessible for education and learning English nevertheless only few of them were typically reliable. Mamedu (2016) studied the perception of academic staff of work-life quality of and university objective accomplishment. This study was conducted with the aim of understanding the work-life quality of academic staff and also with the purpose of linking this knowledge to their performance towards objective achievement. The findings of the study showed a position of acceptable work-life quality for the employees; a condition of disapproving objective accomplishment; and trivial association between work-life quality and objective achievement in the context of the study, i.e., Nigeria.

3. Method

3.1. Design

This study employed a mixed methods approach to collect data through questionnaires, and interview sessions. The justification for using the mixed

methods approach was to collect richer data, and gain a deeper understanding of teachers' and learners' remedies to improve both educational accountability and quality of classroom life in Iranian EFL contexts. The study was exploratory in nature, since the present study aimed at investigating the status of educational accountability and quality of classroom life in Iranian public-and private-sector EFL contexts. Moreover, this study was comparative since it compared the difference between public- and private-sector contexts concerning their educational accountability and quality of classroom life.

3.2. Participants

One hundred and twenty (60 public-and 60 private-sector) EFL learners and 80 (40 public-and 40 private-sector) EFL instructors participated in this study. The participants were teaching and learning English at different senior secondary schools and private institutes in Kermanshah. The participants were selected based on accessibility sampling. The participants were native Kurdish speakers, and their ages ranged from 16 to 50. Moreover, out of 200 participants, 20 (ten private-and ten public-sector) EFL learners and 20 (ten private-and ten public-sector) EFL teachers whose informed consent was obtained were randomly selected and interviewed.

3.3. Instruments

The participants were requested to complete the following instruments:

3.3.1. Teacher Accountability in English Teaching in Iran Questionnaire (TAETIQ)

To assess EFL teachers' accountability, the Teacher Accountability in English Teaching in Iran Questionnaire (TAETIQ) by Zarei et al. (2019) was given. This questionnaire comprises 46 items on a five-point Likert scale. The potential range of scores was from 46 to 230. This scale has seven main components, i.e., goals (4 items), performance indicators (5 items), design decisions (9 items), consequences (3 items), communication (4 items), support (17 items), and system evaluation, monitoring, and improvement (4 items). EFL teachers' were asked to fill this questionnaire in about 20 minutes. According to Zarei et al. (2019), the reliability of the TAETIQ was 0.95. Furthermore, in the current study, the reliability of the TAETIQ was 0.84.

3.3.2. Learner Accountability in English Learning in Iran Questionnaire (LAELIQ)

To measure EFL learners' accountability, the Learner Accountability in English Learning in Iran Questionnaire (LAELIQ) by Zarei et al. (2019) was given. It

consists of 46 items on a five-point Likert scale. The scores' potential range was from 46 to 230. This scale has seven main components, i.e., goals (4 items), performance indicators (5 items), design decisions (9 items), consequences (3 items), communication (4 items), support (17 items), and system evaluation, monitoring, and improvement (4 items). The students were requested to fill this instrument in about 20 minutes. Zarei et al. (2019) reported that this instrument enjoyed a high reliability rate of 0.95. Furthermore, in the current study, the reliability of the LAELIQ was 0.91.

3.3.3. Quality of Classroom Life (QoCRL) Questionnaire

To assess the qualities of classroom life from the viewpoint of EFL educators and learners, the Quality of Classroom Life (QoCRL) Questionnaire was primarily developed by Tahan Shizari et al. (2019) was given. It comprises 71 five-point Likert scale items ranging from strongly disagree (=1) to strongly agree (=5). This instrument measures seven components, i.e., teaching quality (17 items), general ideas of QoCRL (7 items), classroom management (5 items), educational view on QoCRL (4 items), classroom setting (4 items), the quality of classroom interaction (17 items) and puzzle content in exploratory practice (17 items). The educators and learners were requested to fill this instrument in about 35 minutes. Tahan Shizari et al. (2019) reported that this instrument enjoyed a high reliability rate. Furthermore, in the present study, the reliability of this instrument was 0.90.

