Investigating demotivating factors in foreign language learners: The case of non-Iranian Persian language learners

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Abstract: Learners’ motivation has been widely accepted as a key factor which influences the rate, success, and failure of second/foreign language learning. On the other hand, demotivation is regarded as a flip side of motivation which has negative effects on language learning processes and outcomes. This study intended to examine what factors may demotivate Persian language learners in a classroom. It also investigated the frequency and order of significance of the demotivating factors to find out which factors are the most influential and also explore their relations to gender and level of education of the learners. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, approximately a hundred learners were asked to complete a questionnaire, which included background questions concerning sex, age, level of the study, and the nationalities of the participants on the basis of which five demotivating factors were identified. The findings indicated that while there were no significant differences between male and female participants in terms of some demotivating factors, significant differences were observed between learners at different levels of education with regard to some other demotivating factors. Implications for non-Iranian Persian language learners are discussed.
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**Subjects:** Educational Research; Higher Education; Classroom Practice; Language & Linguistics; Language Teaching & Learning

**Keywords:** Foreign language; motivation; demotivation; Persian language; non-Iranian learners

1. Introduction
There are various factors affecting language teaching and learning processes among which motivation plays an important role. Research has shown that those students who have higher motivation are more fruitful and competent in their learning (Ely, 1986).

Motivation is a concept that could be described as a driving force that energizes human’s behavior. Research on L2 motivation is concerned with what makes a person want to learn a second language and what keeps him or her interested in learning it. However, as language is always socially and culturally connected, motivation to learn L2 is a complex construct (Dornyei, 2001).

In sharp contrast to motivation and motivating factors are demotivating factors which have been ignored, at least partly, in language learning and teaching studies. Demotivation can be simply construed as the absence of adequate motivation to do a specific goal. Dornyei (2001) makes a distinction between motivation and demotivation. He argues that demotivation indicates a lack of motivation brought about by the specific external causes. Demotivating factors impede learners’ learning motivation and, consequently, lead to unsuccessful mastery of English language proficiency.

In motivation research on L2 has traditionally been viewed as positive influences that generate interest in learning, facilitating and sustaining it. There is also another side to motivation which includes experiencing temporary loss of motivation. Considering its direct educational implications, demotivation is an area of research that has recently attracted the attention of educationalists (Jahedizadeh & Ghanizadeh, 2015; Molavi & Biria, 2013; Zhang, 2007).

In other words, in addition to knowing what motivates a learner, being conscious of the risks that weaken motivation is critical both for teachers and learners.

Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) identified a number of demotivating factors in EFL classrooms, including lack of interest, teachers and experiences of failure that probably diminish learners’ desire and motivation towards learning. The empirical demotivation-related studies uncovered the most significant factors leading to student demotivation. These studies have demonstrated that students commonly considered de-motivation as a teacher-owned problem (Ebadi & Gheisari, 2016; Gorham & Christophel, 1992; Ushioda, 1998). Song (2005) highlighted teachers important role in explaining that the reasons why some motivated students become demotivated. Hasegawa (2004) stated that there is a significant relationship between students’ de-motivation and inappropriate teachers’ behaviors. In the same vein, Zhang (2007) listed the following demotivating factors in EFL context: teachers’ indifference to the course and students, unfair assessment and tedious presentations.

Demotivation has negative impact on students’ foreign language learning outcomes as well. Therefore, studying demotivating factors of language learning is an essential obligation of language teachers, researchers and anyone who is involved in language learning and teaching process.

Tanaka (2017) investigated the roles of motivation and peers in EFL vocabulary learning in a demotivating learning environment in Japan. The study revealed that demotivated peers have
a negative influence on their peers’ vocabulary learning. Hu (2011) investigated the relationship between EFL students’ past demotivating factors and their English language proficiency. He attempted to predict English language proficiency attainment from demotivating factors through stepwise multiple regression analyses. The findings revealed that learning difficulties explained the most variance in the prediction of the proficiency of learners in EFL context.

