



Modeling and Contribution of Mastery and Performance Climates to Emotional Exhaustion and Feedback Seeking Behavior among EFL Teachers

Monireh Norouzi¹ 
 Parvaneh ShayesteFar^{2*} 

¹Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language Teaching, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

^{*2}Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, English Language Teaching Department, Farhangian Teacher Education University, Hafez Street, Tehran, Iran

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CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

E-mail: parishayeste@cfu.ac.ir

ABSTRACT

Previous research highlights the importance of motivational climates created by supervisors but lacks a detailed understanding of how these climates influence specific teacher behaviors. This study aims to explore how different motivational climates, as perceived by EFL teachers, affect their emotional exhaustion and engagement in feedback-seeking behaviors. Employing a cross-sectional design, the study involved 549 EFL teachers from various language institutes using three questionnaires, one of which was developed for the purpose of this study. Structural Equation Modeling was utilized to assess the relationships among the constructs. Results demonstrate that mastery climates are positively associated with seeking self-improvement feedback, while performance climates correlate with increased emotional exhaustion and a preference for self-validation feedback. Autonomy-supportive climates significantly reduced emotional exhaustion, whereas autonomy-controlling climates exacerbated it. These findings suggest that supervisor-training programs should focus on developing leadership styles that promote supportive and mastery-oriented climates. Implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Motivational climates; Emotional exhaustion; Feedback-seeking behavior; Self-determination theory; Achievement goal approach

1. Introduction

Teacher motivation has played a key role in shaping educational outcomes, impacting diverse aspects such as teacher well-being (Abós et al., 2018), classroom dynamics (Orsini, 2020), and student learning (Bardach & Klassen, 2021). Despite the broad understanding of these effects, research focusing on the personal and contextual factors that shape teacher motivation remains fragmented. Specifically, while social environments created by educational leaders (alternatively called motivational climates) are cited as crucial in the quality of teacher motivation (Cho & Shim, 2013; Maehr, 2001), the mechanisms through which these climates affect teachers' behaviors and well-being is not well understood.

Recent studies in teacher motivation (e.g., Daumiller et al., 2023; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017) have been guided primarily by the Achievement Goal Approach (Ames, 1992; Nicholls, 1989; Norouzi & ShayesteFar, 2025) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These frameworks have illuminated how various facets of teachers' motivational climate-like collaborative climates and collegial relations-influence teacher behaviors. In particular, with the growing recognition that supervisors play a key role in shaping teachers' perceived motivational climate (Kurland, 2018),

researchers are increasingly focusing on identifying teachers' perceptions of supervisors' beliefs and behaviors that make them feel emotionally exhausted (Klassen, 2012; Klusmann, 2008; Uslukaya & Demirtas, 2023).

Defined as the loss of energy sources (Villa & Calvete, 2001), emotional exhaustion is considered as a core element of burnout (Cano-Garcia et al., 2005). Over the past decades, teacher education research has shown that emotional exhaustion triggers negative processes and outcomes such as reduced job satisfaction, diminished instructional quality, and increased attrition (Collie, 2018; Fernet, 2012; Lauermann & König, 2016), and this has generated a substantial body of research on contextual antecedents of teachers' emotional exhaustion, among other factors (Collie, 2020; Salokangas et al., 2020; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011; Uslukaya & Demirtas, 2023). Within this literature, motivational climate has emerged as a significant contextual factor. Studies grounded in SDT suggest that autonomy-supportive environments—those that acknowledge teachers' perspectives and provide meaningful choices—can buffer against emotional exhaustion (Collie, 2020; Klassen, 2012). Conversely, controlling climates that pressure teachers to conform to rigid standards have been associated with heightened burnout risk (Bartholomew, 2014; Eyal & Roth, 2011). Despite these insights, more research is needed to understand how specific dimensions of motivational climate, as perceived by teachers, relate to their emotional well-being.

Furthermore, this study explores how perceptions of motivational climates influence teachers' engagement in feedback seeking behavior, defined as "... [a] conscious devotion of effort toward determining the correctness and adequacy of behaviors for attaining valued end states" (Ashford, 1986, p. 466). Previous research has long recognized context as a major antecedent of feedback seeking behavior (Vandewalle et al., 2000), and has highlighted supervisors' roles in shaping teachers' social environment (Kurland, 2018). Given these indications in the literature, this investigation is timely.

Through this focus, the study offers a novel contribution by modeling how distinct components of motivational climate relate to both emotional exhaustion and feedback-seeking behavior among EFL teachers. Understanding how motivational climates can mitigate or exacerbate these outcomes is even more essential in private educational sectors such as language institutes where issues like job security, class size variability, and student motivation frequently pose additional strains (Agheshteh & Mehrpour, 2021; Oder & Eisenschmidt, 2018; Papi & Teimouri, 2012). By addressing this underexplored intersection, the study fills a critical gap in the literature and provides actionable insights for improving teacher support systems and institutional leadership practices.

2. Conceptual frameworks

Two theories of motivation well-suited for the examination of motivational climates within educational settings are Achievement Goal Approach and SDT. These frameworks provide a robust foundation for exploring how social environments created by significant others affect teachers' cognitions, practices, and emotions. The following parts provide a brief overview of these theories.

