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Kurdish EFL Teachers' Use of Self-regulation Strategies

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المخلص

في السنوات القليلة الماضية، أصبحت قدرة المعلمين على التنظيم الذاتي، كمجموعة من الاستراتيجيات التي ينفذها المعلمون لتحقيق أهداف تربوية داخل بيئة تعليمية، مجالاً مهماً للبحث، خاصة في بعض السياقات التي لم تُدرس كثيراً. وفي هذا الإطار، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف استخدام استراتيجيات التنظيم الذاتي بين معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من الكرد في إقليم كردستان العراق. وباستناد إلى نموذج زيمرمان (2000) الدوري للتنظيم الذاتي ونظرية بانديورا (1986) المعرفية الاجتماعية، تستخدم هذه الدراسة منهجاً مختلطاً لفحص 66 معلماً للغة الإنجليزية من مدارس مختلفة في الإقليم. تُظهر نتائج تحليل البيانات المجمعة أن المعلمين يستخدمون مستويات عالية من استراتيجيات التنظيم الذاتي خلال ممارساتهم التعليمية، وأن بعض التحديات والحواجز السياقية قد تعيق الاستخدام الفعال لهذه الاستراتيجيات. يمكن أن يكون ناتج هذا البحث مساهمة جيدة في النقاش العالمي والسياقات التعليمية قليلة الدراسة. كما تؤكد النتائج أهمية تعزيز برامج التطوير



المهني التي تدعم تنمية مهارات التنظيم الذاتي لدى المعلمين بما يساهم في تحسين جودة الممارسات التعليمية. وتوفر هذه الدراسة أيضاً أساساً يمكن أن تستند إليه البحوث المستقبلية لفهم العوامل المؤثرة في التنظيم الذاتي لدى المعلمين في سياقات تعليمية وثقافية متنوعة. كما تسلط الدراسة الضوء على الحاجة إلى إجراء مزيد من البحوث المقارنة لتطوير فهم أشمل للتنظيم الذاتي في بيئات تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية المختلفة. وفقاً لنظرية التعلم الاجتماعي المعرفي، ينشأ السلوك البشري من تفاعل ثلاثي متبادل بين العوامل الشخصية والسلوكية والبيئية ضمن سياق اجتماعي. علاوة على ذلك، فإن دوافع الإنسان وأفعاله تخضع إلى حد كبير لتنظيم معتقداته في قدراته على أداء فعل ما، وفي النتائج المحتملة لهذا الفعل. يؤكد باندورا على التأثير الفعال للمعرفة على قدرات الأفراد على الفهم والتنظيم الذاتي وأداء الفعل. في هذا السياق، يُعرّف التنظيم الذاتي بأنه "أفكار ومشاعر وأفعال ذاتية التوليد، يتم تخطيطها وتكييفها دورياً لتحقيق الأهداف الشخصية". وهذا يعني أن الأفراد يحددون أهدافاً محددة، ويضعون الخطط اللازمة، ويستخدمون استراتيجيات معينة لتحقيق هذه الأهداف، ثم يقيمون أداءهم في نهاية المطاف. ويُعتقد أن هذه العملية الدورية تساعد الأفراد على تحسين أدائهم المستقبلي.

Abstract

In the past few years, teachers' self-regulation, as a set of strategies executed by teachers to achieve pedagogical goals in an instructional environment, has become a significant area of research, especially in some under-researched contexts. In this respect, this study aims to investigate the use of self-regulation strategies among Kurdish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Based on Zimmerman's (2000) cyclical model of self-regulation and Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, this utilizes a mixed-methods approach to examine 66 English teachers from various schools in the region. The analyses of the collected data show that teachers' use high levels of self-regulation strategies during their instructional practices, and some challenges and contextual barriers can hinder the effective use of the strategies. The outcome of this research can be a good contribution to the global discourse and understudied educational contexts.