3.3.4. Semi-Structured Interview

To identify EFL learners' and teachers' perceptions concerning the remedies to improve both educational accountability and quality of classroom life in Iranian EFL contexts, the researchers conducted a semi-structured interview with 20 (ten private-and ten public-sector) EFL learners and 20 (ten private-and ten public-sector) EFL teachers. The questions of the interview (i.e., two questions) were expert viewed by two authorities for validity objectives. In this study, the interviews were accomplished in the participants' mother tongue (i.e., Kurdish). It took 10-12 minutes for each interview.

3.4. Procedure

This study was conducted at different public schools and private language institutes in Kermanshah during the academic year 2021-2022. This study is of two distinct phases. In the first phase, which was a survey study, the following stages were taken to fulfill the objective of the study. To begin with, the researchers requested the participants to identify whether they agreed to participate in the investigation. Then, the researcher provided the necessary explanations to the participants and explained how to answer the items of the questionnaires.

Afterward, the instruments, i.e., the TAETIQ (Zarei, et al, 2019), the LAELIQ (Zarei, et al., 2019) and the QoCRL Questionnaire (Tahan Shizari, et al., 2019) were distributed among the participants of the study. It is noteworthy that due to the COVID-19 pandemic face to face accessibility of participants was not possible; therefore, the research instruments were distributed among the participants in different ways, such as sending the online file via email and using other social media such as Telegram, WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Finally, as stated earlier, out of 120 EFL learners and 80 EFL teachers that participated in the survey phase, 20 EFL learners and 20 EFL teachers were randomly selected and interviewed. It is noteworthy that the interviews were conducted in Kurdish in about 10-12 minutes for each interview.

3.5. Data Analyses

Concerning the first and questions, frequency analyses were used. Concerning the third question, two separate Independent samples t-tests were used. Concerning the fourth question, an Independent samples t-test was run. Concerning the fifth question (qualitative data), the common patterns and recurring themes of the participants' answers were identified and subjected to frequency analysis and finally tabulated.

4. Results

4.1. First Question

In order to answer the first question, descriptive statistics were applied.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for the Level of Iranian EFL Teachers' Educational Accountability

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Educational Accountability	80	129.00	205.00	169.72	18.14
Valid N (listwise)	80				

As designated in Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of the EFL educators' educational accountability were 169.72 and 18.14, respectively. The ultimate score was computed in the possible range of 46 to 230. Moreover, the minimum score gained by the EFL teachers was 129 and the maximum score was 205.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for the Level of Iranian EFL Learners' Educational Accountability

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Educational Accountability	120	131.00	187.00	156.63	12.17
Valid N (listwise)	120				

As is shown in Table 2, 120 EFL leaners participated in the study. As designated in Table 2, the mean and standard deviation of the EFL leaners' educational accountability were 156.63 and 12.17, respectively. The ultimate score was computed in the possible range of 46 to 230. Moreover, the minimum score gained by the EFL teachers was 131 and the maximum score was 187.

4.2. Second Question

With the intention of answering the second question, descriptive statistics were applied.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for the Level of Quality of Classroom Life in Iranian EFL Contexts

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quality of Classroom Life	200	196.00	309.00	253.11	21.75
Valid N (listwise)	200				

As is shown in Table 3, 200 EFL instructors and leaners participated in the study. As indicated in Table 3, the mean and standard deviation of the quality of classroom life in Iranian EFL contexts were 253.11 and 21.75, respectively. The ultimate score was computed in the possible range of 71 to 355. Moreover, the minimum score gained by the participants was 196 and the maximum score was 309.

4.3. Third Question

To explore the third question, two Independent Sample t-tests were run.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Public- and Private-Sector EFL Teachers Regarding their Educational Accountability

	Teachers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Educational Accountability	Public-sector	40	154.97	12.33	1.95
	Private-sector	40	184.47	8.27	1.30

As is evident in Table 4, the mean and standard deviation of the senior secondary school instructors were 154.97 and 12.33, respectively, while those of the private institute instructors were 184.47 and 8.27, respectively.

The results of the Independent Sample t-test for public- and private-sector EFL teachers' educational accountability levels are exhibited in Table 5.

Table 5
Independent Samples T-Test for Public- and Private-Sector EFL Teachers Regarding their Educational Accountability

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Educational Accountability	Equal variances assumed	7.49	.00	-12.55	78	.00	-29.500	2.34	-34.17	-24.82
	Equal variances not assumed			-12.55	68.19	.00	-29.500	2.34	-34.18	-24.81

As is evident in Table 5, there was a significant difference between the mean scores (t (68.19) = -12.55, p=0.00<0.05). Thus, the two groups significantly differed concerning their educational accountability; that is, private institute instructors (M=184.47, SD =8.27) had a higher level concerning their educational accountability than senior secondary school teachers (M=154.97, SD =12.33).

