

Gender-related Ethnographic Study on the Role of Partnership Values in Motivating Iranian EFL Learners' Engagement in the Learning Process

Sousan Sattar Boroujeni ¹, Azizeh Chalak ^{2*}, Hossein Heidari Tabrizi

¹ *PhD Candidate, English Department, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran*

² *Associate Professor, English Department, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran*

³ *Associate Professor, English Department, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran*

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Abstract: New approaches and methods to language learning and teaching have drawn the attention of many researchers. This study aimed at investigating the role of Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards the value components of the Partnership Approach (PA) on motivating their active engagement in the learning process. A descriptive research method (survey study) was used, and 72 male and female Iranian EFL students whose ages ranged from 18 to 26 were randomly selected to participate in the study. They were asked to respond to a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire addressing the objectives of the study, and then 30 of the participants were randomly interviewed to reveal the possible consonance with the questionnaire outcomes. The study was conducted at Islamic Azad University (IAU), Najafabad Branch. The findings indicated that although both male and female participants showed significantly positive attitudes towards the value components of the PA, except for the inclusivity value, female participants held significantly higher positive attitudes. The highest motivational value from both male and female participants' point of view was for the challenge value component. However, reciprocity and inclusivity were the value components with the lowest motivational values from the male and female participants' point of view, respectively. Focusing on the importance of the psychological factors in education, the findings of the study may encourage both education policy-makers and practitioners in the field to think more critically, and make more reasonable decisions for their policy and practice.

Keywords: Attitude, Engagement, Motivation, Partnership Approach, Partnership Values.

* Corresponding Author.

Authors' Email Address:

¹ Sousan Sattar Boroujeni (ssattarb@gmail.com), ² Azizeh Chalak (azichalak@gmail.com),

³ Hossein Heidari Tabrizi (heidantabrizi@gmail.com)

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Introduction

In recent decades, Partnership Approach (PA), learning and working in partnership, is a pedagogical alternative to consumerist models of Higher Education (HE) which places a premium on the students' engagement and their amenability for their own learning. Partnership processes have been embedded within and between students throughout the Higher Education practice and students can be given the opportunity to engage in different ways. According to Healey, Flint and Harrington (2014), PA aims at working together towards achieving an agreed-upon objective, and establishing and maintaining mutual respect between the teacher and the students, as well as among the students themselves. Partnership can raise the learners' awareness about the nature of the teaching and learning and can encourage students to learn about what they do, how they do it, and why. It can improve language learners' experiences of power relations in a different way. The learners find the opportunity to experience trust, risk-taking, empowerment, and inter-dependence in relevant meaningful ways while learning about, accepting, and working with the existing differences. In addition, students learn to take responsibility for their own learning, improve ethic, and develop a more positive attitude.

In this study, the rationale behind students' engagement is inviting them to actively participate in the learning process and reflect on their own learning. In its Framework for Student Engagement through Partnership, the Higher Education Academy (HEA, 2015) proposed a number of useful values as inherent elements of the partnership. These values include authenticity, inclusivity, honesty, reciprocity, empowerment, trust, courage, plurality, and responsibility. The following table briefly defines the meanings of the values embedded in the PA.

Table 1. *Framework for Student Engagement through Partnership (After HEA, 2015)*

Authenticity	There is a rationale behind the participants' engagement and they contribute to this partnership honestly.
Reciprocity	Participants eagerly engage in the partnership activities.
Inclusivity	All potential participants have the equal chance to get involved and no barrier prevents them from getting involved.
Trust	Participants talk to know each other before getting involved to make sure there will be mutual fairness and respect.
Challenge	Partners take risks, encourage to critique, develop, and practice new ways of doing and learning.
Community	Participants feel being valued for making contributions and develop a sense of belonging to the group.
Empowerment	All participants have power and value in the group and engage in constructing new ways to attain the group objectives.
Responsibility	All participants take responsibility of their roles in the group and the contributions they make.

According to Abidin, Mohammadi and Alzwari (2012), attitude refers to an individual's reaction to or evaluation of a certain situation/object based on his/her opinion and belief. Eshghinejad (2016) claims that attitude is "a psychological" process in which learners favor or disfavor a certain situation. Gardner (1985, p. 10) has defined motivation as a "combination of effort plus the desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language." He further argues "motivation to learn a second language is seen as referring to which extent the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" so that the more positively one feels about what s/he is going to fulfill and the greater the need to accomplish it, the higher is the motivation and the degree of effort one expends to achieve it.