2.1. Goal structure

Grounded in the tenets of the Achievement Goal Approach, the goal structures of educational environments, defined as "the types of achievement goals emphasized in [that] environment" (Cho & Shim, 2013, p. 12), affect individuals' perceptions of competence and subsequent actions, cognitions, and emotions (Barnes, 2018). Studies in this line of research have identified two dimensions of social environments in terms of whether a mastery (the desire to develop one's competence) or a performance (the desire to demonstrate one's competence) conception of competence is valued, namely a task-involving motivational climate and an ego-involving motivational climate (Ames, 1992). Fostering a mastery conception of competence, a task involving climate (alternatively labeled mastery climate) is characterized by a focus on improvement, learning, cooperation, and effort (Duda & Balaguer, 2007). In contrast, an ego-involving climate (or performance climate) refers to social environments that support the endorsement of performance goals (the desire to demonstrate one's competence) through valuing superiority, competition, and punishment of mistakes (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

Research has robustly documented the effects of these climates on educational outcomes (e.g., Erentaitė & Vosylis, 2025), yet much of the work in this line of research has focused on teachers' views about goal related messages to students rather than themselves. Therefore, despite the general recognition that teachers also receive such signals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017), which affect their beliefs, practices, and well-being (Kumar, 2006), and the growing interest in "the significant role of the principal as a key re-framer of teachers' conceptions of education and school" (Eyal & Roth, 2011, p. 267), a significant gap remains in relating these theoretical frameworks to the nuanced experiences of EFL teachers. Specifically, there is a lack of empirical evidence on how these goal structures manifest in the unique settings of private language institutes and influence teacher behaviors such as feedback seeking behavior and emotional exhaustion.

2.2. Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—is essential for fostering intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy refers to the experience of volition and psychological freedom. In general, in an autonomy supportive climate, individuals' preferences, feelings, perspectives, and interests are acknowledged (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). When teachers perceive higher autonomy levels—by being offered meaningful choices, acknowledging their perspectives, and minimizing pressure—they are more likely to

experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion (Wang, 2024). In contrast, an autonomy-controlling environment refers to situations where individuals are pressurized and coerced into behaving in certain manners (Bartholomew, 2014). These climates have been linked to increased burnout symptoms (Bartholomew, 2014; Eyal & Roth, 2011).

Competence, the need to feel effective and capable, is closely tied to feedback-seeking behavior. Individuals who feel competent are more inclined to seek feedback that enhances their skills and professional growth (VandeWalle, 2003). In autonomy-supportive climates, feedback is perceived as a developmental tool rather than a judgment, encouraging the pursuit of self-improvement information. Conversely, in controlling or performance-oriented climates, individuals may avoid feedback due to fear of exposing inadequacies, thereby undermining their sense of competence (Tuckey, 2002).

Relatedness, the need to feel connected and valued by others, is fulfilled in socially supportive climates which provide care, respect, and value. It is assumed to play an important role in fostering individuals' sense of connectedness (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Reinboth, 2004). Indeed, establishing good relationships is critical for creating positive climates (Noonan, 2004), which "provides the foundation for connectedness in school communities" (Aldridge & Ala'l, 2013, p. 49). More specifically, such environments have been shown to buffer against emotional exhaustion by promoting a sense of belonging and interpersonal safety (Reinboth, 2004; Cano-Garcia et al., 2005; Uslukaya & Demirtas, 2023). Relatedness also facilitates feedback-seeking behavior, as teachers are more likely to request guidance when they feel psychologically safe and socially supported (Noonan, 2004).

Despite its robust theoretical foundation and empirical support, SDT has been underutilized in research on EFL teachers' motivational climates. By examining how supervisor-created climates fulfill or frustrate these psychological needs, the present study aims to clarify their role in shaping teachers' emotional exhaustion and feedback-seeking behavior—two outcomes that are particularly salient in high-pressure, low-security environments such as private language institutes.

2.3. An integrated framework

Emergent research has increasingly sought to bridge the Achievement Goal Approach and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by focusing on their shared constructs—particularly perceived competence, motivational regulation, and the role of contextual climates (Abós et al., 2018; Catalán et al., 2018; Duda, 2013). Both frameworks emphasize how environmental cues shape individuals' goal orientations and motivational quality. While Achievement Goal Theory focuses on the types of goals individuals pursue (e.g., mastery vs. performance), SDT emphasizes the underlying psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness) that determine whether motivation is self-determined or controlled.

This study builds on prior integrative efforts (e.g., Appleton & Duda, 2016) and develops a context-specific framework to examine how supervisor-created motivational climates in EFL settings activate particular goal structures and influence teachers' emotional and behavioral outcomes. Specifically, mastery climates—characterized by autonomy support, collaboration, and personal growth—are theorized to promote learning-approach goals and satisfy basic psychological needs, thereby fostering self-improvement feedback seeking and reducing emotional exhaustion (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ames, 1992; Collie, 2018). In contrast, performance climates—marked by competition, normative comparison, and external evaluation—are expected to promote performance goals and frustrate psychological needs, leading to greater emotional exhaustion and a preference for self-validation feedback (Bartholomew, 2014; VandeWalle, 2003; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

This integrated framework is developed specifically for the present study to address a critical gap in the literature: how motivational climates shaped by supervisors influence EFL teachers' goal orientations, feedback-seeking behavior, and emotional well-being. By combining insights from both theories, the framework offers a nuanced lens for understanding how institutional climates can either support or undermine teacher motivation. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed relationships among motivational climate, goal orientation, feedback type, and emotional exhaustion.

