

# STATE BOREDOM IN ONLINE CLASSROOMS: A STUDY OF NOVICE AND EXPERIENCED IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS

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**Abstract:** Teachers and students frequently experience positive and negative emotions in EFL classrooms. Boredom is a negative feeling whose detrimental influence on various aspects of the learning process and achievement has been well established. However, in the EFL context, particularly among EFL teachers, this aspect remains under-examined. Using a mixed-methods research design, the current study examined 263 Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers with online teaching experience to compare their state boredom and perceptions of its signs. For qualitative analysis, 15 novice and 15 experienced teachers were selected from the respondents to review their open-ended questionnaire answers. Additionally, 16 teachers participated in a semi-structured interview. The results of Mann-Whitney U-test revealed a significant difference in state boredom between teacher groups, with novice teachers experiencing higher level of boredom in online classrooms. Qualitative analysis using MAXQDA showed differing perceptions of boredom between novice and experienced teachers in online settings. Novice teachers primarily viewed boredom as attention failure, while experienced teachers had a deeper understanding, including loss of motivation and enthusiasm. The results suggest that targeted support and training for novice teachers in online environments are critical approaches to enhance engagement and reduce boredom, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of motivational factors.

**Keywords:** EFL context, experienced teachers, novice teachers, online classroom, state boredom

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Foreign language classrooms are influenced by positive and negative emotions (Nakamura et al., 2021) which affect both the language learning process and language achievement (Li et al., 2020). Among all emotions, boredom appears to be the most commonly experienced one in various educational settings (Goetz et al., 2014). It is a negative feeling composed of disengagement, dissatisfaction, attention deficit, altered time perception, and decreased vitality (Fahlman et al., 2009). In educational settings, it is detrimental to an individual's academic performance and negatively affects their behavior, engagement, cognition, interest, curiosity, motivation, learning strategies and outcomes (Tze et al., 2015).

Teachers' emotions and experiences profoundly influence various aspects of their teaching practice, including the cognitive, behavioral, motivational, classroom management, and social support they provide to students. This highlights the significance of prioritizing teachers' well-being and addressing their professional development requirements, as these factors play a crucial

role in facilitating successful teaching practices and fostering students' outcomes. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) asserted that students notice their teachers' emotions, and it affects their performance. Most research in the teachers' domain, to date, has been dedicated to teaching quality (Anderman & Patrick, 2012; Patrick et al., 2011), and less attention has been directed toward teachers' motives, goals, and affective experiences (Chang, 2009; Frenzel et al., 2009; Kunter et al., 2011). It is necessary to conduct further investigation in exploring the insights of EFL teachers with various teaching experiences concerning their feelings of boredom in online classrooms.

Since early 2020, due to COVID-19, all universities and schools shifted from face-to-face (in-person) to online settings to guarantee students' and teachers' safety and health. Although numerous advantages could be counted for the online mode of education, it is important to acknowledge that there are potential demerits such as boredom which can hinder learning and teaching and prevent learners from benefiting the full potentials of online classrooms (Russell, 2020; Wang, 2024). Research has demonstrated that the online instructional mode can be more prone to inducing boredom compared to face-to-face learning environments (Russell, 2020; Wang, 2024; Xie, 2021). However, several education centers in Iran are still running their online classes even after the end of the pandemic, using virtual teaching platforms and distance education. Notably, the air pollution crisis frequently results in the closure of schools and universities during autumn and winter, emphasizing the critical need for online classes in Iran. As a result, recognizing and addressing the issues, aspects, and challenges associated with this new educational environment becomes increasingly crucial, particularly with regard to teachers' experiences and needs.

### **Teachers' Emotions**

Emotions can be defined as multifaceted phenomena involving sets of coordinated psychological processes, including affective, cognitive, physiological, motivational, and expressive components (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981; Shuman & Scherer, 2014). Within the realm of educational emotions research, these factors are regarded as essential for the effectiveness of academic institutions, impacting students' learning outcomes, psychological well-being, and overall development, as well as influencing teachers' instructional strategies and goal attainment. Emotions are present at each stage of the learning process, and their importance in the education context involves both students and teachers who experience positive emotions, such as enjoyment, hope, pride, and negative emotions, including anger, anxiety, hopelessness, shame, and boredom (Pekrun et al., 2009) in the classroom.

It is now well established that teachers' quality of teaching depends on their emotional experiences in the classroom (Brackett et al., 2013; Frenzel, 2014), and those with predominantly positive emotional experiences may be able to effectively utilize a broad range of teaching strategies and flexibly deal with unexpected obstacles (Reyna & Weiner, 2001). As a result, they provide better cognitive and motivational stimulation in the classroom.

In the realm of teachers' emotions, it is essential to consider Becker's (2011) study, which investigated the emotions of thirty-nine German secondary teachers. Boredom emerged as a significant negative emotion, with teachers reporting feeling bored during 26% of their classes.

This highlights the need for increased research focus on teachers' boredom, which has been overlooked.

### **Teachers' State Boredom**

The complex construct of boredom, its interaction with a variety of factors, and its many faces stemming from various causes make it impossible to reach a single definition. (Ally, 2008; Caldwell et al., 1999). The most general definition was formulated by Fahlman et al. (2009), who posited that the experience of boredom, usually referred to as an emotion, a feeling, an affect, a drive, or a state, draws on a combination of disengagement, dissatisfaction, attention deficit, distorted time perception and decreased vitality.