According to social cognitive theory, human behavior results from the triadic reciprocal interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors within a social context. Moreover, human motivation and action are largely regulated by beliefs in their capabilities to perform an action and the possible outcomes of the action. Bandura emphasizes the effective impact of cognition on people's capabilities to understand, self-regulate, and perform an action. In this respect, self-regulation is defined as "self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals". This means that people set specific goals, make necessary plans,



employ particular strategies to achieve these goals, and ultimately evaluate their performance. It is believed that such a cyclical process helps people improve their future performance

1. Introduction

According to social cognitive theory, human behavior results from the triadic reciprocal interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors within a social context (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Moreover, human motivation and action are largely regulated by beliefs in their capabilities to perform an action and the possible outcomes of the action (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2015). Bandura (1986) emphasizes the effective impact of cognition on people's capabilities to understand, self-regulate, and perform an action. In this respect, self-regulation is defined as "self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 14). This means that people set specific goals, make necessary plans, employ particular strategies to achieve these goals, and ultimately evaluate their performance. It is believed that such a cyclical process helps people improve their future performance (Capa-Aydin, Sungur & Uzuntiryaki, 2009).

As self-regulation helps people take responsibility for their learning, it can be predicted that it also allows teachers in their professional development. Therefore, teacher self-regulation (TSR) is a set of strategies executed by teachers to achieve pedagogical goals in an instructional environment. In other words, TSR is further defined as an active process through which teachers direct and maintain their metacognition, motivation, and strategies for more effective teaching (Capa-Aydin, Sungur & Uzuntiryaki, 2009, p. 346).

Stemming from Zimmerman's (1989, 2000) theoretical model of self-regulation, teachers can self-regulate by employing three cyclical phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. In the first phase, teachers prepare themselves for the action (i.e. the lesson) in which the teachers set specific objectives, select necessary instructional materials, and ultimately choose appropriate teaching methods considering their students' characteristics and the content's nature. In so doing, teachers need to self-regulate and maintain a high level of pedagogical motivation by applying many techniques and strategies (Saez-Delgado et al., 2022). In addition, the performance phase takes place in the classroom, where



teachers apply the lesson plan designed in the forethought phase. For successful engaging instruction and lesson delivery, the teachers need to use a variety of instructional and management techniques and maintain socio-emotional control by considering the classroom conditions and consequences of the performance. Finally, in the self-reflection phase, which is characterized by self-judgment and self-reaction process (Capa-Aydin, Sungur & Uzuntiryaki, 2009), the teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching based on the student (or peer) feedback and comparison to their previous performance. This is similar to what Schön (1983) described as reflection-on-action, in which professionals reflect on an experience or performance after it has occurred to explore what happened in a particular instructional environment, why they acted like this, and whether they could have behaved differently. Research has concluded that self-reflection helps teachers enhance their cognitive and behavioral responses and improve their future planning and professional practice in a cyclical manner (Saez-Delgado et al., 2022; Schön, 1983; Zimmerman, 2002).

Over the past few years, numerous studies have been conducted to investigate teacher self-regulation in various teaching contexts. A systematic literature review on the teacher self-regulation by Peeters et. al (2014) demonstrated that self-regulated teachers modify their instructional practices to their self-regulation skills and become more effective in developing such practices and promoting educational innovations. In addition to that, other studies also highlighted the fact that self-regulated teachers can enhance more effective instructional practices, have better control of the teaching environment, and be proactive agents in monitoring and evaluating some educational outputs and reflecting on their practices (Bartimote-Auffick et al., 2010; Butler, 2004; Van Eekelen et al., 2005). On the other hand, Pazhoman and Sarkhosh (2019) have conducted a study that aimed to explore the correlation between Iranian teachers' self-regulation and reflective practice. The outcome of the study has highlighted that although there was a positive relationship between these two variables, no significant relationship was detected between their self-regulation and teaching experience. Correspondingly, other studies have also found that there was a positive relationship between the use of self-regulation strategies and teaching effectiveness, and factors as motivation, gender, age, educational environment, and social and individual differences were highly correlated with practicing the self-regulation strategy in teaching contexts (Albelbisi & Yusop, 2019;



Houten-Schat et al., 2018; Jouhari, Haghani & Changiz, 2015; Saez-Delgado et. al., 2022).

Despite attempts to investigate teacher self-regulation in different contexts, research on this issue in the Kurdistan region of Iraq is unknown and rather limited. Since contextual and individual factors have a significant impact on the use of self-regulation strategies and practice, this study is worth conducting in a way that it adds more to the existing literature and provides insights into the practice of self-regulation strategies in Iraqi and Kurdish contexts. Therefore, the present study aims to assess Kurdish teachers' use of self-regulation strategies and explore the factors affecting the practice of such strategies in Kurdistan region of Iraq through the following research questions:

1. To what degree do Kurdish EFL teachers use self-regulation strategies?
2. What factors influence the practice of EFL teachers' use of self-regulation strategies?