2.4. Emotional exhaustion

As stated earlier, the study of teachers' emotional exhaustion has become a major area of research in the field of teacher education over the past decades (e.g., Fernet et al., 2012; Lauermann & König, 2016). Various conceptual frameworks such as SDT and achievement goal approach have guided this line of research. Studies grounded in SDT have yielded important knowledge about supervisor-created environmental conditions that promote or hinder teachers' feelings of emotional exhaustion (e.g., Collie et al., 2018). In general, these studies show that teachers who perceive their supervisor as being more autonomy supportive through providing useful feedback and meaningful choices, understanding their perspectives, and welcoming their input in decision making (Collie, 2018; Klassen, 2012; Klusmann, 2008; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011) are less likely to feel emotionally exhausted (Collie, 2018; Ebersold, 2019) as they become more self-determined regarding teaching (Eyal & Roth, 2011). In line with the same reasoning, the negative experiential state of emotional exhaustion is reported to be prevalent among teachers who perceive their principal to thwart their needs for autonomy through pressurizing them to comply with standards and rules (Bartholomew, 2014; Eyal & Roth, 2011). It is also shown that a positive school climate characterized by respect, trust, and supportive relations (Bartholomew, 2014) with supervisors negatively predicts teachers' emotional exhaustion (Cano-Garcia et al., 2005). In general, this line of research underscores the role of supervisors in creating low-burnout and high-burnout work climates.

Research on teachers' emotional exhaustion has also attracted achievement goal theorists (Norouzi, 2021; Retelsdorf, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). While this body of work has grown, relatively few studies have examined how teachers'

perceptions of supervisor-created goal structures relate specifically to emotional exhaustion. One notable study by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) found that perceptions of a performance goal structure were associated with increased emotional exhaustion both directly and indirectly via time pressure. In contrast, perceptions of a mastery goal structure were linked to reduced emotional exhaustion through enhanced self-efficacy. These findings suggest that the nature of goal structures embedded in supervisory practices may play a meaningful role in shaping teachers' emotional well-being, warranting further empirical attention.

2.5. Type of feedback information

As an aspect of feedback-seeking behavior, the type of feedback information—conceptualized as self-improvement and self-validation (Janssen & Prins, 2007)—has gained increasing attention among achievement goal researchers (e.g., VandeWalle, 2000; Tuckey, 2002). Self-improvement information refers to diagnostic feedback aimed at enhancing one's competence, while self-validation information serves to affirm one's existing abilities and performance. These feedback types are closely linked to individuals' achievement goal orientations, which shape how they evaluate the value and cost of seeking feedback (Norouzi, 2021).

Individuals with learning-approach goals—who are motivated by growth and mastery—tend to seek self-improvement information, as they view feedback as a valuable tool for overcoming weaknesses and enhancing skills. In contrast, those with performance goals—especially performance-avoidance—often perceive feedback as threatening and are more likely to seek self-validation information to protect their self-image or avoid negative evaluations (VandeWalle, 2003; Ashford, 1986).

To understand how these individual orientations are shaped by context, it is useful to consider the concept of goal structure, which refers to the shared expectations and values emphasized in a particular environment (Ames, 1992). Motivational climates—whether mastery- or performance-oriented—can be seen as contextual goal structures that promote specific achievement goals. Mastery climates, which emphasize personal growth, collaboration, and effort, are likely to foster learning-approach goals and, in turn, encourage teachers to seek self-improvement feedback. Conversely, performance climates, which stress competition and normative comparison, may promote performance goals and lead teachers to prioritize self-validation feedback or avoid feedback altogether due to ego and impression management concerns.

Despite these theoretical links, empirical research has yet to fully explore how motivational climates influence EFL teachers' preferences for different types of feedback. Most existing studies have focused on corporate or student populations, leaving a gap in understanding how these dynamics operate in language education settings. Moreover, the intersection between feedback-seeking behavior and emotional exhaustion remains underexplored, particularly in contexts where supervisory practices and institutional pressures vary widely.

By addressing these gaps, the current study aims to clarify how perceived motivational climates relate to EFL teachers' feedback-seeking behavior and emotional well-being. This investigation contributes to a more nuanced understanding of teacher motivation and offers practical insights for designing supportive supervisory practices in educational institutions.

2.6. Research questions and hypotheses

To guide the investigation, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do EFL teachers' perceptions of mastery and performance climates relate to their emotional exhaustion and feedback-seeking behavior?
2. What types of feedback information (self-improvement vs. self-validation) are associated with different motivational climates?
3. Do demographic variables (age, gender, teaching experience) predict teachers' perceptions of motivational climate?

Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and prior empirical findings (e.g., Collie et al., 2018; Bartholomew, 2014), this study hypothesizes that:

- **H1:** Teachers in environments characterized by a mastery climate—defined as settings that prioritize personal improvement, autonomy support, and cooperative learning—will report lower levels of emotional exhaustion and higher engagement in professional development activities. This hypothesis is consistent with SDT, which suggests that autonomy-supportive climates foster psychological need satisfaction, reducing burnout and enhancing motivation for growth-oriented behaviors.
- **H2:** Teachers operating in performance-oriented climates—where emphasis is placed on outperforming peers and highlighting individual achievements—will exhibit higher levels of emotional exhaustion and a preference for feedback that validates their competence rather than fosters growth.