Scholars have attempted to classify the complex construct of boredom into distinct subtypes. In a notable classification, researchers suggested that boredom can be classified as a 'trait' or 'state' (Vogel-Walcutt et al., 2012). Trait boredom seems to be an inherent part of one's personality, which means that one tends to be permanently disengaged and/or disinterested. On the other hand, state boredom is defined as a transient, context-dependent, and situation-specific attribute that results from an individual's perception of their immediate learning environment as impoverished and thus not sufficiently stimulating (Bench & Lench, 2013; Fahlman et al., 2009).

Previous studies are primarily concerned with trait boredom examining its multiple facets, antecedents, and changes, as well as interactions with other variables among students. (e.g., Pekrun et al., 2010), while environments and the perceptions of environments vary within and across individuals. Hence, merely counting on the individuals' trait boredom as the predictor of prevalence and an individual's experience of boredom might lack reliability. Studies focusing on state boredom are scant in the literature, and the existing research has investigated students' state boredom in face-to-face classrooms. (e.g., Hunter & Eastwood, 2018; Mercer-Lynn et al., 2014). Therefore, this study intended to explore state boredom in online English classroom and attempted to partially fill this gap by looking into Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers' differences and perceptions of state boredom.

### **Novice and Experienced Teachers' State Boredom**

Novice teachers are those who are still studying, undergoing training, or have just completed their training and started teaching with little experience. Danielson (1999) asserted that novice teachers are fully equipped with proper knowledge and competence in the field of education. On the other hand, the experienced teachers' definition is more complex, but they can primarily be identified according to the number of years they have taught. Richards and Farrell (2005) described experienced teachers according to some characteristics such as rich and elaborate knowledge, ability to integrate and use different kinds of knowledge, desire to investigate and solve a wide range of teaching problems, better understanding and use of language learning strategies, and greater awareness of the learning context. They also benefit from experience and knowledge acquired over time to face classroom complexities insightfully and effectively (Doyle, 2006). Borg (2017) argues that experience shapes teachers' beliefs and teachers' beliefs shape their behavior, and the correspondence between beliefs and practices is more evident in teachers with more experience.

Comparative studies on novice and experienced teachers in the education context abound (e.g., Akyel, 1997; Gatbonton, 2008; Shohani et al., 2015; Wolff et al., 2017, 2021), and relatively all have a general agreement on the difference of novice and experienced teachers in response to teaching and education challenges. However, the novice and experienced EFL teachers' boredom in an online context has not been closely examined.

As revealed in the literature, few attempts have been made to scrutinize EFL teachers' state boredom in light of their teaching experience. To bridge such a gap, this study aimed to explore the perceptions of Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers concerning their state boredom in online classrooms and explored the probable differences across both groups. This study focused specifically on higher education settings due to the unique challenges and dynamics present in these environments. Higher education often involves diverse teacher populations and advanced pedagogical strategies, making it essential to understand how factors like teacher perceptions specifically impact their boredom in this context. By concentrating on higher education, the researchers strived to provide visions that are directly applicable to the evolving path of online instruction within universities and colleges. More specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the state boredom of Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers differ in online classrooms?
2. What perceptions do novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers have of the signs of state boredom in online classrooms?

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Due to the accessibility and availability of participants, as well as their voluntary willingness to partake in the study, the researchers selected 263 Iranian EFL teachers from an initial pool of 282 through non-random convenience sampling. Referring to Mackey and Gass (2005), this type of non-random sampling method is defined as the selection of individuals who are readily accessible for the study. In order to ensure participants' consent, the questionnaire booklet commenced with a section where they were instructed to select a checkbox when they confirm their voluntary agreement to partake in the survey.

The study involved both male and female teachers from state and private universities, alongside instructors from private English teaching institutes. It is essential to highlight that private universities in Iran are non-profit, non-governmental organizations that provide higher education degrees, typically emphasizing specialized academic fields. In contrast, private English teaching institutes primarily aim to improve learners' general language proficiency and do not confer formal degrees. This distinction emphasizes the diverse educational contexts from which the participants were drawn, allowing for a comprehensive examination of teacher experiences across different settings, mainly higher education settings.

They were categorized based on their online teaching experience, with some having high experience (more than five years) and others having low experience (less than two years). Table 1 shows the demographic information of participants classified as novice teachers (with less than

two years of teaching experience) and experienced teachers (with above five years of teaching experience).

**Table 1.** Participants' Demographic Information

	Novice teachers	Experienced teachers	% (round)
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	32	55	31%
Female	58	118	69%
<b>Years of Teaching</b>			
0-2	81	-	31%
3-5	-	40	15%
5+	-	142	54%
<b>Academic degree</b>			
Bachelor's	33	43	29%
Master's	4	91	50%
Doctorate	0	16	6%
Other	20	20	15%
<b>Type of Institution</b>			
Private	36	133	64%
State	17	52	26%
Other	7	18	10%

Additionally, in the qualitative phase, 30 EFL teachers' responses to an open-ended questionnaire were selected from the initial pool of respondents in the earlier quantitative phase of the study through quota sampling including both novice and experienced teachers (50% novice and 50% experienced). From this pool, 15 novice teachers (defined as those with less than 2 years of experience) and 15 experienced teachers (defined as those with 5 or more years of experience) were randomly selected. This was to capture perspectives from both groups in the qualitative phase, while still using a random selection process within each group. Likewise, it ensured that the sample was representative of the different subgroups of novice and experienced teachers. In the next phase of the study, and for the semi-structured interview phase of the study, the researchers picked 16 participants through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-random type of sampling in which the researcher selects some participants based on a set of criteria or his/her knowledge about the sample to elicit data in which he/she is interested (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Teaching experience, academic qualification, and teachers' tendency for further cooperation were the criteria for selecting the interviewees.

