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Motivational Beliefs, Self-Regulation and EFL Listening Achievement: A Path Analysis

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Abstract

Informed by the expectancy-value and social cognitive theories of learning, the present study proposed a path model to investigate the impact of motivational beliefs as defined by listening self-efficacy, three types of goal orientations, and task value on self-regulation of Iranian EFL learners, in addition to the unique contribution of each to the variability in the listening comprehension score. Results of path analysis revealed significant positive effect of listening self-efficacy and self-regulation on students' listening comprehension and task value on self-regulation. Unlike performance approach goals, mastery and performance avoidance goals demonstrated a significant impact on participants' self-regulation but no significant direct effect of any goals on listening achievement was detected.

Keywords: goal orientations, listening comprehension, listening self-efficacy, self-regulation, task value

The ultimate aim of learning and teaching English revolves around effective and meaningful communication which to a large extent, depends on the listening ability of individuals. Conversely, the interest towards listening, within both research and language pedagogy, has shown significant strides only recently. The role assigned to listening skills has thus changed from a passive activity to an active process through which the acquisition of language is materialized (Vandergrift, 2004). The gap in

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the academic scholarship on EFL listening, specifically among Iranian learners, remains a lacuna in studies on language acquisition.

Effective listening depends on a multitude of factors. It is determined not only by the strategies and type of instructions used, but also by the learners' beliefs and motivations. Identifying the best predictors of EFL listening achievement is a great move towards a better understanding of this particular language skill. Having been guided by social-cognitive and expectancy-value theories of learning, this study is an attempt to explore the relationship between motivational beliefs as defined by the self-efficacy, task value and goal orientation as well as self-regulation of Iranian EFL learners, in addition to the unique contribution by individual listening performances represented by their respective scores in the listening comprehension test through a path model.

Self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learning (SRL) refers to the active participation of individuals in their own learning process. Three major constructs have been identified to be conjoined in SRL: metacognition, cognition, and resource management (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). A self-regulated individual makes use of different metacognitive strategies for planning and monitoring; cognitive strategies used to learn, remember, and understand the material and time and effort management and control on classroom academic material.

Self-regulated learning was intellectualized in academic scholarship on educational psychology, but its origins can be traced back to Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory. The social cognitive model of self-regulation no longer treats individual differences in cognition and motivation independently. It does not regard internal elements and external stimuli as primary contributors to human functioning. On the other hand, it suggests a model of triadic reciprocality, in which behavior, cognition and other personal factors all interact with each other as well as with the environment to affect the course of action taken by the learner (Bandura, 1986). Hence, from a social cognitive learning theory perspective, which forms the theoretical foundation of this study, self-regulation is defined as the degree to which students are "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process"

(Zimmerman, 1989, p. 1). Through this trajectory, self-regulation thus acquires the ensemble of learners' control not only over their cognition, but also over their behavior, and motivation (Zimmerman, 1989). Therefore, to help students in their self-regulated learning, the interrelationships among strategies to control personal beliefs, behavior, and environment must be examined.

Motivational beliefs. Despite an early emphasis on cognitive and metacognitive aspects of learning in1970s and 1980s, self-regulation studies have been broadened to integrate motivation (Bandura, 1991; Pintrich& De Groot, 1990). Accordingly, different models have been proposed to highlight the interaction between different variables and the impact of motivation. The most prominent model which has integrated motivation in itself and treated it as a component of self-regulation is the model advanced by Pintrich and De Groot (1990). Pintrich and her colleagues, according to Schunk (2005), were among the first researchers adding a motivational flavor to self-regulation and no longer treating it as a purely cognitive process. Their conceptual framework serves as the theoretical foundation of the present study.

Through their conceptualization of student motivation guided by a general expectancy-value model, Pintrich and De Groot (1990) identify three motivational components: (a) an *expectancy component*, which concerns the students' beliefs and expectations with regards to success in task performance, (b) a *value component,* which refers to students' personal views about the importance of a given task, and (c) an *affective component,* which constitutes the ways students react emotionally to the aforementioned task. It has been suggested by Pintrich and De Groot (1990) that, in order to arrive at a reliable result about student cognition, the contribution of cognitive and metacognitive strategies along with motivational strategies must be considered.