In addition, demographic factors are expected to influence climate perceptions:

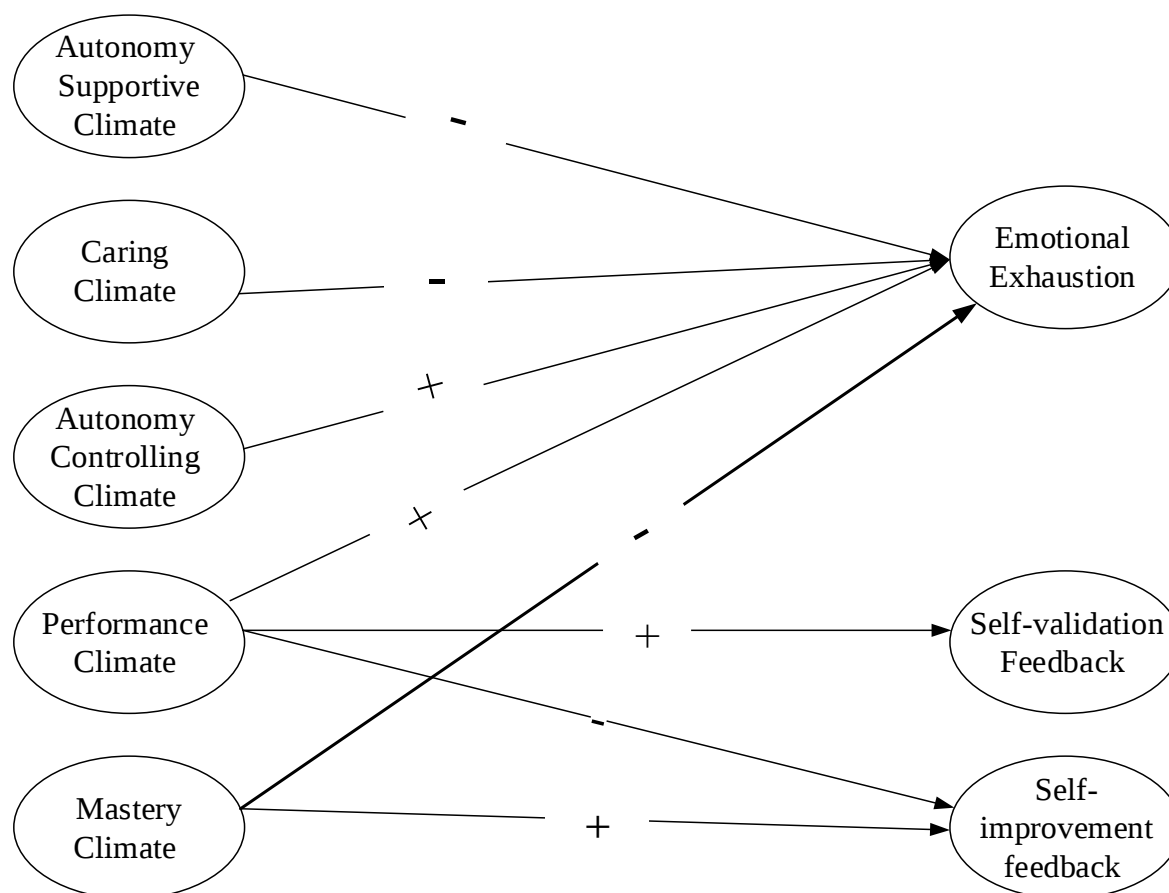
- **H3:** Younger teachers, due to less professional inertia and greater openness to developmental feedback, are hypothesized to perceive their environments as more mastery-oriented compared to older teachers, who may prioritize stability and perceive a more performance-oriented climate.

- H4: In line with social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), male teachers are hypothesized to perceive their environments as more competitive (performance-oriented), while female teachers may view their settings as more collaborative and supportive (mastery-oriented).

(See Figure 1 for the hypothesized model.)

Figure 1.

Conceptual model



3. Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional design to assess the relationships among motivational climates, teachers' feedback seeking behavior, and their experiences of emotional exhaustion.

3.1. Participants

Given the absence of an existing scale to measure EFL teachers' perceptions of motivational climate, two independent samples were recruited for different phases of the study. Participants were selected using convenience sampling and they all taught general English courses at different language institutes in Iran.

The first group consisted of 337 EFL teachers (92 male, 245 female), aged 20 to 45, with teaching experience ranging from less than one year to approximately 20 years. This group participated in the development and validation of the Perceived Motivational Climate (PMC) scale. The second group included 212 EFL teachers (57 male, 155 female), whose teaching experience ranged from less than one year to 17 years. Data from this group were used to examine the relationships among perceived motivational climates, feedback-seeking behavior, and emotional exhaustion.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Perceived Motivational Climate (PMC)

The PMC scale was specifically developed for this study. Based on the general principles proposed by DeVellis (2012), initial item generation was based on a thorough literature review and supplemented by qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and subjected to thematic analysis to capture nuanced aspects of motivational climates. A preliminary set of 45 items was refined to 36 through iterative testing for content validity and participant feedback on clarity. The final scale included five subscales, validated through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, demonstrating good psychometric properties (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics, factor loadings, and convergent and discriminant evidence of the measurement model

subscales	Items	Factor Loading	Mean	Standard Deviation	A	CR	AVE
Recommended Threshold value		>.5					
Mastery climate (MC)	M1	0.73	3.5	.8	.80	.89	.58
	M2	0.73					
	M 5	0.83					
	M 6	0.79					
	M 7	0.71					
	M 8	0.75					
Caring climate (CC)	C2	0.73	4.4	.9	.84	.88	.60
	C3	0.91					
	C4	0.74					
	C5	0.7					
	C6	0.78					
Autonomy Supportive Climate (ATSC)	S2	0.8	4	.7	.81	.87	.57
	S3	0.76					
	S4	0.76					
	S6	0.72					
	S7	0.74					
Autonomy Controlling Climate (ATCC)	T1	0.81	3.2	.8	.70	.88	.62
	T2	0.86					
	T3	0.88					
	T4	0.65					
	T7	0.71					
Performance Climate (PC)	P1	0.84	3.3	.8	.77	.90	.65
	P2	0.76					
	P6	0.75					
	P7	0.84					
	P8	0.63					

Note: CR= Composite Reliability; AVE= Average Variance Extracted

3.2.2. Emotional exhaustion

To measure EFL teachers' feelings of emotional exhaustion, nine items (e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work") from Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, 1996) were used. This scale is extensively validated and widely used in EFL contexts. Responses were given on a scale ranging from 0 (Never) to 6 (Always).