Falout, Elwood, and Hood (2009) investigated demotivating factors in learning EFL in Japan, and the relationship between learners’ proficiencies and past demotivating experiences. They categorized the demotivating factors into three groups: external conditions of the learning environment, internal conditions of the learner, and reactive behaviors to demotivating experiences. They found out that less-proficient learners in non-English majors were least likely to control their affective states to cope with demotivating experiences.

Despite the bulk of research, an important aspect of motivation, namely, demotivation has not received due attention from the researchers (Dornyei, 2001). Dornyei (2005) believes that “although there are both positive and negative forces exerting their influence on ongoing student behaviors, past motivation research has typically overlooked the negative motives and conceptualized motivation as a kind of inducement” (p. 89). Researchers regard demotivation as “another side of motivation” (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011; Falout et al., 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Although there are some studies investigating the relationship between student demotivation and some demographic variables such as age (e.g., Falout et al., 2009), gender, or proficiency level (e.g., Falout et al., 2009; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Hu, 2011), to the best of researchers’ knowledge, no study has examined the demographic variables’ effects on demotivating factors of learners of Persian language in a single study.

There should be enough motivation among the European, Asian and African students who want to learn about Iran and its language and view the historical and cultural background of Persian language. However, to keep themselves motivated, they require knowing and recognizing demotivating factors in learning Persian as a foreign language. It is of great importance to know what these factors are and how they should be decreased in order to motivate students to learn Persian effectively.

It seems that one way to increase the quality of learning Persian in foreign countries is getting familiar with demotivating factors among the students learning it. Knowing the negative factors will result in better language learning by foreign students and developing the quality of teaching Persian by the teachers of foreign countries. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate demotivating factors among different groups of Persian learners, namely male and female from different countries in Asia and Europe with different educational backgrounds who study Persian as their foreign language in their own hometowns. This study attempts to address the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between male and female students in terms of demotivating factors?
2. Is there any significant difference between students at the different levels of education in terms of demotivating factors?

In order to investigate the above questions, the following null hypotheses are stated:

H01: There is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of demotivating factors.

H02: There is no significant difference between students at the different levels of education in terms of demotivating factors;
2. Conceptual framework
Motivation is a key to much of human life and to language learning. Researchers note that students’ motivation is subject to many negative influences during the process of second language learning. Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) argue that these negative influences may relate to “particular learning-related events or experiences, such as performance anxiety, public humiliation, heavy work demands or poor test results” and “factors in the social learning environment, such as the personality and the attitude of the teacher or classroom counter-cultures and peer pressures.” (p.148)

As Falout et al. (2009) note that demotivation can affect the learner’s attitudes and behaviors, and teacher’s motivation which has a negative impact on learning outcomes. In fact, when students are demotivated, second language learning is more difficult and less pleasant; consequently, the achievement of expected learning outcomes becomes difficult. Furthermore, students’ demotivation might lead to complete lack of motivation. It seems that successful language learning requires serious attention to and plans for dispelling demotivating factors. Any failure to learn a second language may be largely due to the existence of demotivating factors on the part of learners.

Motivation is often defined as psychological quality that prompt learners or students to achieve their goals. Belmechi and Hummel (1998) defined motivation as a composite of intensity and orientation that corresponds respectively to the effort and to the learner’s goal. On the contrary, Gardner and Tremblay (1994) explain that motivation differs from orientation because students might demonstrate a particular orientation, but they may not be motivated to achieve the goal. Motivation, in this case, is the positive power toward learning the language to attain the goal reflected in the orientation. This power, Gardner and Tremblay (1994) suggested, stems from the desire to attain the goal, positive attitude toward learning language. In relation to the previous statement, learners need motivation in order to attain the goal of language learning, and it can come from themselves or from their environment.

According to Dornyei (2001), demotivation refers to “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (p.143). Dornyei (2005) believes that demotivation only means that a strong negative factor restrains the present motivation, with some other positive motives still remaining ready to be activated. A demotivated learner is someone who once was motivated, but for one reason or another has lost his or her commitment or interest in learning. These reasons for losing interest can be called demotives which are the negative counterparts of motives, and whereas motives increase action tendency, demotives de-energize it (Dornyei, 2001, p. 142). Dornyei believes that there is no widely accepted definition of demotivation. Nevertheless, demotivation may be defined as the negative effects of various factors that negatively impact motivation. It refers to “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (Dornyei, 2005, p. 90).