Heterogeneity regarding learners' language-ability levels is an inevitable issue in most of the EFL classrooms in Iran; hence, in the same classroom, EFL learners do not equally engage in the learning process. On the other hand, attitude and motivation are the important factors affecting the way students learn. In spite of the importance of learning English as a global language, some language learners show indifference and unwillingness to learn it. Reluctant students, particularly in the EFL classrooms in Iran have made the EFL teachers think of new teaching approaches and ways to engage all the students in their own learning process. Psychological factors play an important role in education and any educational program should equip students to take a full and active part in their learning. In this relation, language attitude can equip curricula planners, syllabus designers, and teachers with the needed data, and so it still needs more investigation. Supporting the previous body of research, this study tended to emphasize the idea that in order to serve the students' needs and preferences, the educational processes should be structured and designed based on the learners' attitudes and the factors such as gender which may affect these attitudes. Partnership is understood differently in different studies based on the direction and the focus on its different values. In this relation, in this study, the role of the Partnership Approach as well as its aforementioned inherent value components have been examined.

Review of the Related Literature

Theoretical Background

As a new way of engaging learners in their learning process, PA has focused on the importance of the learners' partnership and engagement in learning and teaching the language by putting students at the center of the learning and teaching processes. Partnerships have

varying operational challenges, tasks, and different structures (United Way Toronto, 2009), so there are no all-embracing typologies for partnerships. According to Williamson (2013), “partnership implies an equal relationship between two or more bodies working together towards a common purpose, respecting the different skills, knowledge, experience and capability that each party brings to the table” (p. 8). He adds “it is an effective working relationship between an institution and its students, as individuals and through its collective representative body, working towards an educational institution of the highest quality possible” (p. 8).

Healey, et al. (2014) believe that partnership causes a strong sense of community to be created. Such communities can transform the students’ learning experiences, involve critical consideration of the existing relationships, improve learners’ identities, and also reformulate the processes and structures. They further argue that through partnership, communities are built which can transform the students’ learning experiences, involve critical consideration of the existing relationships, improve learners’ identities, and reformulate the processes and structures. Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten (2014) claim that a central concept to partnership is sharing which means sharing goals, responsibilities, power, values, experiences, and participating in decision-makings. PA is basically process-orientated and emphasizes the importance of what students and staffs do together in order to attain the educational objectives (Matthews, 2016).

Cook-Sather and Felten (2017) state that partnership is supported by its value components, such as respect and reciprocity, as well as by the teacher and students’ commitment and accountability in learning and teaching (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). In addition, learning about the different attributes that all the participants bring with them to the learning communities, their commitment, and their shared viewpoints can help the researchers in exploring how these communities are formed and developed. They can also examine the extent to which partnership values are important and enact to maintain successful partnerships (Perkins, Bauld, & Langley, 2010). In this relation, Tschannen-Moran (2004) maintains, “trust is established through a commitment period during which each partner has the opportunity to signal to the other a willingness to accept personal risk and not to exploit the vulnerability of the other for personal gain” (p. 42).

Maio and Haddock (2010) have stated that “common sense dictates that attitude predicts behavior” (p. 55). In relation to learning languages, positive attitudes towards the target language can motivate the language learners to make a great effort to learn it

(Pan, Zang & Wu, 2010). Motivation also plays a pivotal role in determining the individuals' action (Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2018). The theoretical basis of the motivation, particularly, motivation in relation to the acquisition of a second language, mainly addresses the theory of integrative motivation (Falk, 1978) which was first introduced in relation to the socio-psychological variables. Intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation is the other theoretical categorization of motivation which was developed in relation to the cognitive and psychological variables (Vallerand, 1997). Language learners with the intrinsic motivation learn a language to be able to communicate in that language, while in extrinsic motivation, there is a conditional or temporary intention to learn the language in order to fulfill another more important objective. According to Bryant (2019), the main objective in the Higher Education is to remove the learners' achievement gaps and promote academic success. We may expect social and educational change to occur "when positive, cohesive relationships are fostered in the school environment" (Bryant, 2019, p.36).

Empirical Background

Recently, some researchers have focused on the role of implementing the PA in the Higher Education and its impact on the learners' academic achievement (Bryson, 2014). It is found that cooperative learning fosters positive interpersonal relationships among students, develops their self-esteem, helps them in understanding instructional material more deeply, and enhances long-term retention. It is a very effective learning strategy and one of the most constructive teaching methods (Zhang, 2010). Thomas (2012) suggests that developing the students' sense of community and belonging can contribute to their success. Jarvis, Dickerson and Stockwell (2013) conducted a study and concluded that "staff-student partnership in learning and teaching has a significant impact on learning and teaching development and enhancement, learning to learn, raising the profile of research into learning and teaching, and employability skills and attributes" (p. 220).