Another Independent Sample t-test was run to investigate the difference between educational accountability of EFL learners of senior secondary schools and those of private language institutes.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Public- And Private-Sector EFL Learners Regarding their Educational Accountability

	Learners	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Educational Accountability	Public-sector	60	146.26	6.09	.78
	Private-sector	60	167.00	6.57	.84

As is evident in Table 6, the mean and standard deviation of the senior secondary school learners were 146.26 and 6.09, respectively, while those of the private institute learners were 167 and 6.57, respectively.

The results of the Independent Sample t-test for the public- and private-sector EFL learners' educational accountability levels are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Independent Samples T-Test for Public- and Private-Sector EFL Learners Regarding their Educational Accountability

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Educational Accountability	Equal variances assumed	.00	.94	-17.91	118	.00	-20.73	1.15		-23.02	-18.44
	Equal variances not assumed			-17.91	117.32	.00	-20.73	1.15		-23.02	-18.44

As is evident in Table 7, there was a significant difference between the mean scores (t (118) = -17.91, *p*=0.00<0.05). Thus, the two groups significantly differed pertaining to their educational accountability; i.e., private institute learners (M=167, SD =6.57) had a higher level of educational accountability than senior secondary school learners (M=146.26, SD =6.09).

4.4. Fourth Question

To investigate the fourth question, an Independent Sample t-test was run.

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics of the Quality of Classroom Life in Public- and Private-Sector Contexts

	Contexts	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Quality of Classroom Life	Public-sector	100	235.82	13.36	1.33
	Private-sector	100	270.40	12.98	1.29

As indicated in Table 8, the mean and standard deviation of the senior secondary school context were 235.82 and 13.36, respectively, while those of the private institute context were 270.40 and 12.98, respectively.

The Independent Sample t-test's results for the public- and private-sector contexts' quality of classroom life level are presented in Table 9.

Table 9
Independent Samples T-Test for the Quality of Classroom Life in Public- and Private-Sector Contexts

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Classroom Life	Equal variances assumed	.00	.92	-18.55	198	.00	-34.58	1.86	-38.25	-30.90
	Equal variances not assumed			-18.55	197.83	.00	-34.58	1.86	-38.25	-30.90

As is evident in Table 9, there was a significant difference between the mean scores (t (198) = -18.55, *p*=0.00<0.05). Thus, the two contexts significantly differed concerning the quality of classroom life; that is, the private institute context (M=270.40, SD =12.98) had a higher level concerning the quality of classroom life level than the senior secondary school context (M=235.82, SD =13.36).

4.5. Fifth Question

To answer the fifth question, the researchers conducted a semi-structured interview with 20 students and 20 teachers. After content analysis, the recurring themes of the answers were identified (Table 10).

Table 10
EFL Teachers' and Learners' Common Patterns of Answers to the Interview Questions

No.	Pattern (Remedies for Educational Accountability)	Frequency	Percentage
1	Apply and obey international standards of language learning and teaching methods	34	85
2	Developed a specific system of mutual accountability among students and teachers to enrich English learning and teaching	29	72.5
3	Offer equal opportunities for learners to learn fruitfully	25	62.5
4	Inform both teachers and learners of the educational accountability systems and principles	19	47.5
5	Set high expectations for both English learning and teaching	15	37.5
No.	Pattern (Remedies for Quality of Classroom Life)	Frequency	Percentage
1	Provide various opportunities for EFL teachers to devise educative tutorial courses to enrich the quality of classroom life	26	65
2	Foster social integration both within and between public- and private-sector contexts	21	52.5
3	Develop and use various instruments to assess public- and private-sector contexts' quality of classroom life	17	42.5
4	inform both teachers and learners of the influence of quality of classroom life factors	13	32.5

5. Discussion

The present study was designed to determine the EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions concerning educational accountability and quality of classroom life in Iranian public-and private-sector EFL contexts. The results of descriptive statistics indicated that the mean score of educational accountability among Iranian EFL teachers (M=169.72) and learners (M=156.63) was higher than the average score (M=138). In other words, the level of educational accountability among Iranian EFL teachers, and learners was reasonably high and most EFL

teachers and learners were found accountable for their language teaching and learning.