Amotivation, by contrast, refers to lack of motivation resulting from realizing that there is no point (Dornyei, 2001). According to what was mentioned, demotives can affect language learning, so they should be taken into account in every education system.

Despite the importance of demotivation in language learning, few researchers have investigated and explored its complex nature.

3. Previous studies on demotivation in L2
Ushioda (1994) conducted a study among 20 university-level learners of French at Trinity College of Dublin in Ireland. Whereas success and development in L2 was mainly explained by internal...
attributes, demotivating experiences were overwhelmingly predominated by external factors associated with the learning environment. Except for one internal attribute that only one participant mentioned, namely the pressure of setting too high standards for oneself, all the other factors that had a negative influence on L2 motivation seemed to derive from the institutionalized language learning experience. Demotivating factors related to the concrete learning environment fell under three categories. Firstly, L2 classes with native speakers were said to have a demotivating effect because the atmosphere was too casual, there were too many classes, or the number of students in the class was too big. Additional reasons for demotivation resulting from the L2 classes specifically were jokes that alienated the teacher, classes found listening to artificial prepared speeches boring, and difficulty in speaking on uninteresting topics in a contrived atmosphere. Secondly, demotivation derived from issues related to L2 coursework or methods used in class. Here, for example, dull teaching methods in a particular grammar class, emphasis on learning facts and figures in a particular course, a gap between coursework studied and exam questions, and limited opportunities for student interaction in some tutorials were mentioned among several other demotivating factors. Thirdly, institutional policies and attitudes were critically evaluated, including critical remarks on, for example, lack of individual attention with too many students, lack of oral L2 use or practice, and too many lectures in English rather than the L2.

Ushioda (1998) also administered a two-stage interview of 20 Irish learners of French. They were asked to identify what they found to be de-motivating in their L2 learning experiences. Evidently, those learners attribute positive L2 outcomes to personal ability or other internal factors whereas attribute negative L2 outcomes or lack of success to external factors. Their answers “overwhelmingly targeted negative aspects of the institutionalized learning framework, rather than personal factors such as falling grades or negative self-perceptions of ability” (1998, p. 86). Ushioda welcomes this finding by holding that in so doing these learners will be better able to develop self-motivation and learning autonomy, offering a different aspect for motivation.

The study by Dornyei (1998) differed from the studies presented above in the sense that it concentrated specifically on pupils who had been identified as being demotivated. Dornyei (2001) presented the following nine demotivating factors based on his unpublished study (Dornyei, 1998) utilizing structured 10–30 minute interviews with fifty secondary school students in Budapest, Hungary, studying either English or German as a foreign language, who were identified by their teachers or peers as being demotivated. Following factors were proposed as demotivating factors: (1) teachers’ personalities, commitments, competence, and teaching methods; (2) inadequate school facilities (large class sizes, unsuitable level of classes or frequent change of teachers); (3) reduced self-confidence due to their experience of failure or lack of success; (4) negative attitude toward the foreign language studied; (5) compulsory nature of the foreign language study; (6) interference of another foreign language that pupils are studying; (7) negative attitude toward the community of the foreign language spoken; (8) attitudes of group members; and (9) Course books used in class.