## **Instruments**

### ***Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (MSBS)***

To examine Iranian EFL teachers' state boredom and their perception in an Iranian EFL context, a modified version of the Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (MSBS) developed by Fahlman et al. (2013) was distributed among the participants. The questionnaire had two main sections. The first section was used to collect demographic information about the respondents, such as their age, gender, academic degree, teaching experience, and institution. The second section of the questionnaire was originally comprised of 29 items, ranging from (1) "Strongly disagree" to (5) "Strongly agree" (Appendix 1). MSBS includes five subscales: Disengagement (10 Items), High Arousal (5 Items), Inattention (4 items), Low Arousal (5 items), and Time Perception (5 items). The questionnaire items were all scored in the same direction, meaning that none of the items required reverse scoring (as would be necessary for negatively worded items). Thus, higher scores consistently indicate a greater level of the construct being measured. It is essential to note that the researcher modified some items of the questionnaire in order to gauge the construct better. Hence, composite reliability and construct validity were conducted to ensure the psychometric properties of the questionnaires employed in the study.

### ***Open-Ended Questionnaire***

An open-ended questionnaire was designed for the qualitative phase of the study to afford opportunities for the participants to share their viewpoints freely and help the researchers interpret the results more meaningfully (Appendix 2). The questions were delivered online through Skype, Telegram, and WhatsApp along with the MSBS questionnaire, and the participants were asked to reply in English as they were all English teachers. It is worth noting that, initially, three experts examined the items to ensure the language appropriateness and content validity.

### ***Semi-Structured Interview***

In this study, the interview aimed to capture what the teachers think about their boredom experience in the online classroom and if there is any meaningful difference between novice and experienced teachers in their perception of boredom. Hence, the researcher set a semi-structured interview (Appendix 3) with 16 teachers from both groups (8 from novice and 8 from the experienced group). The justification for choosing a semi-structured interview was because it allows the researcher to follow a prepared list of questions as a guide while also having the flexibility to explore additional information through follow-up questions and probing (Mackey & Gass, 2005). To ensure the content validity of the interview questions, three subject-matter experts were involved to give their opinions about the language and content appropriateness of each question in measuring the construct. The interviews lasted an average of 10-20 minutes, and an audio recorder in a laptop was used to record all the interviews. After the coding of the interview transcripts by three experts in the field of Applied Linguistics, including the researchers, intercoder reliability was measured.

### **Data Collection**

In this study, initially, the researchers modified MSBS questionnaire (Fahlman et al., 2013) regarding teachers' state boredom in online classes. Then, to ensure the reliability and validity of the modified instrument, the questionnaire was piloted with 30 respondents who closely matched the study parameters in terms of gender, age, major, and academic degree. In the main phase of the study, the questionnaires were distributed among 282 novices and experienced EFL teachers, and in total, 263 teachers' responses were obtained. In the next step, data screening was administered, and 26 responses with odd patterns, meaning unusual or atypical answers that deviated significantly from the rest of the sample, were eliminated. Since the focus of this study was on novice teachers (two or less than two years of teaching experience) and experienced teachers (five or more than five years of teaching experience), 40 responses from mid-experienced teachers (those with 3-4 years of experience) were omitted, and ultimately, 197 responses were used for data analysis.

Subsequently, for the qualitative phase of the study, from among the open-ended questionnaire respondents, 30 of them were selected through quota sampling including both groups of teachers (50% novice and 50% experienced teachers). Then in the last phase of the study, to provide a deeper insight into the teachers' perception of state boredom, a follow-up interview was conducted with 16 teacher participants (8 novice and 8 experienced teachers), who were selected through purposive sampling based on their willingness for cooperation and level of experience. The interviews were semi-structured and initiated with a couple of predetermined questions. The interviewees were given enough freedom to expound their opinions and present other relevant points during the interview. The interview sessions were held on virtual platforms such as Skype or WhatsApp and took 10-20 minutes on average. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through content and thematic analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data through the MSBS questionnaire, open-ended questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers were subject to quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Concerning the quantitative research question of this study in the first phase, this study applied a series of non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-Tests.

In the qualitative phase, the researchers exploited content and thematic analyses to examine data from the open-ended questionnaire and interviews. To this end, the researchers listened to interview recordings attentively and transcribed them verbatim for meticulous analysis. For content and thematic analyses, they employed the six phases recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, they re-read the transcriptions to implement data familiarization. Then they scrutinized the transcripts to generate the initial codes. Subsequently, they organized the codes into potential themes. Afterward, they produced a thematic map of the analysis by reviewing the codes and themes. Ultimately, they refined, defined, and labeled the extracted codes and themes to produce the final results.