One conceivable reason for the high level of educational accountability among EFL learners in Iran might be because of the effect of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the role of the instructor is to provide the students with necessary guidance. In online learning, the teachers do not explain the course content in detail, which, as a result, makes the Iranian EFL learners more active and accountable for their learning. Consequently, online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic transfers the learning accountability from teachers to learners.

Moreover, recently improving both public-and private-sector schools and also learner success has become a national concern in Iran, which as a result, leads to highlighting educational accountability among both EFL learners and teachers. The preferred objectives will merely be fulfilled by offering a situation in which all learners, and teachers and even their institutions and schools are held genuinely accountable for their responsibilities (Goff, 2000).

In addition, the results of descriptive statistics revealed that the mean score of the quality of classroom life in Iranian EFL contexts (M=253.11) was higher than the average score (M=213). That is, the level of quality of classroom life in Iranian EFL contexts was logically high and most students, and teachers believed that in Iranian EFL contexts, the quality of classroom life is satisfactory indeed. The findings are consistent with those of Tahan Shizari et al. (2019), who concluded that both EFL learners and instructors had a positive attitude toward the quality of classroom life in the educational context of Iran.

Both Iranian EFL teachers and learners in both public- and private-sector contexts work together to understand classroom life, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, since, according to Allwright and Hanks (2004), working together is the best way for EFL teachers and students to make their classroom lives both productive and pleasing. Hence, it is of the significance to inform language learners, and teachers in both private-and public-sector contexts of the importance of quality of classroom life. Also more consideration should be paid to the particulars of quality to enrich the instructive level in both public-and private-sector contexts in Iran.

One reasonable justification might be the Tahan Shizari et al. (2019) argument that "the preliminaries for quality of classroom life are adequately provided in Iranian educational contexts in general, and in L2 context in particular" (p. 225). As rightly pointed out by Allwright (2004), the quality of classroom life is regarded as a comprehensive notion that mainly focuses on the quality of teaching and classroom management. The positive attitude of the participants

concerning the level of quality of classroom life is basically in proportion to the notion of 'Collegiality' (Allwright, 2004).

Furthermore, the outcomes of an Independent Sample t-test unveiled that there was a significant difference between the educational accountability of EFL teachers of senior secondary schools and those of private institutes. That is, private institute instructors had a higher educational accountability than senior secondary school teachers. The findings are in agreement with those of Dahmardeh (2009), Gholami et al. (2016), Khoshsima and Hashemi Toroujeni (2017), and Zarei et al. (2019). For instance, Gholami et al. (2016) concluded that language institute English teachers have more communicative courses by taking advantage of learner speaking time, authorizing language learners to be more independent and self-governing.

One explanation might be the existing standards and principles in private language institutes that contribute to more educational accountability on the part of the teachers that, as consequence, result in a preferred outcome, which means more vital learner accomplishment (Fordham, 2004). Another justification for the findings might be since Iranian EFL educators have a low level of inspiration at senior secondary schools, which consequently brings about a low level of educational accountability (Meshkat & Hassani, 2012). However, as Soodmand Afshar and Hamzavi (2017), EFL teachers in the private-sector context, "who are typically young and energetic, are possibly more motivated towards and more interested in language teaching, since interest in language teaching could be regarded as one of the most significant features of effective and successful English language teachers" (p. 28).

Additionally, there was a significant difference between the educational accountability of EFL learners of senior secondary schools and those of private institutes. That is, EFL learners in private institutes were found to have a higher level of educational accountability than those in senior secondary schools. The findings are consistent with those of different studies such as Guastello and Lenz (2005), Dugan (2004), Astuti and Lammers (2017), and Kagan and Kagan (2009). The findings are also in proportion to those of Zarei et al. (2021), who argued that participants in private language institutes had higher levels of educational accountability than those in high schools.

It is believed that the senior secondary school students cannot make actual links between the objectives and their performance indicators. In contrast, they ought to be exclusively tied to the goals (Hallberg et al. 2009). Moreover, another explanation for the low level of educational accountability among Iranian EFL learners in senior secondary schools might be since senior secondary school learners are not provided with chances to make precise decisions to reach their objectives in English learning (Zarei et al., 2019).