Falout and Maruyama (2004) used a 49-item questionnaire constructed on the basis of nine categories suggested by Dornyei (2001) in order to examine whether demotivating factors before entering college differed between lower-proficiency and higher-proficiency learners of English. Six categories of questions in their questionnaire concerned teachers, courses, attitude toward English speaking community, attitude toward English itself, self-confidence, and attitude of group members. 64 college students were asked to reflect on their English study before entering college and respond to the 49-item questionnaire. By comparing the mean of items obtained for each category, the researchers found that (a) the demotivating factors for the lower-proficiency group were self-confidence, attitudes toward the L2 itself, courses, teachers, and attitudes of group members (in descending order), (b) for the higher-proficiency group, self-confidence was the demotivating factor with the other factors being relatively neutral, (c) the higher- and lower-proficiency groups had been demotivated to the same degree, and (d) the lower-proficiency group started to develop negative attitudes towards English earlier than the higher-proficiency group.
Muhonen (2004) examined the main demotivating factors in relation to students’ gender and level of achievement. Through the analysis of 91 ninth-grade students’ writings, the following demotivating factors were identified: (1) the teacher, (2) learning material, (3) learner characteristics, (4) school environment, and (5) student’s attitude towards English. The findings revealed that the most demotivating factor was the teacher and the least demotivating factor was attitude towards second language. The quantitative analysis of the data showed that there were not significant differences between male and female students in terms of demotives. However, the comparison of the frequencies of demotives indicated that male students more frequently attributed demotivation to the teacher whereas learning material was considered more demotivating by female students. The teacher was regarded the main demotivating factor in all grades.

Overall, the previous studies illustrate that demotivation in learning L2 is a matter of concern worldwide. Therefore, much more information is needed on the nature of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the related studies were mostly focused on demotivation in learning European languages not Persian language. Therefore, this study is intended to fill this gap by exploring demotivation in Persian language as a foreign language among the learners from different Asian, European, and African countries and uncovering demotivating factors in this context.

4. Methodology

4.1. Design of the study
As the researchers did not have any control over the selection and manipulation of independent variables, the ex post facto design was utilized in this study.

4.2. Participants
The participants were 70 Non-Iranian students at three levels of university degrees, namely, Bachelor’s degree (BA), Master of Arts (MA), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), randomly selected from among more than 130 non-Iranian students among different nationalities from Asia, Europe, and Africa. The participants included both male and female students who took part voluntarily in the study. The distribution of participants by level of education, age, nationality, and gender, is presented in Table 1.

4.3. Instruments
The questionnaire originally developed by (Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009) consisting of two sections was adopted in the present study to identify the main demotivating factors.
factors for Persian language learners. Section one included 32-items and the second asked learners about their comments and elaboration on other demotivating factors. Table 2 presents the reliability coefficients for the demotivation questionnaire. The Persian version of the questionnaire, used also by another study in Iran (Kaivanpanah & Ghasemi, 2011), was administered to a group of 82 volunteer students who were similar to the target population. Incomplete questionnaires (N = 12) were excluded from analysis. Responses to items on the questionnaire were recorded on a 5-point Likert-type scale with values of 5 = “true” to 1 = “not true”. The questionnaire included the following categories of demotives: (1) The teacher, (2) Learning contents, materials, and facilities, (3) Experience of failure, (4) attitude towards second language learning, and (5) Attitude towards Persian Speaking Community. The items were written in Persian and described in simple words to ensure maximum understanding on the part of the participants.

4.4. Procedures
This research was conducted at the faculty of human sciences at Imam Khomeini international university, Iran. Language learners were asked to complete the questionnaire in 20 minutes. The participants were fully informed of the objectives of the study before the administration of the questionnaire. Instructions for completing the questionnaire were also given in the questionnaire orally by one of the researchers. They were required to choose one of the alternatives: (1) True; (2) To some extent true; (3) Not either true or untrue; (4) To some extent not true; and (5) Not True. They were also given the option to freely express their extra comments at the end of the time. Regarding the ethical considerations, the written consent was obtained from the participants and they were ensured about the anonymity of their responses to protect their identities.

4.5. Data analysis
To test the hypotheses of the present study certain statistical techniques were implemented. First descriptive statistics for the scores at three levels of education were compared, this was followed by a Varimax rotation and ANOVA procedure which were performed to analyze the data so that we can see the frequency and order of importance, as well as, demotivating factors in relation to the gender, age, level of education, and nationality of the participants.