2. Methods

2.1 Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in 43 schools in three different areas (i.e., Qaladize, Rania, and Slemani) of Sulaimaniyah governorate, located in the northern part of Iraq. The participants were 66 teachers (male 46 and female 20) teaching in these schools, with an age range of 30-50 years (Mean = 39 years). It is worth noting that most of the teachers had more than 15 years of teaching experience in basic and high schools, while the others had at least 5-15 years of teaching experience. As partial fulfillment of the ethical considerations of the research, the participants provided consent for participation after providing information that their data would be utilized only for the purpose of this study and their identity would remain anonymous when reporting the research results.

2.2 Data Collection

The present study employed the quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, also known as a "mixed-methods" research approach, or "multiple methods" research inquiry (Creswell, 1999). Research has shown that since all research approaches have limitations, using the mixed-methods approach can strengthen the reliability and validity of the collected data, neutralize some of the disadvantages of certain methods,





and provide a deeper understanding of social and contextual issues (Creswell, 1999; Greene, 2005). In this sense, the quantitative data was collected using the Teacher Self-regulation Scale (TSRS) (Capa Aydin, Sungur & Uzuntiryaki, 2009), consisting of two major sections. The first section aimed at collecting the participants' demographic information; while the second section comprised 40 items, which were categorized into nine dimensions, namely, goal setting (6 items), intrinsic interest (5 items), performance and goal orientation (5 items), mastery goal orientation (4 items), self-instruction (4 items), emotional control (5 items), self-evaluation (4 items), self-reaction (4 items) and help-seeking (3 items), which were presented in a six-point Likert scale ranging from (strongly agree) to (strongly disagree). This instrument was chosen because of its validity and reliability (i.e., Cronbach Alpha = 0.75) in assessing teachers' use of self-regulating strategies (Capa Aydin, Sungur & Uzuntiryaki, 2009; Moafian & Ostovar, 2012). As for the qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were used, in which 10 participants were randomly selected after completing the TSRS and asked some questions regarding their self-regulation strategies and factors affecting the application of the strategies while teaching English in the classrooms. The interviews were conducted online because some interviewees were from different geographical areas and had traveling problems. Later, the interviews were recorded and then transcribed for further analysis.

2.3 Data Analysis

To analyze the quantitative data, descriptive statistics was used, which is a feature of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 software program. To view the questionnaire's scales at a nominal level more clearly, positive scales, such as strongly agree, agree, and partly agree, as well as negative scales, including strongly disagree, disagree, and partly disagree, were combined. As for the qualitative data, however, the data were analyzed following the process of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). For the reliability of coding the data and generating the themes, the authors independently coded an important part of the data and then compared their codes and themes. After making sure that such interrater reliability was considerably high (about 90%), the authors continued doing the rest of the analysis. Finally, after finishing the analysis and creating the themes, the reporting stage started.



3. Results

The present study attempted to assess Kurdish teachers' use of self-regulation strategies. In so doing, the data collected from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were analyzed to answer the research questions. Concerning the first question, which aimed at exploring the degree of using self-regulation strategies by the teachers, the analysis of the data revealed the following results.

Table 1: The use of self-regulation strategies for goal-setting

While preparing classes ...	%		M	St.D.
	SD+PD+D	SA+PA+A		
I identify goals to be achieved by students.	10	90	4.8	1.12
I decide on the instructional strategy appropriate for the topic.	0	100	4.9	.61
I take student characteristics (e.g. prior knowledge, learner level) into consideration.	13.5	86.5	4.6	1.12
I take students' needs into account.	11.5	88.5	4.7	1.3
I decide on how to assess my students	18.5	81.5	4.3	1.07
I take available resources into consideration.	26.5	73.5	4.8	1.1
Total average scores	13	87	4.7	1.05

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; PD=Partly Disagree; D=Disagree; SA=Strongly Agree; PA=Partly Agree; A=Agree; M=Mean; St.D.=Standard Deviation

According to the total average scores given in Table 1, a significant percentage of the teachers use self-regulation strategies for goal-setting before giving the lesson (%=87; M=4.7; St.D.=1.05). More specifically, before delivering the lesson, the teachers identify goals they want to achieve and decide on appropriate instructional strategies for the topic (%=90; M=4.8; St.D.=1.12). Additionally, most teachers consider the students' needs while preparing themselves and the lessons for the classes (%=88.5; M=4.7; St.D.=1.3). Interestingly, all teachers decide on choosing appropriate instructional strategies while preparing themselves for the lesson (%=100; M=4.9; St.D.=0.61).