Likewise, the interview data were analyzed via MAXQDA software based on Strauss and Corbin's (1990) model of data codification (i.e., open coding, axial coding, and selective

coding). A sample of the coding process can be found in the Appendix 4. Following this model, the researchers first inspected the data and generated open codes. Then the themes that emerged in the open codes were compared and mixed to produce larger codes in the axial coding phase. Lastly, the extracted themes came under larger categories in the “selective coding” stage (Creswell, 2008).

Additionally, to ensure consistency in the raters’ coding, Intercoder reliability was measured, and 20% of the generated codes were randomly chosen to be re-coded by the second coder to check the credibility of the analytical process. In this study, 164 codes were created, and the second coder examined 32 codes. The second coder disagreed with the first coder on three codes, resulting in a 97% inter-coder agreement in the coding for this study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

#### *Difference in State Boredom between Novice and Experienced Iranian EFL Teachers in Online Classrooms*

The first research question focused on determining whether there was a difference in state boredom between novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers in online classrooms. To answer this question, the total state boredom scores of novice and experienced participants were compared. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of these scores for the two groups.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of State Boredom Scores for Novice and Experienced Iranian EFL Teachers

	Experience	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness Ratio
Disengagement	Novice	77	8.00	39.00	22.18	7.98	0.94
	Experienced	120	8.00	36.00	19.01	6.27	1.91
Low arousal	Novice	77	4.00	20.00	10.38	4.14	1.96
	Experienced	120	4.00	20.00	8.44	3.67	4.23
Time perception	Novice	77	5.00	24.00	12.53	4.29	2.01
	Experienced	120	5.00	24.00	11.05	4.39	4.49
Inattention	Novice	77	3.00	14.00	7.70	3.00	1.49
	Experienced	120	3.00	14.00	6.93	3.03	2.86
High arousal	Novice	77	3.00	14.00	7.59	2.98	2.33
	Experienced	120	3.00	14.00	6.55	2.92	2.69
Total	Novice	77	23.00	107.00	60.40	20.47	1.20
	Experienced	120	23.00	108.00	52.00	17.60	2.80

As reported in Table 2, the mean scores of the experienced teachers in all subscales of the state boredom and its total scores were lower than those of novice teachers. The skewness ratios for the experienced teachers were outside the legitimate range of  $\pm 1.96$  for normal distributions (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Therefore, to compare the scores of the two groups, a series of non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-Tests were run (Table 3).





### ***Novice Iranian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of State Boredom in Online Classrooms***

According to Table 4 and Figure 2, analysis of the qualitative data pertaining on the second research question revealed that, in total, 85 codes were created for the novice Iranian EFL teachers regarding their perceptions of signs of state boredom in online classrooms. More specifically, novice Iranian EFL teachers in this study reported 27 signs of state boredom in online classes, namely losing concentration and becoming distracted (F = 9), losing enthusiasm/willingness/passion/interest (F = 6), behaving in a cursory manner (F = 6), not being energetic (F = 6), looking at the clock/watch/phone (F = 6), feeling down/depressed (F = 5), feeling that time passes slowly (F = 4), doing repetitive tasks (F = 4), feeling sleepy (F = 3), not being creative (F = 3), getting irritated/angry easily (F = 3), lack of motivation (F = 3), not wanting to continue (F = 3), feeling an ache (F = 3), becoming impatient (F = 2), leaning back on the chair (F = 2), having a monotonous voice (F = 2), yawning (F = 2), not having proper eye contact (F = 2), liking to finish the class as soon as possible (F = 2), low pitch of voice (F = 2), feeling exhausted/tired (F = 2), hoping that time passes quickly (F = 1), talking with oneself (F = 1), feeling hungry (F = 1), silence (F = 1), and not smiling (F = 1). Some excerpts from the participants referring to some of these signs of state boredom are present below.

*"I can't focus on what I planned to do in the class."*

*"Yes, I have, and when it happens, I don't feel energetic anymore and lose enthusiasm for teaching."*

*"Teachers might not go deep into the topics."*

*"The teachers don't hold the class energetically."*

*"When the teacher keeps looking at the phone..."*

*"Time passes slowly"*

*"By doing repetitive tasks"*

*"I get irritated easily."*

*"I feel demotivated."*

*"I want to do something else!"*

*"It can make teachers impatient."*

*"When I start to talk with myself"*

*"I get tired more than usual, uninterested and unwilling to do my tasks"*

*"My volume comes down and I sit back to my chair. I'm more impatient to answer questions"*