Barnes, Veilleux, Brugos, and Shattuck-Hufnagel (2010) identified gains for students in terms of their knowledge, values, skills, changing the power relations, and shaping their own learning. Kuh (2009) concluded that students develop autonomy and independence through engagement in partnership activities, and the more autonomy means they are experiencing more partnership. Partnership fosters the sense of community, belonging, and support among the participants, and it also develops the students' capacity to engage (Lech, Hoople, Abiker, Mitchell, & Mooney, 2017).

A number of scholars have reported a transformed sense of self and self-awareness for both students and staff, as well as, the development of more inclusive teaching practices as a result of employing the PA (Cook-Sather & Agu, 2013; Cook-Sather & Abbot, 2016). Within quality enhancement, engaging students in partnership work and empowering them this way not only motivates them to learn but also increases their passion and willingness to enhance activities. Empowerment, as one of the value components in the PA, also encourages students to learn and increases their enthusiasm for enhancement activities (SooHoo, 1993). As Cook-Sather and Agu (2013) have stated it leads to sharing authority and responsibility of both the learners and the staff for developing a culturally sustainable pedagogy. They maintain that through partnership, marginalized students are motivated to engage and share power and responsibility with staff which, in turn, leads to the development of culturally sustainable pedagogy. In foreign language learning context, it was also found in some motivation studies conducted on gender differences that female learners are more motivated in learning foreign languages than boys (Mori & Gobel, 2006).

Zareia, and Layeqb, (2016) found that teachers succeeded in improving their students' autonomy through employing partnership. They asserted, it could be attributed to the higher levels of self-confidence that the students experienced in cooperative situations concluding that teachers need to encourage their students to cooperate and work in groups to achieve higher levels of autonomy. A good teaching method is the one which helps the students to examine their assumptions. It can motivate the students to learn by placing them in a situation in which they find themselves responsible for change and the initiators or providers of answers (Shirani Bidabadi, Nasr Isfani, Rouhollahi, & Khalili, 2016).

According to Kalantar Goreyshi, Rezaei Kargar, Noohi, and Ajilchia (2013) partnership ensures learners' mental health, creates unity and positive dependence among learners, and develops healthier personalities. Wigfield and Wentzel (2007) state that regardless of the language learners' aptitude and their ability to learn, motivation can significantly influence the language learning outcomes. Eshghinejad (2016) investigated the EFL students' attitudes towards learning the English Language and probed the impact of gender in this relation, and found that the participants held overall positive attitudes towards learning the English language. The findings also revealed that the females depicted a higher positive attitude than the males indicating the significant role of gender regarding the participants' attitudes towards learning English.

Despite the recent research studies which try to make the learning process and learning

tasks more interesting and motivating, there is still doubt about the most effective approaches and techniques to be employed in the language classrooms. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there are few studies examining the role of different value components of the PA in the Higher Education, and the extent to which these values may impact the language learners' engagement in the learning process. Hence, in this study, the partnership values including authenticity, reciprocity, inclusivity, trust, challenge, community, empowerment, and responsibility were focused on to investigate the extent to which these values were important and motivated the students' participation in the learning processes. Accordingly, the main questions addressed in the study were as the following.

- 1- What are the Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards the partnership values?
- 2- Are there any statistically significant differences in the EFL learners' attitudes towards the different value components of the PA due to gender?
- 3- Which value components of the PA are more motivating from the male and female EFL learners' points of view?

Methodology

Research Design

The research questions in the study aimed at investigating the EFL learners' experiences and perspectives, so a descriptive research method (survey study) was employed. In order to have methodological triangulation, a questionnaire along with a semi-structured open-ended interview (based on Kallio, Pietila, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016) were utilized to collect data. The study was conducted at the English Department of the Islamic Azad University (IAU) -Najafabad Branch as an EFL setting. The rationale behind running the study at this setting was that sufficient number of EFL students were available and they showed interest and expressed willingness to cooperate. The study was completed from November 2018 to May 2019.

Participants

From the total population of the undergraduate EFL learners at IAU-Najafabad Branch, 72 (36 male and 36 female) students whose age ranged from 18 to 25 were randomly selected to participate in the study. They were majoring in TEFL, shared the same linguistic background, and aimed at learning English as a foreign language in order to fulfil the requirements of their courses.