An area which has increasingly attracted the interest of the motivation theorists is to understand how motivation and cognition work together. The significance of motivation in enhancing student engagement in strategic behavior, involvement in academic task and investment of more effort and time has been noted by many researchers (Pintrich, 1988, 1989; Schunk,

1994; Zimmerman, 1989). Consequently, recent research has tried to identify the personal characteristics that could function as constructive predictors of self-regulation among students. Of different factors identified, the gist of this study rests heavily on three forms of motivational beliefs, namely self-efficacy beliefs, task value beliefs, and goal orientation.

Self-efficacy is an expectancy-related variable which is defined as personal judgments of one's capabilities in choosing the necessary move that leads to the achievement of goals (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1993) contends that different motivational theories revolve around "three different forms of cognitive motivators" (p. 128), namely causal attributions (attribution theory), outcome expectancies (expectancy-value theory), and academic goals (achievement goal theory). He further claims that beliefs of self-efficacy are present in all of these three motivational forms. In essence, he is of the view that "casual attributions affect motivation, performance, and affective reactive reactions mainly through beliefs of self-efficacy" (p. 128). Zimmermann (2000a) subsequently identifies self-efficacy as a vital motive in learning that provides learners "with a sense of agency" (p.87) that stimulates their use of different self-regulatory strategies, such as goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. A growing body of research has brought to light the significant link between self-efficacy beliefs and academic achievement in different fields as well as language skills in different contexts including that of Iran (Ghanizadeh & Mirzaee 2012; Ghonsooly & Elahi 2010; Gorban Doordinejad & Afshar, 2014; Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2009; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996, 2002; Rahimpour & Nariman-Jahan, 2010). Self-efficacy has also shown significant influence on learners' use of different self-regulatory strategies (Bouffard, Bouchard, Goulet, Denoncourt & Couture, 1991; Pintrish & Schunk, 2002; Schunk 1994; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992).

The nature of the symbiosis between self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulatory processes is at best interdependent, although goals do play a part as well. The role of goals has been focalized in the academic contexts based on different theoretical perspectives (Pintrich, 2000). Achievement

goals investigated in this study are most often labeled as academic goal orientations commonly associated with "the purpose or reasons an individual is pursuing an achievement task, most often operationalized in terms of academic learning tasks" (Pintrich, 2000, p. 94).

Goal orientation was first discussed from a dichotomous perspective. Mastery and performance goals are the most common labels generally adopted in research on self-regulated learning. In later revisions, further details were added to this perspective by highlighting the schism between an approach and an avoidance dimension (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). A 2 x 2 conceptualization involving mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals was proposed by Elliott and Thrash (2002). A trichotomous classification of goals, namely that of mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance and performance approach has been adopted in this study ignoring the approach avoidance goal orientation, of which a link with maladaptive behavior has been detected.

Research concerning the relationship between goal orientation and good learner characteristics has not been so conclusive. In most cases, mastery goal orientation has positively influenced different aspects of learning, notably in the forms of higher levels of self-efficacy and self-regulation (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Pintrich, 1999), and lower levels of anxiety (Rezaei, Keivanpanah, & Najibi, 2015). Conversely, results of performance goal orientation indicted unfavorable evidence on the influence of performance goals on learning (Ames, 1992; Pintrich, 1999), use of motivational regulatory strategies (Wolters, 1999) as well as lower levels of self-efficacy (Middleton & Midgley, 1997). On the other hand, evidence of the positive influence meted by performance goals on motivation, effective strategy use, positive effect and performance has been reported by another line of research (e.g., Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Lack of a significant relationship between similar variables has also been reported in other past academic scholarship (e.g., Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996).