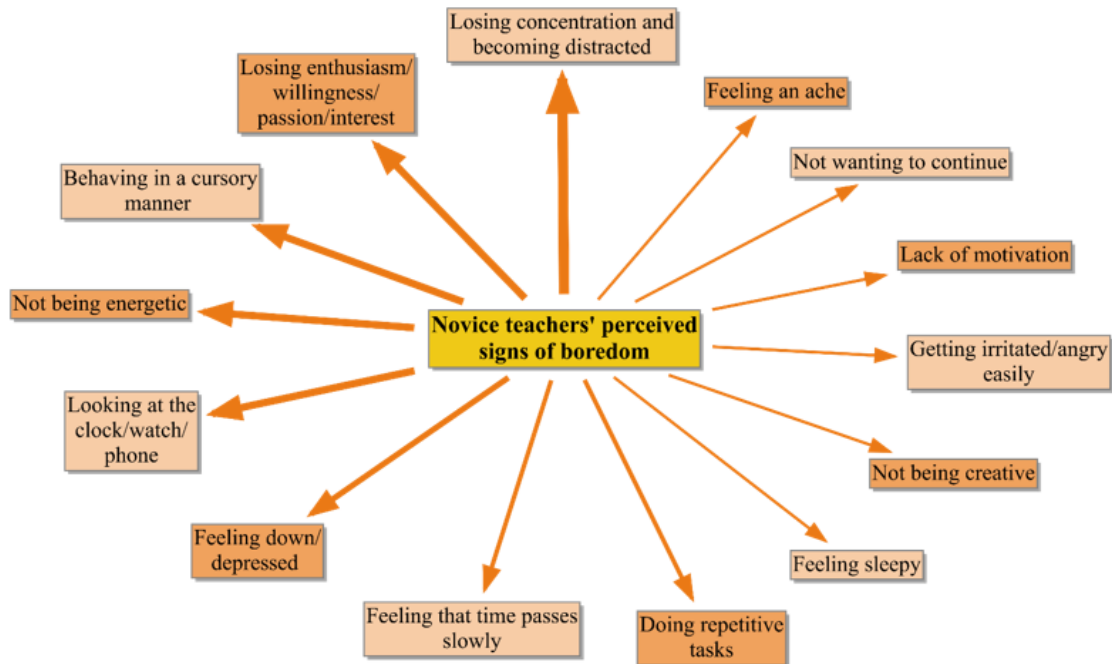
*"Talking in a monotone voice all the time, depression, exhaustion, feeling irritable & quick to anger"*

*"When students don't listen to the lesson with enthusiasm"*

*"When I am not listening carefully to my students' answers. I easily lose my attention"*

**Table 4.** Novice Iranian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Signs of State Boredom in Online Classrooms

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Losing concentration and becoming distracted	9
Losing enthusiasm/willingness/passion/interest	6
Behaving in a cursory manner	6
Not being energetic	6
Looking at the clock/watch/phone	6
Feeling down/depressed	5
Feeling that time passes slowly	4
Doing repetitive tasks	4
Feeling sleepy	3
Not being creative	3
Getting irritated/angry easily	3
Lack of motivation	3
Not wanting to continue	3
Feeling an ache	3
Becoming impatient	2
Feeling exhausted/tired	2
Leaning back on the chair	2
Having a monotonous voice	2
Yawning	2
Not having proper eye contact	2
Liking to finish the class as soon as possible	2
Low pitch of voice	2
Talking with oneself	1
Hoping that time passes quickly	1
Feeling hungry	1
Silence	1
Not smiling	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>



**Figure 2.** Novice Iranian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Signs of State Boredom in Online Classrooms

### ***Experienced Iranian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of State Boredom in Online Classrooms***

According to Table 5 and Figure 3, the analysis of qualitative data related to the second research question identified 79 codes reflecting Experienced EFL teachers' perceptions of signs of state boredom in online classes. More specifically, 26 signs of state boredom were identified from their responses, including signs of losing enthusiasm/willingness/interest/passion ( $F = 12$ ), losing concentration and become distracted ( $F = 11$ ), lack of energy ( $F = 8$ ), being exhausted/tired ( $F = 6$ ), looking at the clock/watch ( $F = 4$ ), lack of motivation ( $F = 4$ ), becoming angry/irritated ( $F = 4$ ), not following lesson plans ( $F = 3$ ), silence ( $F = 3$ ), feeling that time passes slowly ( $F = 2$ ), lack of creativity ( $F = 2$ ), liking to finish the class sooner ( $F = 2$ ), lack of interaction with learners ( $F = 2$ ), feeling nervous/stressed ( $F = 2$ ), lack of engagement in class ( $F = 2$ ), forgetting what one wants to do in class ( $F = 2$ ), feeling down ( $F = 1$ ), not being able to sit in front of PC ( $F = 1$ ), laziness ( $F = 1$ ), using avoidance strategies ( $F = 1$ ), low control over learners' tasks ( $F = 1$ ), teaching repetitive things ( $F = 1$ ), feeling sleepy ( $F = 1$ ), lower-quality teaching performance ( $F = 1$ ), sticking to routines to pass time ( $F = 1$ ), and projecting negative vibes to students ( $F = 1$ ). Below are some excerpts from the participants that highlight certain signs of state boredom.