3.2.3. Type of feedback information

The questionnaire by Janssen and Prins (2007) was adapted to the teaching context to measure the type of feedback information that EFL teachers sought. The original ten-item scale, which includes two subscales—self-improvement and self-validation—was modified to reflect the instructional and supervisory dynamics specific to language institutes. For example, items were reworded to reference pedagogical practices and professional development relevant to EFL teaching (e.g., "to improve my teaching skills" or "To get information about how I can solve my classroom problems"). To ensure contextual relevance and

clarity, the adapted items were reviewed by two experts in EFL teacher education and piloted with a small group of teachers (n = 20) prior to full-scale administration. Minor linguistic adjustments were made based on participant feedback. Responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3. Data collection and analysis

3.3.1.Procedure

Data were collected in two separate phases. In the first phase, the Perceived Motivational Climate (PMC) scale was administered online to a broad sample of EFL teachers. Participants were recruited through institute announcements, and email invitations. Before data collection, all respondents were briefed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. The first phase also included screening procedures to identify and exclude patterned or inattentive responses.

In the second phase, the validated PMC scale was administered alongside the emotional exhaustion and feedback type scales to examine the relationships among the study variables. Data collection spanned approximately four weeks, allowing sufficient time for participant engagement across different institutions and teaching contexts

3.3.2.Data analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and Structural equation modelling (SEM) were employed to validate the measurement model and test the hypothesized relationships. The analysis utilized LISREL (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996), version 8.8, applying criteria such as the normed Chi-Squared, RMSEA, TLI, and CFI to evaluate model fit. Furthermore, regression analyses were used to check whether demographic variables could predict teachers’ perceptions of their motivational climates.

4. Results

4.1. Scale development and validation

As stated earlier, the items of PMC scale were subjected to separate CFA, using maximum likelihood estimation. Accordingly, 10 items with low standardized factor loadings were removed. The retained items, as Table 1 shows, all loaded significantly on their designated factors and had acceptable factor loadings. Given the large sample size, the Chi-Square statistic was significant. Therefore, Chi-Square to degrees of freedom ratio (x2/df) was also employed which was below 3 in this study. The fit indices (CFI= .99, NFI = .97, IFI = .97, SRMR = 0.04, RMSEA = .06) present evidence of the models’ overall fit. Overall, 26 items remained which represented mastery climate (N=6), autonomy supportive climate (N=5), caring climate (N=5), performance climate (N=5), and autonomy controlling climate (N=5).

In a further attempt, the convergent and discriminant validity of the hypothesized model were assessed (Hair, 2010). As Hair (2010) point out, if items, which load on a factor “converge or share a high proportion of variance in common” (p. 618), convergent validity of the model can be supported. In this study, convergent validity is substantiated by the average variance extracted (AVE) higher than .50, composite reliability (CR) exceeding .70, standardized factor loadings above the threshold level of 0.50, and average standardized factor loadings greater than .70 (Table1). Moreover, the results are indicative of discriminant validity of the model. Discriminant validity concerns how different a factor is from other factors (Hair, 2010), which can be supported if the AVE estimate for each factor is more than its squared inter-construct correlations (SIC) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In this study, the square root of AVE for each factor was greater than its squared inter-construct correlations (SIC) (Table 1).

4.2. Regression analysis

Regression analyses were conducted to examine the predictors of teachers' perceptions of mastery and performance climates (Table 2). Results showed that gender was a significant predictor for both climates (Mastery: $\beta=0.328$, $p=.010$; Performance: $\beta=-0.168$, $p=.047$), while age and teaching experience did not significantly predict climate perceptions. The model explained 3% of the variance in mastery climates and 2% in performance climates, indicating a small but statistically significant effect of gender. Although the explained variance is limited, these findings suggest that gender may play a subtle role in shaping how teachers interpret motivational cues in their workplace.

Table 2.

Regression results

	Mastery climate			Performance climate		
	B	t	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
gender	0.328	2.582	0.010	-0.168	-1.352	0.047

age	0.006	0.522	0.602	0.008	0.711	0.478
Teaching experience	0.007	0.157	0.876	-0.033	-0.727	0.468
Model Summary	F=2.571, P<0.05, R ² =0.037			F=1.084, P>0.05, R ² =0.026		

4.3. Structural modeling

The structural model was assessed using LISREL for scale validation (Table 3) and to examine the relationships among constructs (Table 4). The model fit was good (CFI= .98, NFI = .93, IFI = .97, SRMR = 0.07, RMSEA = .03). However, the initial analysis indicated that the relationship between mastery climate and emotional exhaustion was non-significant and was subsequently removed from the model. Refitting the model resulted in satisfactory fit indices (CFI= .98, NFI = .93, IFI = .98, SRMR = 0.07, RMSE = .04).