Task value is the other motivation-related variable which is believed to elucidate an individual's perception of the incentives for task

engagement (Bong, 2001). Wigfield and Cambria (2010) maintain that the significance of task value also extends to beliefs about the relative worth of particular activities to students. This study explores students' task value in EFL listening using the expectancy-value theory by Eccles and Wigfield (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). The expectancy-value model of achievement-related choices tested by Eccles and his colleagues (e.g., Eccles et al., 1984; Meece et al., 1990) was based on the assumption that task characteristics, either positive or negative, affect one's choices. Consequently, the relative value and probability of the success of various options play an integral role in the choices that one makes. According to Wigfield and Eccles (1992), personal views on the significance, magnitude and the very worth of the learning task are the components of task value. Eccles and Wigfield (1995) have thus identified cost, attainment value, intrinsic value and utility value as the major elements of task value. It has been reported in past academic scholarship that students' task value is positively influenced by such motivational entities as self-efficacy, self-regulation and cognitive strategy use, although there are others, notably anxiety, that pose a negative impact (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990).

EFL listening achievement. Despite the integral role of listening comprehension in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language, the teaching of listening as a skill in language acquisition has been somewhat overlooked in the classroom (Field, 2008). As such, listening comprehension is also regarded as a hurdle that causes EFL learners much anxiety (Graham, 2006). This is a source of aggravation for many EFL learners, and their respective performances in the classroom suffer considerable deterioration as a result. It has been identified that a substantial lack of time dedicated to the mastery of effective listening in the classrooms plays an integral role in this predicament (Mendelsohn, 2006; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

Due to the common misconception about listening being a passive skill, the mastery of listening skills has been insufficiently emphasized on in language teaching. Mendelsohn (2006, p. 75) posits that the bulk of what was commonly known as "teaching listening" is actually a different

process that veered more towards testing listening. However, unlike their predecessors, scholars in the 1970s gradually discovered that listening comprehension is a crucial component of language learning and have thus made efforts to give it greater emphasis. Subsequent attention was then paid to the factors that contribute to its significance. Having reviewed over 120 studies, Rubin (1994) has listed down five key aspects that feature prominently in listening comprehension. They are text characteristics, interlocutor characteristics, task characteristics, listener characteristics and process characteristics.

Despite this change in attitude towards listening comprehension in language teaching, scant focalization is devoted to some of the crucial aspects of the listening process, notably the self-regulatory ability and motivational beliefs of the listener, in academic scholarship on listening in second and foreign language acquisition. Encouraged by such a gap, this study is a response to the call for a more integrated investigation of different motivational beliefs, self-regulation, and performance of learners and to provide an inclusive picture of the learning process.

Path Model of the Study

In this study, an a priori model (figure 1, p. 104) is developed according to findings from previous research. The theoretical framework examines a model of EFL listening that involves motivational beliefs (self-efficacy, task value, and goal orientations), self-regulatory strategy use and students' performances in EFL listening using path analysis. The endogenous variable for the proposed study was the students' listening performance, which was measured by using participants' FCE listening scores. The other variables are all exogenous variables. Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized path model.

The model can be expressed theoretically as follows: motivational beliefs predict self-regulatory strategy use, which in turn predicts performance. It has been hypothesized that self-efficacy, task value, and goal orientation contribute to an increase in self-regulatory strategy use, which in turn yields positive influence on the students' performances in listening. Self-efficacy and goal orientations also influence listening

performance, both directly and indirectly via the use of self-regulatory strategies. Positive influence on self-regulatory strategy use has been detected from goal orientation too, which would then lead to an increase in listening performance and self-regulatory strategy use. It is noteworthy that goal orientation is based on a trichotomous framework which includes mastery, performance approach and performance avoidance.

Method

Participants

The selection of participants for this study was conducted through convenient sampling in a group of EFL learners attending high intermediate courses in the Iran's language Institute of Mazandaran. The early sample included 289 high intermediate EFL learners who took part in the first part of the data collection process during the winter term of 2015. Out of this number, only 251 questionnaires were selected for further consideration in the final estimation due to missing information on the questionnaire. Males represented 52% of the participants in the final sample. The participants were aged between 14 to 36 years with an average of 18.48. In addition, the average years of learning English formally was 5.47.

Instruments

Data for this study were obtained through the following scales:

Cambridge ESOL's First Certificate in English (FCE). FCE constitutes five papers, each bearing a weightage of 20%, namely Reading, Writing, Use of English, Listening and Speaking. The Listening paper was used to test the participants' listening comprehension at an estimated length of 45 minutes. It is broken down into four parts, with a total of 40 questions.