*"Lack of interest in teaching"*

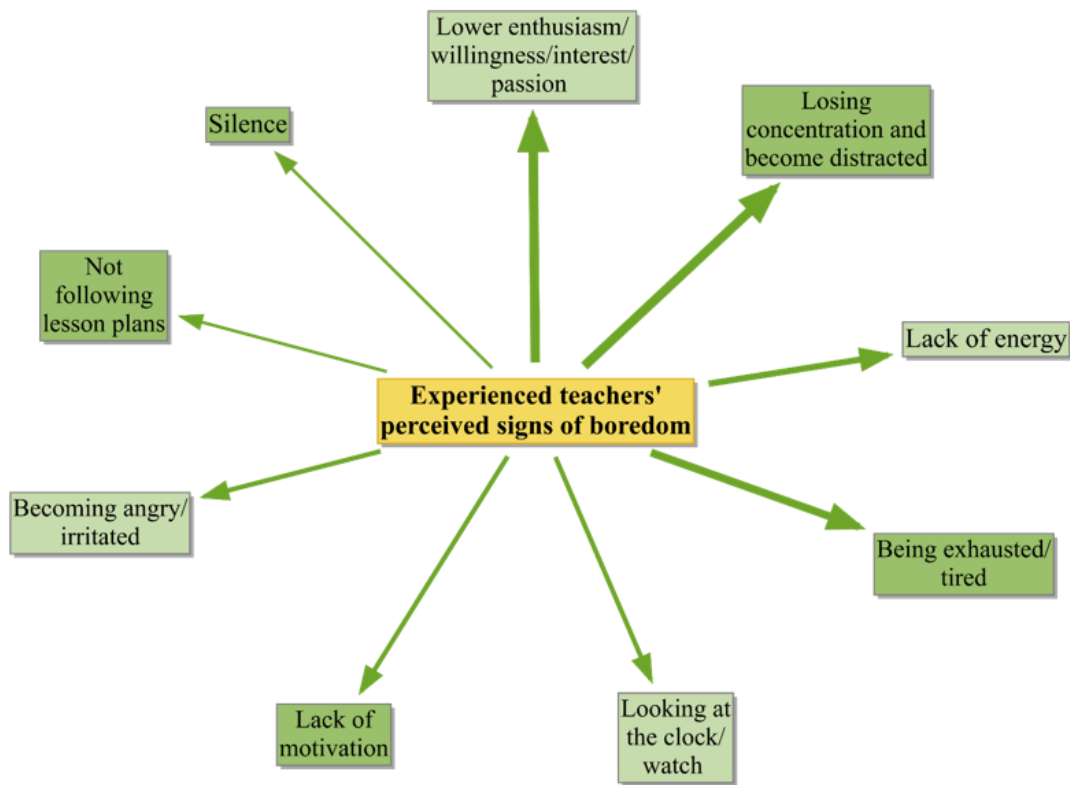
*"Wandering mind is I think a sign of boredom in an online class."*

- “When I have no more energy for teaching”*
- “Feeling stressed and exhausted”*
- “I look at my watch repeatedly in such situations.”*
- “I lose my motivation.”*
- “It makes teachers angry.”*
- “Losing track of the steps in my lesson plan”*
- “Some signs of boredom that I experienced include silence.”*
- “When it seems that time doesn't pass!”*
- “To be honest, I really tend to finish the class sooner.”*
- “When enthusiasm and interaction decrease”*
- “When I check how much time is left”*
- “I can't sit in front of the laptop any more or I get that my students are not reacting very well”*
- “When I have no more energy for teaching”*
- “When my students do not participate enough, I feel I am bored”*
- “When I look at the clock and hope the class ends sooner”*

**Table 5.** Experienced Iranian EFL Teachers’ Perceptions of Signs of State Boredom in Online Classrooms

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Losing enthusiasm/willingness/interest/passion	12
Losing concentration and become distracted	11
Lack of energy	8
Being exhausted/tired	6
Looking at the clock/watch	4
Lack of motivation	4
Becoming angry/irritated	4
Not following lesson plans	3
Silence	3
Feeling that time passes slowly	2
Lack of creativity	2
Liking to finish the class sooner	2
Lack of interaction with learners	2
Feeling nervous/stressed	2
Lack of engagement in class	2
Forgetting what one wants to do in class	2

Category	Frequency
Feeling down	1
Not being able to seat in front of PC	1
Laziness	1
Using avoidance strategies	1
Low control over learners' tasks	1
Teaching repetitive things	1
Feeling sleepy	1
Lower-quality teaching performance	1
Sticking to routines to pass time	1
Projecting negative vibes to students	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>



**Figure 3.** Experienced Iranian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Signs of State Boredom in Online Classrooms

Although there were some shared similarities among novice and experienced teachers in their responses regarding their perception of state boredom in online classes, novices demonstrated a more varied way of perceiving boredom than their experienced counterparts. This is evident in the higher number of codes extracted from the novice group (85) as opposed to the experienced group (79).

## **Discussion**

The present mixed-methods research was to examine the state boredom of novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers in online classrooms. The findings were grounded in data gathered in two quantitative and qualitative phases. The employed research instruments were three questionnaires completed by 263 English teachers, 30 open-ended questionnaires, and 16 semi-structured interviews. The quantitative research question of the study aimed at finding the difference in the state boredom among novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers in online classrooms. The collected data revealed a significant difference in all state boredom subscales (disengagement, low arousal, time perception, high arousal) between the two groups and demonstrated that experienced teachers' boredom was less than novice teachers in online classrooms. The result also revealed that the highest difference between the two groups belonged to low arousal ( $Z = 3.37$ ), and the slightest difference was assigned to high arousal ( $Z = 2.42$ ).

The findings are consistent with the results obtained by Wolff et al. (2021), who argued that expert teachers have a higher analytical and comprehensive perception of classroom events than their novice counterparts, and their experience differentiates them in how they represent and process classroom events. The results also support numerous studies such as Gatbonton (2008), Wolff et al. (2017), Stahnke and Blömeke (2021), and Pilous and Leuders (2023), who maintained that teachers, varying in experience level, differ in perception, interpretation, classroom management, and pedagogical reasoning. The rich and elaborate knowledge possessed by experienced teachers allows them to effectively integrate and apply their expertise in various situations.