Other factors such as many students in a single class, the type of textbook and syllabus design, and the teacher-centered norm of the senior secondary school classes might have a role in lowering the educational accountability of senior secondary school learners. To increase the level of educational accountability of language learners in senior secondary schools, EFL students in such context must have tight communication with the newest educational principles and standards (Hamilton & Stecher, 2004).

Furthermore, there was a significant difference between private institutes and senior secondary schools concerning the quality of classroom life. That is, the quality of classroom life was found to be higher in the private language institute context than the senior secondary school context.

One reasonable justification for the higher level of quality of classroom life in the private-sector context might be because of such elements as regular class observation, frequent teacher supervision, and meticulous monitoring system that are prepared in such private-sector context as Iranian private language schools and institutes (Soodmand Afshar & Hamzavi, 2017). As pointed out by Borg (2006), teacher instruction is profoundly context-specific; therefore, an understanding of the features that pay a regular contribution to the quality of classroom life would be of high applied importance to educator instructors.

Accordingly, it is essential to make EFL teachers in a public-sector context conscious of various features of quality of classroom life, such as the chance of growth, work conditions, social integration in senior secondary schools, and also the use and improvement of capacities that are dominant issues influencing EFL learners' accomplishment and achievement in learning an L2. It is noteworthy that since no study was found to directly inspect the dissimilarity between the quality of classroom life in public- and private-sector contexts, the results cannot be compared with other studies.

Concerning the remedies to improve educational accountability, the results of the interview revealed that 85% of the participants referred to applying and obeying international standards of language learning and teaching methods, while 72.5% referred to developing a specific system of mutual accountability among students and teachers to enrich English learning and teaching. Moreover, 62.5% of the respondents noted that equal opportunities should be offered for learners to learn fruitfully, whereas 47.5% of the interviewees stated that teachers and learners should be informed of the educational accountability systems and principles. Lastly, 37.5% of the respondents said that it is better to set high expectations for English learning and teaching.

On the remedies to improve the quality of classroom life, the findings of the interview revealed that 65% of the participants stated that it is better to provide

various opportunities for EFL teachers to invent educative discussion group courses to enrich the quality of classroom life, while 52.5% of the participants believed that we should foster social integration within and between public- and private-sector contexts. In addition, 42.5% of the respondents argued that various instruments should be developed and used by EFL stakeholders to assess public- and private-sector contexts' quality of classroom life, whereas 32.5% of the interviewees stated that both teachers and learners ought to be informed of the impact of quality of classroom life features.

6. Conclusion

This study tried to scrutinize the status of educational accountability and quality of classroom life in Iranian public-and private-sector EFL contexts. The level of educational accountability among Iranian EFL teachers and learners was reasonably high. Moreover, the level of quality of classroom life in Iranian EFL contexts was logically high. Additionally, both EFL learners' and teachers' level of educational accountability was more significant in the private-sector context. Furthermore, the quality of classroom life was higher in the private-sector context than the public-sector context. Concerning the remedies to improve the educational accountability, the findings showed that most of the participants referred to applying and obeying international standards of language learning and teaching methods. Likewise, regarding the remedies to improve the classroom life quality, the results indicated that most of the participants stated that we should provide various opportunities for EFL teachers to invent educative discussion group courses to enrich the classroom life quality.

Great consideration ought to be paid to both EFL instructors' and learners' educational accountability in Iranian EFL contexts in general and in senior secondary schools in specific and provide different research-based educational accountability programs, systems, and principles to help them update their accountability for learning and teaching, which consequently, result in better language teaching and learning. Taken together, these results suggest that different workshops should be provided for pre-service and in-service EFL instructors to improve their awareness of the prominence of the quality of life and even the quality of provided in-service programs and workshops necessitates to be critically considered to inspect why they do not fabricate the anticipated productivity.

In general, therefore, it seems that various strategies and managerial practices ought to be provided in support of the incessant enhancement of effect the classroom life quality. EFL teachers and learners in the senior secondary schools are also suggested to reflect upon their learning and teaching practices along with their qualities to make more enhancements in their language learning and teaching.

Being conscious of the restrictions of the self-report instruments accompanied by semi-structured interviews, additional studies are recommended to accomplish classroom observation to inspect what EFL instructors and learners do in both public- and private-sector contexts.

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