Motivated strategies for learning questionnaire (MSLQ*).* Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ: Pintrich & De Groot, 1990) consists of 81 self-report items designed to evaluate students' motivational beliefs and their learning strategies. As reported by Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, and McKeachie (1993), the reliability coefficients for the

learning strategies scales and the motivation scale were .62 and .68 respectively. As an address to recent advances in self-regulated learning, MSLQ prioritizes on the links that bridge together motivation and cognition (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994). Students' use of different self-regulatory strategies was measured by the following subscales of MSLQ.

The metacognitive strategy subscale contains a total of 12 items measuring students' control over their cognition. The cognitive strategy subscale of MSLQ with 19 items was used as a yardstick for measuring four types of strategies for processing information: rehearsal, elaboration, organization, and critical thinking. Time and study environment as well as effort regulation and help-seeking subscales were used to operationalize resource management. The effort regulation is measured through four items and eight items are used to measure time and study environment management.

Listening self-efficacy questionnaire. The Listening Self-efficacy Questionnaire (LSQ: Kassam, 2015) was used to measure participants' self-efficacy in listening. It consisted of 40 likert-type items measuring five dimensions: (1) progress: a comparison of the listeners' perceptions about their present and past performances (2) observational comparison: a comparison of the listeners' perceptions about their respective performances and those of their classmates (3) physiological states: internal feelings experienced by the listener while listening, (4) strategic awareness: knowledge of the way to overcome difficulties faced during the listening task and (5) challenge: how willing the listener is in embraking on challenging listening tasks. The alpha estimate for the internal consistency of the Listening Self-efficacy Questionnaire was reported to be.92.

Achievement goal orientation. Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS: Midgley et al., 2000) was used to measure participants' mastery goal orientations. With a trichotomous perspective towards goal orientation, PALS comprised 14 items, with five items for mastery (α = .85) and performance-approach (α = .89) goal orientations and four items (α = .74) measure performance-avoidance goals orientation. The items on

mastery goal orientation were made more domain-specific by rephrasing items to apply to specific goals in EFL courses.

Task value. The task value sub-scale is a component extracted from the MSLQ. It contains a total of six items.

Procedures

Data for this study were gathered through two successive sessions to prevent students' fatigue and boredom and its subsequent effect on the results. The students were guaranteed that their responses would be kept confidential and that their participation was voluntary by nature and were informed about the voluntariness of their participation. Once they had filled the consent form, the 45 minute-long FCE listening test (which was previously piloted on 30 students from the same population) was administered to them and the papers were collected. Questionnaires were then distributed among the participants on the following session. Out of 289 questionnaires, 251 questionnaires were finally selected for further consideration.

Results

The following section provides the results of the study. First, the descriptive statistics, results related to the normality assumptions and the reliability of the measures are presented, followed by the results of the path analysis of the model of the study. Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics for the variables of the study. The means, mode, median, and standard deviations for the variables assessed are reported. On the whole, students reported more orientation towards mastery goal orientation (M=21.90) than performance approach (M= 15.82) and performance avoidance orientations (M= 14.52). Listening was highly valued among the participants (M=34.45) and they depicted a moderate level of self-efficacy (M=149). Finally, as far as their achievement was concerned, the average grade for the listening test in this sample was 20.28.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Variables of the Study

Variable	Number	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Listening	251	20.28	20.00	20.00	3.58	11.00	**28.00**
Mastery	251	21.90	23.00	25.00	3.05	10.00	**25.00**
Approach	251	15.82	17.00	19.00	5.79	5.00	**25.00**
Avoidance	251	14.52	15.00	14.00	3.90	4.00	**20.00**
Self-efficacy	251	137.33	140.00	149.00	21.85	66.00	**185.00**
Task value	251	34.49	35.00	42.00	5.55	17.00	**42.00**
Self-regulation	251	197.97	211.00	228.00	32.75	106.00	**278.00**

One of the main assumptions of path analysis is the reliability of the data. Based on the results displayed in Table 2 and Table 3, it can be claimed that the present data enjoyed acceptable reliability indices. The KR-21 reliability index for the listening comprehension test was .72 (Table 2).