As explained by Richards and Farrell (2005), experienced teachers can draw from their more complex schemas, enabling them to utilize multiple perspectives and establish stronger connections between content, cognition, and context. Given the reduced stimulus environment of online classrooms, it is logical to infer that experienced teachers would be more adept at employing their interpretive and perceptive abilities in these new settings. This adaptability could result in experienced teachers experiencing less exhaustion and process greater energy level compared to novice teachers.

On the other hand, novice teachers are in the process of acquiring and refining mental strategies that enable them to navigate the complexities commonly found in classroom environments effectively; as a result, they tend to exhibit inflexible behaviors, such as adhering closely to their lesson plans. They are unable to modify the curriculum and are afraid of losing control over the class. This group of teachers experiences higher levels of negative emotions, such as stress and attrition, due to their inability to manage personal and professional expectations, limited teaching resources, lack of professional development, and difficulty handling classroom problems (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Evidently, novice teachers need

time to increase the degrees of automaticity in handling problematic classroom activities, develop their management strategies, and know why classroom problems arise and how to cope with them (Berliner, 2001).

Consider a scenario where a novice teacher's well-planned lesson on the cycle of acid rain is interrupted by unexpected events like unrelated student questions or technical issues that can derail the flow of the class. Inexperienced in coping with such situations, novice teachers become flustered, leading to a lack of smooth flow in the lesson and student disengagement. This challenge of flexibly responding to changing classroom dynamics is common among novice teachers as they learn to balance their lesson plans with effective classroom management. In this study, the research findings revealed that novice teachers encountered higher frustration, reduced motivation, and lower energy levels within the less stimulating context of online classrooms. The study by Farrell (2021) has highlighted how novice teachers struggle with classroom management and adaptability in online formats, reinforcing our findings about their experiences. These factors could contribute to increased feelings of boredom among this group in challenging novel online classrooms.

Furthermore, the analysis of qualitative data concerning novice and experienced teachers' perceptions of state boredom in online classrooms elucidated that 79 codes for experienced teachers and 85 codes for novice teachers were identified, which means novice teachers perceived the negative feeling of boredom in more diverse forms. The scrutiny of the codes revealed that novice teachers' dominant perceptions of boredom were "losing concentration" and "becoming distracted" (attention failure), while experienced teachers reported, "losing" enthusiasm/willingness/interest/passion" as the most dominant boredom perception. Nevertheless, there were some similarities among both groups in some codes such as "lack of energy", "being exhausted" (low arousal), "feeling down" or "getting angry and irritated" (valence) which supports the theoretical framework of Russel (1980) who argued the interaction of low arousal and subjective emotional experience causes boredom. This finding supports Berliner (2001) and Wolff et al. (2017, 2021) who focused on the difference between novice and experienced teachers' perceptions of the classroom events and supported that experts are better able to integrate their concerns of teaching and learning when analyzing classroom event and present more complex perceptions toward the classroom events. This is also consistent with Hogan et al. (2003), who asserted that teachers' experience affects their cognition, representation, and goal-oriented thinking, as well as with Dumanci'c (2018), who argued that EFL teachers' experience of boredom involves both cognitive and motivational factors.

To justify this finding, it should explain that attention failure, the most dominant perception among novice teachers, is recognized as a key underlying cognitive (mental) process of boredom. In contrast, losing enthusiasm, willingness, interest, and passion—the most reported perception of boredom among experienced teachers—relates to motivational factors. That is, novice teachers perceived boredom cognitively and had a surface-level perception of the boring situation. Their knowledge has not yet developed, and they need abundant practical classroom experience to be more focused on their goal of teaching and to obtain a deeper understanding and interpretation of the classroom events, while experienced teachers have a deeper perception that manifests itself motivationally. They have a greater awareness of the learning context and are more focused on ensuring that learning takes place, devoting attention to concentrating and



not being distracted. Consistent with the studies conducted by Russell (2020) and Derakhshan et al. (2021a, 2021b), the results demonstrated that online environments significantly contribute to teachers' boredom. In essence, the lack of face-to-face interaction between teachers and students, repetitive tasks, and limited students' participation and engagement were identified as critical factors leading to boredom among EFL teachers in online classrooms.

## CONCLUSION

In light of the obtained findings, it can be concluded that a notable difference between novice and experienced teachers' state boredom exists. The novice teachers showed a higher rank of state boredom, indicating that more experience is associated with less state boredom. Therefore, it could be concluded that experienced teachers are goal-oriented and equipped with their previous experience to confront difficult situations. They have a deeper perception of the classroom events devoting attention to concentration and not being distracted easily. Likewise, they are able to use different kinds of knowledge to solve and manage the teaching problems, such as situational negative emotions of boredom in the classroom. On the contrary, novice teachers have minimum experience and manifest a surface-level perception of the boring situation. They need more time to develop their skills to know why and how classroom problems arise and manage unanticipated problems in the classroom. Novices need abundant practical classroom experience to learn to be more focused on their goal of teaching and gaining a deeper understanding and interpretation of classroom events.

Consistent with Russell's two-dimensional theory of boredom (1980), we can also conclude that low arousal and valence (boredom in this context) are interconnected. Specifically, novice teachers who experience a high level of low arousal are more susceptible to boredom in the classroom. The importance of environment and teaching context as influential factors that impact teachers' emotions have been highlighted relying on the result of this study.