4.6. Extracted factors
Factor 1 received high loadings from eight items (30, 32, 1, 17, 26, 21, 22, and 28). These items concern the ways teachers organized their teaching, taught and presented the learning contents to students, and behaved in the class. Factor 1 was, therefore, called “The Teacher”. Factor 2 received appreciable loadings from nine items (31, 11, 15, 25, 2, 24, 5, 19, and 20). The items related to students’ attitudes towards the nature of language learning and the lack of purpose or goal for language learning. Thus, Factor 2 was named “Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning”. Factor 3 obtained high loadings from seven items (14, 16, 4, 29, 7, 10, and 27). These items concerned the grammar-based instruction, the topics of the learning materials, and learning facilities. Factor 3 was, therefore, labeled “Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities”. Factor 4 had loadings on the five items (3, 9, 8, 6, and 13). The first three items

| Component name                                      | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities         | .862              |
| Experience of Failure                                | .864              |
| Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning           | .878              |
| The Teacher                                          | .869              |
| Attitude towards Persian Speaking community          | .861              |
| Total reliability                                    | .867              |

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were concerned with the learners’ experience of failure such as the low or disappointing score in examinations and inability to memorize vocabulary and expressions. Items 6 and 13 were related to the course books and the teaching methodology. So Factor 4 was called “Experience of Failure”. Factor 5 received high loadings from three items that referred to the learners’ attitude towards English speaking people, country, and culture (23, 12, and 18). At last Factor 5 was labeled “Attitude towards Persian Speaking Community”.

4.7. The participants’ mean scores

The participants’ mean scores on each factor were calculated. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for each demotivating factor. The mean scores of factors “Attitude towards Persian Speaking Community” and “Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities” are higher than (4.25 and 2.63, respectively), the factors of “Experience of Failure”, “Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning”, and “The Teacher” (2.51, 2.13, 2.01).

4.8. Demotivating factors and learners’ gender

Table 4 displays descriptive statistics for male and female Learners. As can be seen, females’ mean scores were approximately close to those of males for all demotivating factors except for “Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities”. In table we can see mean, standard deviation, and variance on Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities, as a demotive across gender, age, level of education, and nationality.

Table 5 presents the mean, standard deviation, and variance of other demotive factors, including experience of Failure, across gender, age, level of education, and nationality.

| Demotivating Factors                          | Mean  | SD  |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Attitude towards Persian Speaking community   | 4.25  | 1.18|
| Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities  | 2.63  | 1.02|
| Experience of Failure                         | 2.51  | 1.27|
| Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning   | 2.13  | 0.85|
| The Teacher                                   | 2.01  | 1.21|

| Experience of Failure | Mean | St.D | Variance |
|-----------------------|------|------|----------|
| Gender                | Male | 2.49 | 1.41     | 2         |
|                       | Female | 2.51 | 1.43     | 2.06      |
| Level of education    | BD   | 2.51 | 1.36     | 1.85      |
|                       | MA   | 2.50 | 1.40     | 1.97      |
|                       | PhD  | 2.51 | 1.59     | 2.54      |
| Age                   | 25 year | 2.43 | 1.40     | 1.97      |
|                       | Over 25 year | 2.58 | 1.44     | 2.08      |
| Nationality           | Asian | 2.46 | 1.47     | 2.17      |
|                       | European | 2.46 | 1.28     | 1.64      |
|                       | African | 2.60 | 1.66     | 2.77      |
Table 5. Descriptive statistics of demotive, experience of failure, across gender, age, level of education, and nationality

| Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities | Variance | Std.D | Mean |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|-------|------|
| Gender                                      |          |       |      |
| Male                                        | 3.50     | 1.30  | 2.26 |
| Female                                      | 1.78     | 1.36  | 2.36 |
| Level of education                          |          |       |      |
| BD                                          | 2.56     | 1.48  | 2.19 |
| MA                                          | 2.46     | 1.52  | 2.31 |
| PhD                                         | 2.94     | 1.58  | 2.52 |
| Age                                         |          |       |      |
| 25year                                      | 2.55     | 1.47  | 2.16 |
| Over25year                                  | 2.68     | 1.57  | 2.48 |
| Nationality                                 |          |       |      |
| Asian                                       | 2.57     | 1.54  | 2.38 |
| European                                    | 2.63     | 1.50  | 2.27 |
| African                                     | 2.96     | 1.47  | 2.18 |

Table 6 shows the mean, standard deviation, and variance for “the Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning”.