Table 2

KR-21 Reliability Index of Listening Comprehension Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Listening	250	20.26	3.572	12.757
KR-21	.72			

As displayed in Table 3, the Cronbach's alpha reliability indices for self-efficacy, self-regulation, task value and goal orientation tallied at .93, .91, .79 and .86, respectively. Moving on, the reliability indices for the three dimension of goal orientation, i.e. mastery approach, performance approach and performance avoidance tallied at .82, .91 and .81, respectively.

Table 3

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Self-Efficacy	.935	40
Self-Regulation	.916	44
Task Value	.796	6

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Goal Orientation	.866	14
Mastery Approach	.824	5
Performance Approach	.917	5
Performance Avoidance	.812	4

Another main assumption in path analysis is normality both univariate and multivariate. As displayed in Table 4, the values of skewness and kurtosis are all below the absolute value of 2 (Bae & Bachman, 2010) indicating that the present data enjoyed univariate normality. As noted by Byrne (2010), the assumption of multivariate normality was also met (Mardi = 2.605 < |5|).

Table 4

Testing Normality Assumption

Variable	**Skewness**	**kurtosis**
Goal Orientation	-.217	-.648
Self-Efficacy	-.462	.178
Task Value	-.628	-.037
Self-Regulation	-.567	.161
Listening Comprehension	-.390	-.109
Multivariate Normality (Mardia)		1.133

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was also run to check whether the data are normally distributed. As displayed in Table 5, the data enjoys a normal distribution.

Table 5

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Listen-ing	Mastery	Approach	Avoid-ance	Self efficacy	Task value
N		251	251	251	251	251	251
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	20.2897	21.9048	15.8294	14.5238	137.3333	34.4960
	S. D	3.58275	3.05182	5.79313	3.90263	21.85811	5.55774
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.103	.159	.109	.112	.071	.089
	Positive	.056	.155	.070	.080	.036	.088
	Negative	-.103	-.159	-.109	-.112	-.071	-.089
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.230	1.328	1.226	1.273	1.127	1.309
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.079	.061	.080	.071	.157	.068

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

The aim of this study was to determine significant relationships between motivational beliefs as defined by self-efficacy, task value and goal orientation and the self-regulated strategy use and listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners.

In path analysis, a path model is proposed based on a review of theories and studies at the researcher's disposal (Şimşek, 2007 cited in Keskin, 2014, p.801). The model indicates the relationship between all variables of the study. Path analyses asses the direct and indirect contribution of each variable (as a predictor) to the variability in the listening comprehension scores of the participants. The full path model with standardized regression weights among variables is presented in Figure 1.

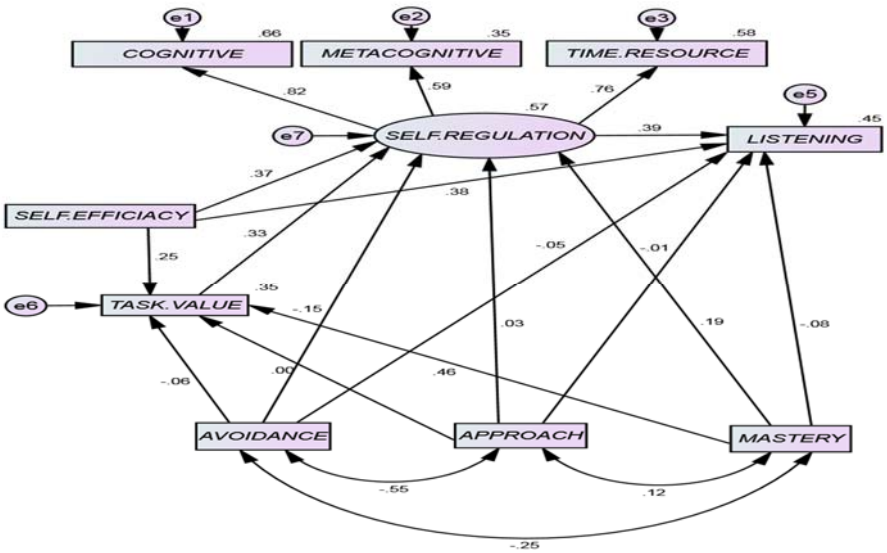

Figure 1. Path model illustrating standardized regression weights among self-efficacy, kinds of goal orientation, task value, self-regulation and listening comprehension

The model proved to be highly compatible with the data. Model fit indices are represented in Table 5.