Regarding the use of self-regulation strategies for intrinsic interest, the analysis of the data (see table 2) revealed that a high percentage of the teachers showed intrinsic interest in the teaching profession and student learning (%=89.4; M=5; St.D.=1.14).

Table 2: The use of self-regulation strategies for intrinsic interest

Items	%		M	St.D.
	SD+PD+D	SA+PA+A		
I like the teaching profession.	6.7	93.3	5.2	1.05
It makes me happy to see my students learn.	3.4	96.6	5.6	0.77
I am proud of working as a teacher.	5	95	5.4	1.13
I have been interested in teaching profession since my childhood.	16.6	83.4	4.5	1.17
I attend classes enthusiastically.	21.6	78.4	4.3	1.59
Total average scores	10.6	89.4	5.0	1.14

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; PD=Partly Disagree; D=Disagree; SA=Strongly Agree; PA=Partly Agree; A=Agree; M=Mean; St.D.=Standard Deviation

More specifically, almost all teachers perceived that they are proud to work as a teacher and (%=95; M=5.4; St.D.=1.13) happy to see their students learn (%=96.6; M=5.6; St.D.=0.77). However, a lower percentage of the teachers showed that they attend classes enthusiastically (%=78.4; M=4.3; St.D.=1.59).

Table 3: The use of self-regulation strategies for performance and goal orientation

It is important to be a successful teacher in order to ...	%		M	St.D.
	SD+PD+D	SA+PA+A		
get promoted.	28.4	71.6	4.1	1.61
get acknowledgment from parents.	23.3	76.7	4.3	1.21
be loved by my students.	6.7	93.3	5.1	1.10
consolidate my authority.	20.1	79.9	4.4	1.30
please management.	18.3	81.7	4.6	1.29
Total average scores	19.4	80.6	4.5	1.30



Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; PD=Partly Disagree; D=Disagree; SA=Strongly Agree; PA=Partly Agree; A=Agree; M=Mean; St.D.=Standard Deviation

As shown in Table 3, a considerable percentage of the teachers use self-regulation strategies for performance and goal orientation (%=80; M=4.5; St.D.=1.30). More importantly, most of these teachers utilize such strategies to be loved and liked by their students (%=93.3; M=5.1; St.D.=1.10). and to please management (%=81.7; M=4.6; St.D.=1.29). However, the lowest proportion of the teachers believed that they use these strategies for getting promotion (%=71.6; M=4.1; St.D.=1.61).

Table 4: The use of self-regulation strategies for mastery goal orientation

It is important to be a successful teacher ...	%		M	St.D.
	SD+PD+D	SA+PA+A		
for my students to learn better.	6.7	93.3	5.2	0.98
to satisfy myself professionally.	8.4	91.6	4.9	1.10
to improve myself.	20	80	4.5	1.47
to prepare my students better for life.	5	95	5.3	1.06
Total average scores	10	90	5	1.15

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; PD=Partly Disagree; D=Disagree; SA=Strongly Agree; PA=Partly Agree; A=Agree; M=Mean; St.D.=Standard Deviation

Concerning the use of self-regulation strategies for mastery goal orientation, the results in Table 4 show that many teachers produced that they use these strategies for mastery goal orientation (%=90; M=5; St.D.=1.15). Particularly, they employ such strategies to become a successful teacher mainly to prepare their students better for life (%=95; M=5.3; St.D.=1.06), help them learn better (%=93.3 M=5.2; St.D.=0.98), and satisfy themselves professionally (%=91.6; M=4.9; St.D.=1.10).