There were some potential limitations to this research. First of all, the number of novice and experienced teachers in this research was not equal despite all the efforts made by the researchers to engage an equal number of novice and experienced teachers. Secondly, individual differences variables that are closely related to boredom, such as different facets of motivation, personality traits, or willingness to communicate might affect the teachers' state boredom in online English classrooms. Thirdly, since this research employed Gatbonton's (2008) classification of the novice and experienced teachers, those with 3-4 years of experience have been considered as mid-experienced teachers and consequently, the received data from this group of teachers were eliminated in the analysis of the results. Ultimately, this study had a limited generalizability scope since the data were gathered from Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers. Hence, care should be taken when generalizing the findings to other contexts.

Practical implications in the fields of EFL teaching, teacher education, and educational psychology could be obtained from this study. It would be of help for novice teachers to take part in in-service teacher professional development courses or training courses on teachers' emotions and teacher emotional regulation or expose themselves to the experts' thinking and teaching. Besides, teacher trainers and instructors can also have fresh insights to design teachers' training courses, conferences, and workshops with an eye on teachers' negative emotions

considering an online situation. Likewise, materials developers and syllabus designers would benefit from this study in that they can develop materials that are more compatible with online settings that need to be more interesting, motivational, and interactive using a variety of tasks and activities. Educational psychology and academic emotion researchers can benefit from the results of this study as well.

Future studies can include using course intervention to determine the impact of treatment (e.g., running a training course) for both groups of teachers in order to add further insights. Secondly, a contrastive study of both groups of teachers regarding their perceptions of boredom in an online and face-to-face EFL classroom would add further insights and provide more evidence for boredom effect in the literature. Thirdly, it is also possible to run a replication study and examine if teachers' gender, age, and other personality traits can affect their perception of boredom in an online setting. It is also possible to investigate the teachers' boredom merely based on qualitative methods such as teachers' self-report, narrative, and teachers' discourse analysis. Last but not least, future scholars can run cross-cultural studies on the role of state boredom in L2 education, especially in relation to other psycho-emotional constructs like agency, motivation, hope, and academic engagement.

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**APPENDICES****Appendix 1. Multidimensional State Boredom Scale**

Please answer each question by ticking the box corresponding to the option that best describes you.

**1:** Strongly Disagree, **2:** Disagree, **3:** Undecided, **4:** Agree, **5:** Strongly Agree

	<b>Considering your online course instruction</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1	Time is passing by slower than usual.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am stuck in a situation that I feel is irrelevant.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am easily distracted.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am lonely.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Everything seems to be irritating me right now.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I wish time would go by faster.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Everything seems repetitive and routine to me.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I feel down.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I seem to be forced to do things that have no value to me.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I feel bored.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Time is dragging on.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I am more moody than usual.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I am indecisive or unsure of what to do next.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I feel agitated.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I feel empty.	1	2	3	4	5
16	It is difficult to focus my attention.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I want to do something fun, but nothing appeals to me.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I watch the clock waiting for the class to end	1	2	3	4	5
19	I wish I was doing something more exciting.	1	2	3	4	5
20	My attention span is shorter than usual.	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>Considering your online course instruction</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
21	I am impatient right now.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I am wasting time that would be better spent on something else.	1	2	3	4	5
23	My mind is wandering.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I want something to happen but I'm not sure what.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I feel cut off from the rest of the world.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Right now, it seems like time is stopped.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I am annoyed with the people around me.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I feel like I am sitting around waiting for something to happen.	1	2	3	4	5
29	It seems like there's no one around for me to talk to.	1	2	3	4	5

### **Appendix 2.** The Open-Ended Questionnaire Items

1. How would you define “State Boredom” in the context of online classrooms? Please provide your understanding of this term and any specific criteria or characteristics that you associate with state boredom.
2. How does boredom manifest itself in EFL teachers?
3. How do you perceive your boredom in online EFL classes?

### **Appendix 3.** The Interview Items

1. How often do you experience boredom in your online EFL classes?
2. Have you observed any signs of boredom during your online English classes? If yes, please describe them.
3. What are some indications or signs that suggest you may be experiencing state boredom in online classrooms? Please describe any specific behaviors, verbal cues, or visual cues that you have observed.
4. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the signs of state boredom for teachers in online EFL classrooms? Please feel free to provide any additional insights, suggestions, or examples related to this topic.

**Appendix 4.** Sample Coding Process

The researchers categorized the open codes in terms of pertinent axial codes/subthemes. Then they grouped the axial codes/subthemes under selective codes/ higher-order general themes.

Open codes	axial codes	Selective code/higher-order general theme
Decreasing learning/Reducing willingness to participate/respond/Causing boredom/Causing neglect of students' emotions/Decreasing learning motivation/Decreasing free expression tendency/Causing error fossilization/Decreasing trust in class/Decreasing commitment to class/Increasing the number of absentees/Causing bewilderment	Student-related outcomes	Experienced Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of the impact of state boredom on teaching self-efficacy
Creasing less interactive classroom/Creating less challenging environment/Not having a prosperous class/Creating undesirable environment	Class-related outcomes	
Decreasing teacher effectiveness/capability/ Becoming inactive and without energy/ Losing interest in one's job/ Not being able to follow lesson plans/ Feeling less confident in oneself/ Blaming of oneself/ Feeling unsatisfied/ Reducing motivation	Teacher-related outcomes	