Table 5
Model Fit Indices

Model	χ2	Df	P	χ2/df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	RFI	IFI	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA (95% CI)
Default model	11.566	13	13	.890	.990	.964	.984	.957	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.000 (0.000 ; 0.057)

Results indicated that self-efficacy (R^2 = .062, p < .0005) and self-regulation (R^2 = .093, p < .0005) had a significant direct effect on listening performance. Self-efficacy had a significant direct effect on task value (R^2 = .064, p < .0005) and self-regulation (R^2 = .255, p < .0005). Task value had a significant direct effect on self-regulation (R^2 = .9, p < .0005). Mastery goal orientation had a significant direct effect on task value (R^2 = .842, p < .0005) and on self-regulation of high intermediate EFL learners

(R^2 = .952, p < .0005). Performance avoidance goal orientation had a significant negative direct effect on self-regulation (R^2 = -.149, p < .0005). Components of self-regulation, cognitive, metacognitive and time resource management strategies had a significant contribution to self-regulation (R^2 = 1, p < .0005; R^2 = .364, p < .0005; R^2=.479, P < .0005 respectively).

Contrary to the expectations of this study, mastery goal orientation has a direct but insignificant effect on the listening achievement of high intermediate EFL learners (R^2 = .094, p = .175). Performance approach goal orientation had a non-significant direct effect on the listening achievement (R^2 = .004, p = .913), task value (R^2 = .004, p = .943) and self-regulation of high intermediate EFL learners (R^2 = .084, p = .609). Performance avoidance goal orientation had a non-significant direct effect on the listening (R^2 = .043, p = .453) and task value (R^2 = -.087, p = .334).

Of the five direct paths to listening performance specified in the model, two were statistically significant. The statistically significant paths were from self-efficacy and self-regulation. The negative direct relationship from performance-avoidance and the positive relationships from mastery and performance goals were not statistically significant. Of the five direct paths to self-regulation specified in the model, four were statistically significant. The statistically significant paths were from self-efficacy, mastery goal, and task value. The negative direct relationship from performance-avoidance was detected. The positive relationship from performance approach goal was not statistically significant. Of the four direct paths to task value specified in the model, two were statistically significant. The statistically significant paths were from self-efficacy and mastery goal. The negative direct relationship from performance-avoidance and the positive relationships from performance goals were not statistically significant. Of all the motivation related variables of the study, listening self-efficacy indicated the most significant contribution to listening performance of the learners and was the strongest predictor of their listening achievement in the proposed path model.

Discussion

Among the objectives of this study was to investigate the significant contribution of different motivational beliefs to self-regulated learning and listening achievement of high intermediate Iranian EFL learners. This study's main point of significance lies in the theoretical-conceptual path model's empirical testing that integrates variables from different components of self-regulated learning to predict EFL listening achievement. Path analysis revealed the direct and indirect effect of motivational beliefs on self-regulation of Iranian EFL learner and its subsequent effect on listening performance of the students.

The results support a social cognitive view of self-regulation which highlights the need for motivational support for self-regulated learning and higher achievement. In other words, adaptive and positive motivational beliefs such as self-efficacy beliefs, mastery oriented goals, and higher value assigned to a task provide motivational support for learners' self-regulatory strategy use which in turn impacts their higher achievement. Such a motivational base tends to impact students' effective cognitive engagement.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of past academic scholarship that forge links to bridge different motivation beliefs with cognitive engagement, strategy use and academic achievement (e.g. Al-Harthy, 2013; Al-Harthy, Was & Isaacson, 2010; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Of all the motivation-related variables of the study, listening self-efficacy indicated the most significant relation with listening performance of the learners and was also the strongest predictor of their listening achievement in the proposed path model. Therefore, learners' listening achievement can be predicted based on varying patterns of self-efficacy per individual. In other words, students who possess a higher level of self-efficacy tend to outlast those with lower degrees of self-efficacy. The magnitude of the impact is most noteworthy when one considers the variety of predictors which contributes to the academic achievement of individuals. The result is in congruence with the assumptions of expectancy-value theory in which it has been postulated that self-efficacy