Significant relationships were identified in the model: autonomy supportive and caring climates were negatively associated with emotional exhaustion ($\beta=-0.19$ and $\beta=-0.26$, respectively, $p<.05$), while performance and autonomy controlling climates positively predicted emotional exhaustion ($\beta=0.26$ and $\beta=0.20$, respectively, $p<.05$). Regarding feedback information, mastery climate positively correlated with seeking self-improvement information ($\beta=0.33$, $p<.05$), whereas performance climate positively influenced self-validation information seeking ($\beta=0.26$, $p<.05$) and negatively predicted self-improvement information seeking ($\beta=-0.28$, $p<.05$) (See Figure 2).

Table 3.

Fit indices for measures

Model	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	NFI
Recommended threshold value	<3	>.9	<0.08	<0.1	>.9
Perceived motivational climate	1.9	0.97	0.02	0.04	0.96
Emotional Exhaustion	2.02	0.97	0.07	0.03	0.95
Type of Feedback Information	2.08	0.96	0.07	0.09	0.93

Note: CFI= the comparative fit index; RMSEA= root mean square error of approximation; SRMR= standardized root mean squared residual; NFI= normed fit index

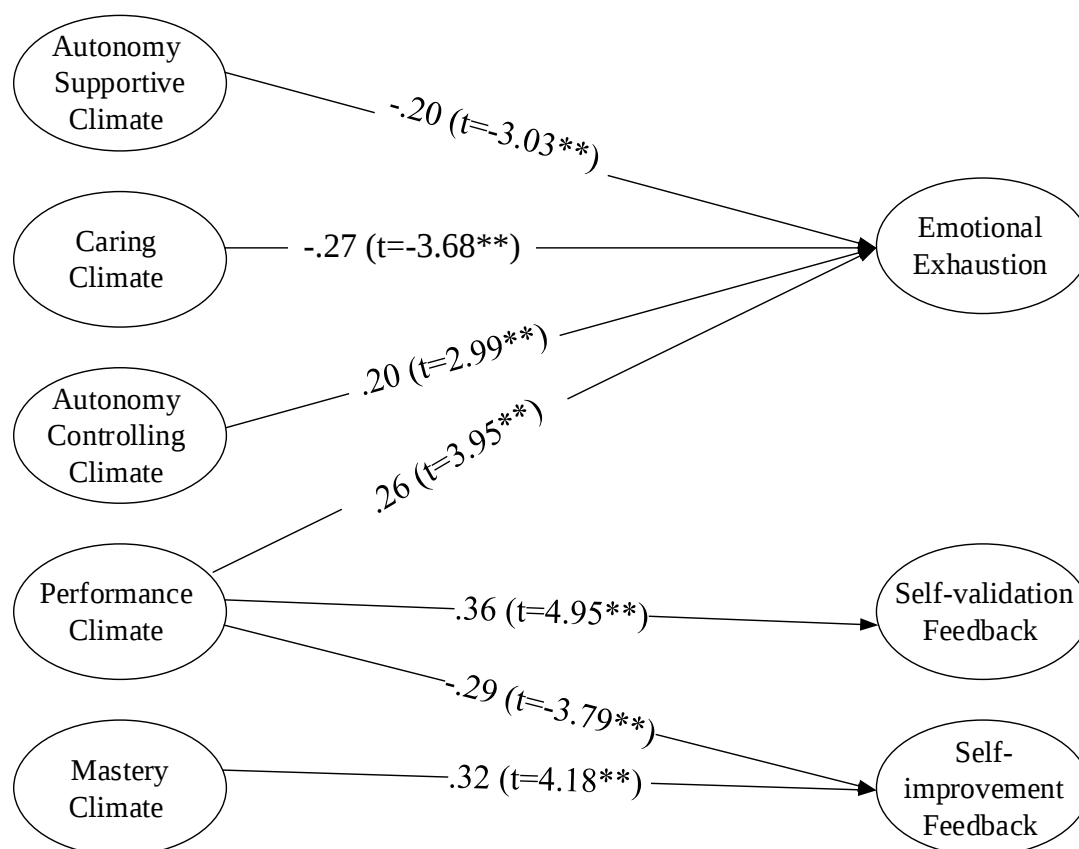
Table 4.

Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates and correlations among latent variables

	α	M/SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. EEX	.86	4.5/.9	-							
2. SVF	.91	4.3/.6	-.18	-						
3. SIF	.87	5/.9	.19	-.23*	-					
4. CC	.92	4.8/.9	-.52**	-.24*	.26**	-				
5. ATSC	.82	4.5/.6	-.43**	-.15	.16	.38**	-			
6. MC	.87	3.8/.7	-.20	-.39**	.41**	.47**	.26**	-		
7. PC	.92	3.4/.8	.47**	.35**	-.39**	-.37**	-.27**	-.28**	-	
8. ATCC	.93	3.1/.7	.45**	.17	-.19	-.42**	-.31**	-.39**	.27**	-

Note: MC = mastery climate, PC= performance climate, ATSC= autonomy supportive climate, ATCC= autonomy controlling climate, CC= caring climate, EEX= Emotional exhaustion; SVF= Self-validation information; SIF= self-improvement information

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Figure 2.*Relations between variables*

5. Discussion

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the existing literature by elucidating the nuanced impacts of motivational climates on EFL teachers' behavior and well-being. Consistent with the tenets of SDT, this study suggests that it is through satisfying or thwarting teachers' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness that significant others (e.g., supervisors) can socialize teachers into motivational systems which differentially affect their emotional exhaustion and type of feedback information they seek or avoid. The findings also indicate that these motivational systems are partially shaped by teachers' perceptions of the achievement goals supervisors emphasize in their workplace.