Table 7 shows the mean, standard deviation, and variance of the next demotive factor, “The Teacher”.

Table 8 contains the mean, standard deviation, and variance of the factor, “Attitude towards Persian Speaking community”, across learners’ gender, age, level of education, and nationality.

The one-way ANOVA results in Table 8 point to statistically significant differences between males and females with regard to the factors of The Teacher (p < .000), Experience of Failure (p < .000), and Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning (p < .000). The findings imply that male learners were more demotivated than female learners with respect to the factors of the Teacher and Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning while female learners were more

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of demotive, attitude towards foreign language learning, across gender, age, level of education, and nationality

| Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning | Mean | Std.D | Variance |
|-------------------------------------------|------|-------|----------|
| Gender                                    |      |       |          |
| Male                                      | 2.14 | 1.44  | 2.06     |
| Female                                    | 2.09 | 1.43  | 2.06     |
| Level of education                        |      |       |          |
| BD                                        | 2.10 | 1.36  | 1.87     |
| MA                                        | 2.18 | 1.51  | 2.30     |
| PhD                                       | 2.03 | 1.47  | 2.18     |
| Age                                       |      |       |          |
| 25year                                    | 2.15 | 1.35  | 1.84     |
| Over25year                                 | 2.07 | 1.52  | 2.31     |
| Nationality                               |      |       |          |
| Asian                                     | 2.03 | 1.40  | 1.98     |
| European                                  | 2.16 | 1.44  | 2.09     |
| African                                   | 2.36 | 1.58  | 2.52     |
One-way ANOVA results in Table 9 and Table 10 point to statistically significant differences in “Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities”, “Experience of Failure”, “Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning”, “The Teacher” and “Attitude towards Persian Speaking community” across the three level of education. No significant differences were found for “Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities” for levels of education.

5. Discussion
According to responses collected in the questionnaire, the most demotivating factor pertains to learning contents, materials, and facilities. This findings corroborated those of Meshkat and Hassani (2012) in which they examined demotivating factors in learning English from the learners’ perspective. They concluded that Iranian students considered lack of school facilities, learning materials such as overemphasis on grammar and long passages were the main sources of
When the materials and equipment employed in classes are insufficient and not matched with the intended context (the students’ needs, the topic to be taught and learned, etc.), students may feel they are just going nowhere and are just wasting their time. Therefore, considering factors like students’ needs, the topic which is to be taught, the materials and equipment which are suitable for this topic and many other factors can play a major role in making learners motivated and energetic to learn much more effectively.

Besides, regarding Persian teaching contexts, these issues can even be more salient. Therefore, considering the above-cited factors and taking steps to meet the necessary conditions for providing the students with the best possible environment and conditions for improving their learning ability seems to be necessary. When language learners do not access adequate and enough materials and equipment, they are unwilling to participate in the class activities and accordingly their early motivation may change into demotivation. This finding is consistent with the findings of the previous studies on language learning demotivation that reported inadequate school facilities as one of the major demotivating factors (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011; Meshkat & Hassani, 2012).

| Table 9. ANOVA results for gender | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities | 10.583 | 4 | 2.646 | 1.194 | .312 |
| Experience of Failure | 44.081 | 4 | 11.020 | 5.568 | .000 |
| Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning | 129.771 | 4 | 324.443 | 1.444 | .000 |
| The Teacher | 225.946 | 4 | 56.487 | 42.700 | .000 |
| Attitude towards Persian Speaking community | 6.983 | 4 | 1.764 | 1.155 | .330 |

| Table 10. ANOVA results for level of education | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities | 10.332 | 4 | 2.583 | 1.139 | .338 |
| Experience of Failure | 184.248 | 4 | 46.062 | 35.122 | .000 |
| Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning | 57.738 | 4 | 14.434 | 7.257 | .001 |
| The Teacher | 49.928 | 4 | 12.482 | 7.796 | .000 |
| Attitude towards Persian Speaking community | 341.269 | 4 | 8.567 | 6.453 | .000 |
Experience of Failure is the second factor bearing an effect in demotivating the learners. This failure, consequently, increased frustration and demotivation among them. In fact, students’ experience of failure in the language learning led to the loss of interest towards foreign language learning. This implies that the situation or intrinsic value of learning a language is not appreciated by language learners, so teachers need to spend more time on highlighting the importance of learning a language for reasons such as communication and reading rather than obtaining high scores.

“Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning” was the other source of demotivation. In fact, learners’ absence of positive attitude towards foreign language learning was not highly correlated with demotivation in this study which contradicts the results of Muhonen (2004) that explored demotivational factors discouraging students from learning English language at a Finnish comprehensive school. They enlisted learners’ negative attitude towards English as a demotivating factor. This finding is also in contrast with Kaivanpanah and Ghasemi (2011) study in which they pointed out that compulsory nature of language and instrumental learning motivation served as a main demotivation factor.

Contrary to the previous studies (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gorham & Christophel, 1992; Song, 2005; Ushioda, 1998) in which it was evidenced that teachers had mainly been the prominent source of demotivation in the learning experiences, this study’s findings uncovered that “The teacher” (their teaching methods and techniques and presenting the course contents, performance as well as their behavior in the class) was only the fourth source of demotivation in the learners’ Persian learning experiences and demotivation yielded low correlation with the role of teachers. By computing descriptive statistics for demotivation questionnaire, the obtained result indicated that the least standard deviation goes to items (1, 17, 21, 22, 28, and 30) which indicate that students had a low disagreement about the item. This implies the qualification of teachers’ competence, teaching styles, personality, and behaviors among high-level educated students from several different countries.

As a result, attitude towards Persian speaking community is rather interpreted as a motivating factor rather than demotivating one. This is not consistent with the findings of the previous studies like Falout and Maruyama (2004) which showed that negative attitude towards L2 community affected the motivation to learn the target language. The findings of this study indicate that learners had positive attitude towards the country, people, and culture of the target language. Teachers are advised to provide learners with a realistic picture of the people who speak the language to foster positive attitudes among them towards target language speaking community and make them more willing to know about the target community by learning their language.

6. Conclusion
The findings point to statistically significant differences between males and females with regard to the factors of The Teacher (p < .000), Experience of Failure (p < .000), and Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning (p < .000). The findings imply that male learners were more demotivated than female learners with respect to the factors of the Teacher and Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning while female learners were more demotivated in Experience of Failure. This contradicts the results of Muhonen (2004) in which the comparison of demotivating factors among the males and the females revealed only slight differences. Thus, the first null hypothesis which states that there is no relation between learners gender in terms of demotivating factors was rejected.

The findings also point to statistically significant differences in “Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities”, “Experience of Failure”, “Attitude towards Foreign Language Learning”, “The Teacher” and “Attitude towards Persian Speaking community” across the three level of education. Therefore, the second null hypothesis which states that there is no relation between learners level of education in terms of demotivating factors was rejected.

The findings of this study are likely to help teachers of Persian language teaching centers for non-Iranian students, and Persian language departments at different universities by familiarizing them to
language learners’ demotivating factors. Addressing these demotivating factors and finding out about the underlying reasons will result in learners’ better performance in learning Persian.

One of the limitations of the study was related to the time of the course in which the learners were invited to take part in learning Persian language which was rather short. Research suggests that an individual’s perspective on time can either positively or negatively affect his attitude towards present tasks and responsibilities. Students who spend more time on learning and manage their time more efficiently while learning can be more motivated and organized in achieving their purposes. Another limitation which is suggested by one of the reviewers is that respondents’ might be influenced by the teaching practices of the university where the data was collected.

Since Learning Contents, Materials, and Facilities were the first demotivating factors in this study, more investigation needs to be done in order to improve the quality of the contents and materials to such a level that motivates learners to learn a foreign language.

Because the present study was exploratory in nature, more studies on Persian second/foreign language demotivation are needed to confirm our findings. Replication of this study with male and female students at the same level of education in different contexts is illuminating to understand how well the findings can be generalized to other learners of different nationalities. Future investigation is necessary to examine differences and similarities between teachers’ and students’ perceptions of demotivating factors.

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