can palpably and directly influence students' academic prowess. The interpretation is that self-efficacy affects how much effort learners invest in their listening tasks, their level of persistence, their choice of the type of strategies pursued and the level of anxiety they feel (Bandura, 1993). In fact, past academic scholarship has consistently indicated that self-efficacy plays an integral role in learning outcomes, whereby it has been posited that enhanced self-efficacy results in better fulfillment of goals as well as higher levels of willpower in addressing challenges and in showing initiative (Bandura, 1993; Graham, 2011; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006; Schunk, 1981, 1989;). That being said, the findings of this study are in tandem with past academic scholarship that posit the view in which language learners with higher self-efficacy tend to utilize different learning strategies and thus wield better control over the learning task (Graham & Macaro, 2008).

Task value was the other motivational belief which has shown its significant contribution to cognitive engagement, strategy use and listening performance. The more importance is attached to a task in the learning process, the more students are engaged in cognitive, metacognitive and resource management strategies. Learners who view themselves as capable of doing or learning something consequently come to the question of the value of the task to their mastering of the materials. If they find value in the task, they try to put more effort in the task and overcome the obstacles in their way to positive outcomes. Our model has indicated that the adoption of mastery goal and higher levels of self-efficacy direct students to assign more value to the task given by the teacher, which in turn facilitates their self-regulatory strategy use and improves their performances.

Achievement goal orientation, another predictor in our model, has been hypothesized to contribute to cognitive engagement and listening performance. Past academic scholarship has elaborated extensively on the symbiotic link that bridges mastery goal orientation with academic achievement, effective strategy use, and higher perceptions in efficacy (Al-Harthy et al., 2010; Ames & Archer, 1988; Anderman & Young, 1994;

Meece et al., 1988; Middlleton, Kaplan, Midgley, 1998; Middleton & Midgley, 1997). This study's findings have also validated the existence of another symbiotic link, this time between self-efficacy and mastery goal orientation. This has been shown to wield good influence on students' achievement and cognitive engagement and strategy use. When the goal is to learn, students attribute failures to lack of effort and show more courage in the face of failure and persist more to attain favorable results.

There has been controversy among scholars regarding the positive contribution of performance goals to positive learning behavior. Some studies have revealed their positive significance in the learning process and some others have proved otherwise (Liem et al., 2008; Wolters et al., 1996). No notable link has been detected in this study between performance approach and task value, effective strategy use and academic achievement in listening. Conversely, this study has revealed that performance avoidant goals tend to wield an unfavorable influence on self-regulation. Surprisingly, none of the goal orientations have demonstrated a direct impact on listening achievement. Mastery has shown an indirect positive effect via their impact on task value and self-regulation. The results also confirm the fact that different kinds of goal orientation lead to different results. These contrasting results have been attributed to the problem with self-report measure of performance approach (Brophy, 2005) and a discrepancy between the goal and its manifestation and criteria in the minds of the learners. Another explanation is the fact that learners enroll in English institutes with a goal of mastering the language in the first place. They are not after developing normative competence but language-based competence. These learners concentrate more on how they perform in different areas of language which they lack competence rather than comparing their language competence with that of their classmates.

The findings of the study have also demonstrated the significant impact of learners' self-regulation (cognitive, metacognitive and resource management strategy use) on their listening comprehension. In this context, high self-regulation offers learners a better opportunity to excel in tests on listening comprehension. Such a finding goes in tandem with

previous studies that have either pinpointed to the significance of different self-regulatory strategy use and academic achievement or detected good influence wielded by self-regulatory strategy intervention to increase academic achievement, listening being one of them (Goh, 2000). Zimmerman (2002) provides a possible cause of such differences. He refers to the compatibility of learners with a high level of self-regulation to different situations and their ability to approach the task more purposefully and find appropriate solutions.