A major finding of this study relates to empowering climates that yielded the most desirable patterns. The positive association between mastery climate and self-improvement information highlights the role of supervisors in creating goal structures conducive to teachers' engagement in beneficial feedback seeking behavior. This finding further implies that work climates characterized by an emphasis on hard work, cooperation, self-referenced criteria for evaluation, and personal improvement prompt teachers to appreciate the instrumental value of diagnostic information for their professional development and accordingly this cognition enhances their tendency to seek self-improvement information. Partial support for this finding comes from achievement goal research which has shown that mastery goals lead teachers to seek information that improves their knowledge and skills (Janssen & Prins, 2007; Tuckey, 2002). In particular, similar to the development focus of mastery goals (Butler, 2007; Dickhäuser et al., 2007), it is likely that the self-improvement dimension of mastery climates drive teachers to take a positive attitude towards help seeking as a strategy for improving learning. Another possible explanation is that when the focus in debriefing sessions is on minimizing the previous mistakes and weak points (induced by the self-based criterion dimension), teachers get motivated to seek information that helps them overcome their deficiencies.

The negative relationship between mastery climate and emotional exhaustion further points to the role of supervisors in creating social environments that can protect teachers from feeling emotionally drained. This finding is in line with research on achievement goals (Retelsdorf, 2010), which suggests that when teachers are encouraged to pursue their professional development and their efforts are appreciated, they are less likely to feel frustrated and worried. This finding can also be attributed to the self-based criteria for evaluation in mastery climates. Partial support for this finding comes from research on teacher motivation (Fernet, 2012), which has reported a negative relationship between autonomous motivation and burnout. Therefore, it is likely that the self-based criteria for evaluation foster teachers' self-determined motivation which postpones their feelings of emotional exhaustion. However, as stated earlier, this relationship was not significant, which implies the need for further research. Given that achievement goals are "concrete cognitive representations that serve a directional function in motivation by guiding the individual toward or away from specific possible outcomes" (Thrash & Elliot, 2001, p. 143), it is possible that goal structures

created by significant others are not as strong as teachers' achievement goals in protecting them from negative feelings.

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Collie et al., 2018; Ebersold, 2019), an inverse relationship was found between emotional exhaustion and autonomy supportive climate, showing that a climate of autonomy support which can be created through shared decision making secures teachers against feelings of emotional exhaustion. In line with previous research (e.g., Cavanaugh, 2019), this finding suggests that teachers who have the impression that their supervisor reflects their perspectives and interests in institute policies and grants them autonomy are less likely to feel emotionally drained because the satisfaction of their needs for autonomy increases their motivation.

Likewise, the present study shows that this negative feeling is less prevalent among teachers who perceive their supervisors as offering support and helping them feel valued, respected, and understood. Given that relatedness is an essential need for human beings (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and that a key dimension of teachers' motivational climate relates to the quality of their relationships with supervisors (Cano-Garcia et al., 2005), the more supervisor-teacher relationships are characterized by mutual trust, respect, supportive relations, and connectedness, the less teachers feel emotionally exhausted. Support for this inverse relationship comes from previous research in mainstream education, which has documented that close-knit communities, marked by supportive interpersonal relationships, negatively correlate with teachers' feelings of burnout. In line with previous research (e.g., Cavanaugh, 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), this study therefore highlights the importance of creating positive motivational climates marked by supportive relations between teachers and supervisors.

Another striking finding of this study relates to disempowering climate which revealed maladaptive patterns. In keeping with previous research on achievement goals (e.g., Janssen & Prins, 2007; VandeWalle, 2003), this study shows that performance goals emphasized in work climates negatively correlate with self-improvement information. This finding suggests that perceptions of a climate where teachers are rebuked for their mistakes or lack of knowledge prompt them to hide their inefficacies. This cognition therefore associates self-improvement information with self-presentation costs as it draws supervisors' attention to teachers' inefficacies. Guided by this cognition, teachers are oriented to disregard the instrumental value of diagnostic information for their improvement and avoid creating an unfavorable image (through not asking for self-improvement information which is assumed to be a symbol of lack of knowledge) as a strategy to escape supervisors' reprimands. This negative attitude towards diagnostic information is further strengthened by the desire to hide one's inferiority to colleagues (caused by the competition and normative comparison dimensions). This study shows how performance climates disadvantage teachers by raising ego concerns among them and belittling the expectancy value of self-improvement information for teachers' professional development.

The positive association between performance climate and self-validation information further shows that perceptions of a performance climate induce ego value among teachers. More specifically, when supervisors create the impression that they favor teachers who outperform their colleagues, teachers get motivated to attract supervisors' attention to their abilities by asking for self-validation information. Such a desire to create a positive self-image can also be attributed to the context of study (language institutes) where supervisors have the authority to recruit and promote teachers (Agheshteh & Mehrpour, 2021) and teachers do not often have security of tenure (Bahrami & Moradkhani, 2019). Being aware of this supervisory power and out of their concern for job security and promotion, teachers are likely to be enticed into the ego value of self-validation information as a strategy for securing their position. This finding therefore implies that teachers' cognitions about the costs and values of different types of feedback information and accordingly their decisions regarding engagement in feedback seeking behavior are shaped by various contextual and personal factors. More specifically, the needs of teachers for job security should not be ignored in attempts to create motivational climates that aim to guide teachers towards professional development.