Instruments

A questionnaire addressing the role of partnership values in motivating students' engagement in group activities and their learning process was used to be completed by the participants of the study. It was a five-point Likert scale researcher-developed questionnaire (based on Dörnyei, 2007) with responses which ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Its reliability was examined through a pilot study with 105 undergraduate EFL learners using the KR-21 formula ($r = 0.87$) and its validity was confirmed using experts' opinion before the beginning of the study. The thirty-two items of the questionnaire addressed the eight different values of the PA, so that every four items were related to a certain value component. The first part of the questionnaire involved the participants' demographic information; however, to ensure the participants' privacy, the participants responded to the questionnaire anonymously. The construct validity of the questionnaire was also established via Factor Analysis and it was proved that every four items related to each value component were valid. A focus group semi-structured interview was also employed to collect more individualized data in the participants' own words. It was a brief and controlled interview (adapted from Kallio, et al., 2016) and arranged in a way to be directly related to the objectives of the study. Four EFL experts were also asked to attend the interview sessions. They confirmed the validity of the instrument.

Data Collection Procedure

At first, ethical approval and the consent of the faculty of humanities and the participants of the study were granted. In a debriefing session, the nature of the PA and its value components were explained to the participants to make sure that everything was clear enough.

Then, a pilot study was carried out with 105 male and female EFL learners to test aspects of the data collection methods and sort out any unexpected problems in advance of the main data collection activities. Cronbach Alpha was used to measure the reliability of the measuring tool after conducting the pilot study. The questionnaire was proved to be reliable ($r = 0.87$) and its validity was established through the expert opinion. For running the main study, the attitude questionnaire addressing the role of the partnership values in motivating the students' participation in group activities and their overall success was given to them. The participants' responses to the questionnaire items were carefully collected for all the items as well as for each partnership value component separately. Finally, thirty students were randomly interviewed to shed light on the accuracy of the collected information.

Data Analysis Procedure

First, the mean score for each of the comprising items was computed. In the PA questionnaire, there were four items germane to each value. For each value, the overall mean score for the four items which were related to that value was calculated. Next, a one-sample t test was computed to make sure if the learners' positive attitudes towards that value were of statistical significance. The mean scores of the learners' overall attitudes towards the eight values of the PA were also computed. Finally, a one-sample t -test was performed to make sure whether the students' attitudes towards the eight values of the partnership approach as a whole were of statistical significance or not.

To answer the second question of the study, the mean score for each value component was calculated once for the male participants and once for the female participants separately. Then, to ensure that the results were statistically significant, one-sample t -test was run. Friedman test was also used to compare the eight value components of the PA and test for the possible differences between them regarding their motivational effects from the male and female participants' points of view. In the end, thirty students were randomly interviewed to give them opportunity to add more details if needed, and shed light on the accuracy of the collected information and reveal the possible consonance with the questionnaire results.

Findings

The data were collected from the learners regarding their attitudes towards the eight value components of the PA, including the values of authenticity, reciprocity, inclusivity, trust, challenge, community, empowerment, and responsibility. From the descriptive statistics, it was inferred that the learners held positive attitudes towards all the eight value components of the PA. To ensure that the learners' positive attitudes were statistically significant or not, one-sample t -test was used. The results have been represented in Table 2.

The p value under the *Sig.* column showed that the learners' positive attitudes towards the eight value components of the PA were statistically significance. The descriptive statistics related to each of the value components of the PA for the male and female participants indicated that both groups held positive attitudes towards the eight value components of the PA; however, it seemed that comparing to the male participants, females held higher positive attitudes towards all the eight value components of the PA. One-sample t -test results in Table 3 show whether such a finding was of statistical significance or not.

Table 2. One-sample *t*- Test Results for the Learners' Attitudes Towards the Partnership Values

	Mean± SD	<i>t</i> (df=71)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
					Test Value = 3	
Authenticity	3.77±0.67	9.86	0.00	0.77	0.62	0.93
Reciprocity	3.70±0.69	8.64	0.00	0.70	0.54	0.86
Inclusivity	3.66±0.60	9.34	0.00	0.66	0.52	0.80
Trust	3.69±0.64	9.13	0.00	0.69	0.54	0.84
Challenge	3.99±0.50	16.63	0.00	0.99	0.87	1.10
Community	3.97±0.59	13.82	0.00	0.97	0.83	1.11
Empowerment	3.86±0.55	13.28	0.00	0.86	0.73	0.99
Responsibility	3.89±0.58	13.06	0.00	0.89	0.76	1.03
TOTAL	3.82±0.34	20.62	0.00	0.82	0.74	0.90