Table 5: The use of self-regulation strategies for self-instruction

Items	%		M	St.D.
	SD+PD+D	SA+PA+A		
I orient myself to use time effectively.	8.4	91.6	4.9	1.12
If the strategies I use don't work, I	6.7	93.3	5.0	1.04

will use alternative strategies.				
I consider the facial expressions of the students when I give a lesson.	8.4	91.6	4.8	1.08
When I teach, I adapt my teaching methods according to the needs of the students.	6.7	93.3	5.0	1.04
Total average scores	7.5	92.5	4.9	1.06

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; PD=Partly Disagree; D=Disagree; SA=Strongly Agree; PA=Partly Agree; A=Agree; M=Mean; St.D.=Standard Deviation

As given in Table 5, a considerable percentage of the teachers use self-regulation strategies for self-instruction (%=92.5; M=4.9; St.D.=1.06). More specifically, almost all teachers perceived that they adapt their instructional strategies and use alternative methods according to the needs of their students (%=93.3; M=5.0; St.D.=1.04), and orient themselves to manage their time effectively (%=91.6; M=4.9; St.D.=1.12).

Table 6: The use of self-regulation strategies for emotional control

Items	%		M	St.D.
	SD+PD+D	SA+PA+A		
When a problem occurs in class, I first try to calm down.	5	95	5.2	1.05
When I encounter a problem, I take a deep breath.	26.7	73.3	4.1	1.27
I do not panic when a problem occurs during instruction.	11.6	88.4	4.7	1.14
When I feel bad during a situation, I try to think positively.	6.7	93.3	5.0	0.99
Total average scores	12.5	87.5	4.8	1.11

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; PD=Partly Disagree; D=Disagree; SA=Strongly Agree; PA=Partly Agree; A=Agree; M=Mean; St.D.=Standard Deviation

Concerning the use of self-regulation strategies for teachers' emotional control, the total average scores in Table 6 show that most of the teachers use the strategies for their emotional control (%=87.5; M=4.8; St.D.=1.11). For example, most of them responded that they try to calm down and not to panic when a problem occurs in the classroom and think positively during a bad situation.



Table 7: The use of self-regulation strategies for self-evaluation

Items	%		M	St.D.
	SD+PD+D	SA+PA+A		
I learn from the mistakes I made in class.	8.4	91.6	5.0	1.07
At the end of instruction, I try to determine whether I have met my goals or not.	10.3	89.7	4.7	0.99
I use student feedback to improve my instruction.	10	90	4.8	1.20
While evaluating myself at the end of instruction, I compare my performance against previous years.	10	90	4.8	1.12
Total average scores	9.7	90.3	4.8	1.09

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; PD=Partly Disagree; D=Disagree; SA=Strongly Agree; PA=Partly Agree; A=Agree; M=Mean; St.D.=Standard Deviation

Regarding the use of self-regulation strategies for self-evaluation, the average scores given in Table 7 reveal that %90 of the teachers use these strategies for self-evaluation (%=90.3; M=4.8; St.D.=1.09). Specifically, the majority of the teachers use student feedback to develop their instruction and compare their current and previous teaching performance

Table 8: The use of self-regulation strategies for self-reaction

Items	%		M	St.D.
	SD+PD+D	SA+PA+A		
I appreciate myself when everything goes according to the plan.	5	95	5.2	0.93
Realizing that I am successful encourages me to work harder.	5.1	94.9	5.3	1.00
I get upset when I am negatively evaluated in my profession.	27	74	4.2	1.40
Realizing that I am not successful worries me.	16.7	83.3	4.5	1.15
Total average scores	13	87	4.8	1.12

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; PD=Partly Disagree; D=Disagree; SA=Strongly Agree; PA=Partly Agree; A=Agree; M=Mean; St.D.=Standard Deviation

According to the total average scores in table 8, most teachers use self-regulation strategies for self-reaction (%=87; M=4.8; St.D.=1.12). Particularly, the teachers perceived that their success encouraged them to work harder and acknowledge themselves when everything went as planned. However, fewer of them reported that they get upset when evaluated negatively in their profession (%=74; M=4.2; St.D.=1.40).

Table 9: The use of self-regulation strategies for help-seeking

Items	%		M	St.D.
	SD+PD+D	SA+PA+A		
When I have problems I can't solve, I ask other teachers for help.	11.7	88.3	5.4	1.33
While preparing classes, I get help from my colleagues when needed.	26.7	73.3	4.1	1.40
I discuss my positive and negative experiences with my colleagues after instruction.	16.7	83.3	4.2	1.08
Total average scores	18	82	4.5	1.27

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; PD=Partly Disagree; D=Disagree; SA=Strongly Agree; PA=Partly Agree; A=Agree; M=Mean; St.D.=Standard Deviation

Finally, the results in Table 9 show that the teachers usually use self-regulation strategies for seeking help from colleagues and peers (%=82; M=4.5; St.D.=1.27). More specifically, they often get assistance from other teachers when they have problems, prepare classes, and discuss their positive and negative experiences with their colleagues and instruction.