Conclusions

On the whole, this study has identified several effective paths for developing self-regulated learning and higher levels of listening achievement and highlighted the importance of a consideration of motivational beliefs and a strategic approach towards learning in lesson planning and material development by EFL teachers, administrators and educators.

In general, several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study. In this context, this study has revealed that motivational beliefs – self-efficacy, task value and achievement goal (mastery approach goal) – have a significant direct or indirect contribution to self-regulatory strategy use and higher levels of EFL listening achievement of the participants. In other words, it has been confirmed that promotion in self-efficacy perceptions of EFL learners in their listening is linked to the enhancement in their self-regulation. Likewise, the more mastery oriented students also demonstrated a more self-regulatory and strategic approach to learning. Self-efficacy together with goal orientation impact the value attached to the task at hand which then enhances self-regulation and all these alternatively work together and form the basis for higher achievement in listening.

The results are consistent with the theoretical predictions represented in the model based on social cognitive models of learning and expectancy-value theory of motivation which emphasizes the working together of

motivation, cognition and the environment to form the learning behavior of individuals.

The results draw our attention to the importance of the way listening is taught. Limiting listening instruction to a comprehension approach which involves testing the learners' comprehension of a text or dialogue is "unlikely to develop self-efficacy for listening through its over-emphasis on 'testing' and lack of insight fostered among learners into how to bring about improvement" (Graham, 2011; p.114). Introducing less confident learners to a strategic approach to a task would provide them with the tools to overcome their difficulties and to ensure them that their low achievement was not due to a lack of ability but to passivity in their listening task and their lack of effort. Providing such an environment in which learners have the opportunity to exert control over their own learning process can enhance self-regulation and achievement (Zimmerman, 2000b). On the contrary, when they lose their sense of control over the task, they feel less confident and self-efficacious. And repeated exposure to such failures can have devastating effects on the learners' perceptions of their capabilities and capacities in that special task and as its side effect it leads them to devalue tasks of the similar structure, not to mention its overall effect on the learning process in general.

Listening is considered as one of the most anxiety breeding and frustrating tasks in language classes and if the cognitive aspects of the listening process are not introduced to the learners through practical instruction, they would feel overwhelmed by the listening task and conceive that they cannot manage the task and repeated failure would lead to lesser degrees of motivation.

It can be concluded that developing and designing effective educational materials requires a meticulous attention to students' views and perceptions and attempts must be made to make best use of different instructional materials and tools to lead them to more positive feelings. In addition, teachers must become aware of the benefits of goal setting and assist the learners to adopt mastery goals which directly results in more value of the task for the learners and a raise in their confidence and

cognitive and metacognitive abilities and indirectly it would lead to successful learning. Tasks incorporated in a course must also be meaningful for the learners and the onus of explaining the significance of the task to the learners and convincing them of its importance to their future success and their mastery of the materials falls to the teacher. An investigation of the tasks and topics which are more appealing and challenging and incorporating them in curriculum leads to favorable results. Last but not least, different approaches which have been developed to enhance strategic behavior of the students must be embedded in the materials and lesson plans. The way information and materials are presented are key factors in encouraging participation and engagement in the learning process which not only leads to better achievement but also prepares individual for their life. If education aims at creating learners who are motivated and who are able to monitor their own behavior, both cognition and motivation must be taken into account simultaneously and any intervention must be geared towards creating self-regulated learners. And the lifelong vision of educators for students to take the lead and move from the other-regulated stage to self-regulated one is to some extent fulfilled.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study was among the few studies, to the researcher's knowledge, undertaken to view motivation and cognition into a single framework. Further research with a simultaneous consideration of different motivational beliefs and different strategies and their subsequent contribution to language achievement is needed. The use of a social cognitive approach towards learning calls for a focalization on the impact that other factors such as the environment and personal attitudes pose towards learners' achievements. These factors were excluded from this study due to a limited scope. A comparison of these factors along different educational contexts might be another area which requires further consideration and research. Qualitative studies to find the reasons behind motivational differences in different learning contexts are also

recommended. Research directed at finding kinds of tasks and topics which are appealing and interesting for the learners is another area which needs consideration. The possibility of the pursuit of multiple goals may also be investigated.

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