The positive association between performance climate and emotional exhaustion is in line with previous research (e.g., Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017), showing that teachers are more likely to perceive teaching as a strain in performance climates. One possible explanation for this relationship is that teachers' attempts to outperform their colleagues require longer hours of preparation for classes. Such an increased workload (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010) along with the anxiety that results from comparison exposes teachers to the risk of burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Moreover, given that teachers are not supportive of each other in a performance climate and might even undermine each other (e.g. by harming each other's reputation in front of students or management) in order to show that they are better than their colleagues, teaching may harden them emotionally and make it difficult for them to work with their colleagues.

Finally, similar to previous findings (e.g., Bartholomew et al., 2014), a disempowering climate marked by perceived lack of autonomy is also positively linked with emotional exhaustion. This finding suggests that teachers' perceptions of supervisory beliefs and practices that control their autonomy pose serious burnout problems for teachers. In other words, supervisors' pressures on teachers to conform to certain teaching methods which is a major source of job-related stress (Taylor & Ntoumanis, 2007) cause teachers to feel emotionally drained. These negative climates that discourage innovation (Eyal & Kark, 2004) and impose rules are detrimental to teachers' well-being as reflected in the quantity and quality of their feelings of emotional exhaustion.

In addition to the core findings, the regression analysis revealed that gender significantly predicted teachers' perceptions of both mastery and performance climates, while age and teaching experience did not show significant effects. This suggests that gendered expectations and social roles may influence how teachers interpret supervisory practices. For instance, female teachers may be more attuned to relational and collaborative cues, leading to stronger perceptions of mastery-oriented climates, whereas male teachers might be more sensitive to competitive or evaluative signals, contributing to perceptions of performance-oriented climates. This interpretation aligns with social role theory, which posits that gendered expectations influence individuals'

preferences for cooperation versus competition in professional settings (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Therefore, gendered orientations may shape how teachers perceive and respond to motivational messages embedded in their work climate. These findings highlight the importance of considering gendered perspectives in supervisor training and climate design, especially in diverse educational settings. The lack of significant effects for age and teaching experience may indicate that perceptions of motivational climate are shaped more by interpersonal and institutional dynamics than by career stage.

6. Conclusion and implications

This study bridges the gap between SDT and achievement goal theory by demonstrating how different motivational climates can act as mediators between supervisory practices and teacher outcomes. Specifically, this study focused on identifying teachers' perceptions of supervisory beliefs and practices that shape their motivational climate and investigating how these perceptions predict teachers' feedback seeking behavior and feelings of emotional exhaustion.

On the whole, the findings show that teachers' decisions as to which type of information feedback to seek are partially based on their judgements about the costs and values associated with each type of information feedback (e.g., VandeWalle, 2003; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997). The motivational system that teachers are socialized into are also influential in their feelings of emotional exhaustion. These insights have profound implications for educational leadership and policy. Training programs for supervisors should emphasize the creation of mastery-oriented climates that support teacher autonomy and encourage constructive feedback, which could mitigate the high rates of teacher burnout, especially in demanding EFL contexts.

The use of self-report measures in this study implies that findings should be interpreted with caution, as such instruments are susceptible to biases including social desirability, self-perception inaccuracies, and common method variance, which may affect the validity of the reported associations (Podsakoff, 2003). Future research using alternative measures of teachers' PMC or intervention studies can provide a more valid picture of supervisory beliefs and practices that have motivational implications. In this study, only supervisors were treated as significant others affecting teachers' PMC while there are also many other individuals such as teachers' colleagues that contribute to their perceptions of their psychological environment. Moreover, teachers' relationships with their students can also affect their PMC, which needs to be investigated. In addition, the factorial structure of the scale can also be further verified by investigating its comparability with other scales.

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8. Appendix

In the institute where I teach,

Mastery climate

1. The supervisor encourages teachers to cooperate with each other.
2. The supervisor encourages teachers to improve their teaching skills.
3. The supervisor encourages teachers to improve their content knowledge.
4. In debriefing sessions, the supervisor makes sure that teachers are overcoming their previous weaknesses.
5. The supervisor evaluates each teacher's performance based on comparisons with his/her previous performance.
6. The supervisor assigns more classes to teachers in acknowledgement of their efforts

Autonomy supportive climate

7. The supervisor gives reasons to teachers for the teaching methods they must use in their classes.
8. The supervisor allows teachers to choose from a variety of teaching strategies.
9. In debriefing sessions, the supervisor seeks teachers' rationale for their instructional practices.
10. The supervisor involves teachers in decision-making about teaching materials.
11. The supervisor offers precise answers to teachers' questions

Caring Climate

12. The supervisor values teachers as human beings rather than as mere teachers.
13. No matter what happens, the supervisor always establishes a supportive atmosphere for teachers.
14. The supervisor cares about the feelings and emotions of teachers.
15. The supervisor treats teachers with respect.
16. Teachers can rely on the supervisor to express their concerns.

Performance Climate

17. It is important to show the supervisor that you teach better than other teachers.
18. The supervisor evaluates teachers' performance based on comparisons with the performance of other teachers.
19. The supervisor scolds teachers for their mistakes.
20. The supervisor favors some teachers more than others
21. Only the best teachers get noticed by the supervisor.

Autonomy controlling climate

22. Teachers are under pressure to follow the teaching methods specified by the supervisor.

23. In debriefing sessions, the supervisor imposes his/her ideas on teachers.
24. The supervisor is less friendly with teachers who do not see things his/her way.
25. The supervisor assigns less classes to teachers who do not teach according to the prescribed syllabus.
26. The supervisor discourages teachers from trying new teaching methods.