As mentioned earlier, one of the interview questions asked the teachers to choose among the given factors that influence the use of self-regulation strategies. The answers were analyzed quantitatively, and the following results were obtained:



Kurdish EFL Teachers' Use of Self-regulation Strategies

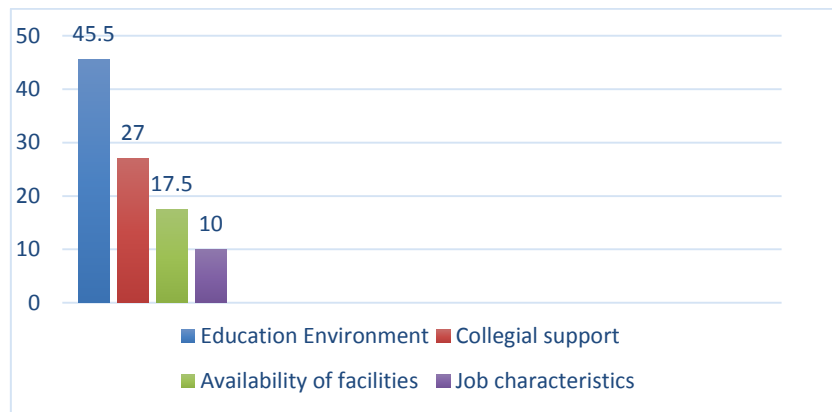


Figure 1: Factors influencing self-regulation strategies

According to the results shown in Figure 1, the most common factor influencing the use of self-regulation strategies is the *education environment*, which was reported by 45.5% of the teachers. Following that, *collegial support* was shown to be the second most common factor that affects the teachers' use of self-regulation strategies, as chosen by 27% of the teachers. Additionally, both the *availability of facilities* and *job characteristics* were found to be the third and fourth most frequent factors, respectively, influencing the teachers' use of self-regulation strategies during their teaching practice.

Concerning the teachers' perceptions, collected from the semi-structured interviews, about the use of self-regulation strategies, the analysis of the data revealed that most teachers employ such strategies in their teaching process. More specifically, following the thematic analysis procedures for the data analysis, one of the most common themes emerged from the interviewees' responses was "*goal setting*". Most teachers reported that before giving the lesson, they employ self-regulation strategies for goal setting in the teaching process. For example, one of the interviewees stated that:

"Before the lesson, I set goals for preparing my lessons, managing time, and using different instructional methods based on the specific needs of my students and the context of teaching." T4

Moreover, the use of self-regulation strategies for goal setting was also mentioned by another teacher, as follows:

"I most of the time prepare lessons for different grades; when I do that I think about what to present inside the classroom, how to prepare myself



for unwanted and unexpected situations, and what teaching method will be more helpful.” T9

In addition, another theme generated from the teachers' responses was *preparing materials*. Many teachers showed that before giving the lesson, they think about and prepare necessary materials such as activities, assessment tools, and visuals to make the lesson more effective. For instance, one of the teachers reported:

“Before the lesson, I gather all necessary materials such as handouts, visual aids, and technology tools to ensure a smooth delivery of the lesson.” T5

Another teacher stated that:

“When I prepare myself for the lesson, I usually plan for organizing materials, technological tools, and some assessment procedures. I think that these materials will help the students have a better engagement in the lesson, and check their understanding of what is given. Ultimately, I will see a better outcome and achieve my objective of the lesson.” T7

Another theme created from the analysis of the qualitative data was *reflection-on-action*. This means that many teachers reported that they employ some strategies to reflect on what they have done before and during the lesson so that they identify the problems and inconveniences arisen during the teaching process, and address them for the coming lesson. For example, one of the teachers reported:

“When the lesson finishes, I reflect on the effectiveness of the lesson and identify any areas for improvement. This helps me make adjustments for future lessons and ensure continuous growth as an educator.” T1

Moreover, another teacher (T6) also showed that he employs some strategies like “engaging the students, assessment tools, sequencing the materials” to deliver the lesson more effectively.

In addition to the factors influencing teachers' use of self-regulation strategies mentioned above, during the interviews, some teachers reported other factors that can impact their use of the strategies. For instance, one of the interviewees stated:



“The level of motivation an individual has towards achieving their goals can greatly influence their ability to use self-regulation strategies effectively. Also emotions can play a significant role in self-regulation. Positive emotions, such as enthusiasm or joy, can enhance self-regulation efforts, while negative emotions, such as stress or anxiety, can hinder them.” T6

Furthermore, two other teachers acknowledged that another factor, such as irregular salary, can also influence their self-regulation strategies; as one of the teachers mentioned:

“Lack of regular salary or sometimes no salary for two or three months demotivates us from using self-regulation strategies, because if there is no salary, we cannot focus on those strategies to regulate ourselves and improve the teaching process.” T7

In conclusion, the results reveal that despite the teachers' regular use of self-regulation strategies, some factors can still prevent them in employing these strategies effectively during their teaching process.

4. Discussion

The results obtained in this study provide considerable insights into teachers' self-regulation domain, particularly in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, as the majority of teachers actively use self-regulation strategies like goal setting, intrinsic interest, performance and goal orientation, mastery goal orientation, self-instruction, emotional control, self-evaluation, self-reaction, and help-seeking. These findings are in-line with the theoretical framework of Zimmerman's (2000) cyclical model of self-regulation, emphasizing the importance of forethought, performance, and self-reflection phases in professional practice.

One of the most noteworthy findings is the high degree of goal-setting among teachers, with 87% of participants reporting its use. It can be inferred from this finding that Kurdish EFL teachers seem to be proactive in planning their lessons, in terms of considering student needs and selecting convenient teaching strategies. Previous studies have concluded that these instructional practices are among the basic elements for effective teaching because they create a strong alignment between the learning objectives, teaching methods, and learning outcomes (Capa-Aydin et al., 2009). Moreover, the teachers' strong emphasis on intrinsic interest (89.4%) and mastery goal orientation (90%), explored in this study, shows that the teachers are highly dedicated to their profession and

student learning, which are among the key factors of showing self-regulated behavior (Bandura, 1986).

This study, however, indicates a few aspects where self-regulation strategies are applied less frequently. For example, only 73.3% of the teachers seek help from colleagues while preparing the classes, and 74% responded that negative evaluations can create a kind of distress among them. These findings indicate that the teachers generally feel confident and that some external support and mechanisms of constructive feedback would further enhance their self-regulation practices. Therefore, the results from qualitative data also confirm that collegial support and educational environment are considered as basic influencing factors of teachers' self-regulation.

The analysis of the interview responses highlights the importance of reflection-on-action, proposed by Schön (1983), in a way that teachers often reflected on their lessons to plan future improvements showing a commitment toward continuous professional development and teaching effectiveness (Saez-Delgado et al., 2022). Despite these positive findings, this study also reveals some contextual challenges, such as irregular salary payments, lack of motivation, and emotional stress, that hinder the effective application of self-regulation strategies. To respond to this pedagogical crisis, systemic and appropriate interventions, and policy reforms are needed to enhance motivation and emotional well-being among the teachers.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the use of self-regulation strategies among Kurdish EFL teachers in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that teachers frequently used self-regulation strategies like mainly on goal setting, intrinsic motivation, and reflective practices in their instructional practices, despite facing some challenges and contextual barriers. Additionally, it is also concluded that the application of self-regulation strategies is mainly determined by contextual factors like educational settings, access to colleague support, and even socio-economic conditions. In order to make the best use of self-regulation strategies, such issues need to be sufficiently addressed by supporting structures, professional development training, and policy measures.

Finally, developing self-regulation among teachers is not only a matter of individual effort, but also an issue of collective and shared responsibility by educators, institutions, and policymakers. By making the environment convenient, stakeholders could empower teachers to fully harness their self-regulation skills, which ultimately lead to improving the quality of education in the Kurdistan region and beyond.

As a suggestion for future studies on this issue, long-term intervention results on teaching and learning outcomes may be investigated through



the use of different data collection tools such as classroom observations and recorded teaching analysis, and involving more teachers across Iraq.

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