Table 3. One-sample *t* Test for Male and Female Learners' Attitudes Towards the Partnership Values

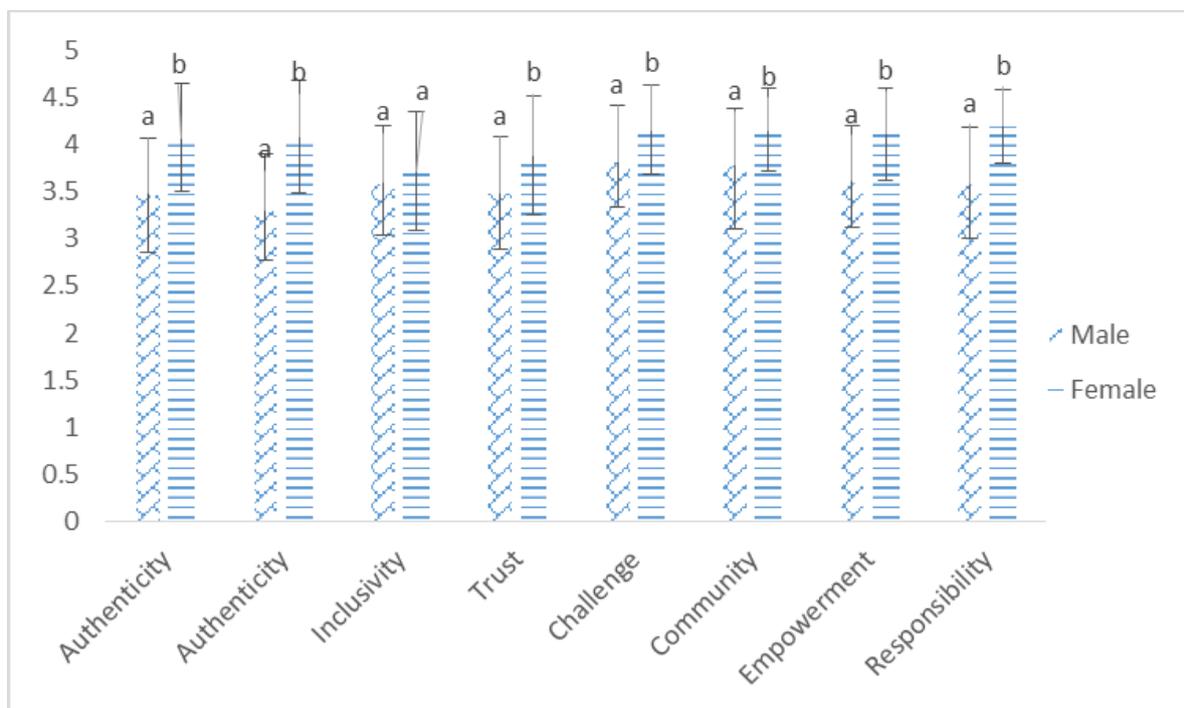
		Mean± SD	<i>t</i> (df=70)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Authenticity	M	3.48±0.63	-4.17	0.00	-0.59	-0.87	-0.31
	F	4.07±0.57					
Reciprocity	M	3.31±0.54	-5.75	0.00	-0.77	-1.04	-0.50
	F	4.08±0.59					
Inclusivity	M	3.60±0.57	-0.83	0.41	-0.12	-0.40	0.17
	F	3.72±0.63					
Trust	M	3.49±0.60	-2.69	0.01	-0.39	-0.68	-0.10
	F	3.88±0.63					
Challenge	M	3.82±0.48	-2.96	0.00	-0.33	-0.56	-0.11
	F	4.15±0.47					
Community	M	3.79±0.68	-2.63	0.01	-0.35	-0.62	-0.09
	F	4.15±0.44					
Empowerment	M	3.61±0.49	-4.31	0.00	-0.50	-0.73	-0.27
	F	4.11±0.49					
Responsibility	M	3.59±0.59	-5.16	0.00	-0.60	-0.84	-0.37
	F	4.19±0.39					
TOTAL	M	3.59±0.28	-7.88	0.00	-0.46	-0.57	-0.34
	F	4.05±0.21					

The *p* values under the *Sig.* column showed that except for the inclusivity value, the differences between the male and female learners' attitudes towards other partnership value components were statistically significant. Finally, Friedman test was used to test for the differences between the eight value components of the PA regarding their motivational effect and the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Friedman Test for Comparing Motivational Effects of the Partnership Values for Both Genders

	M				F				
	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.	
Authenticity	4.07	24.53	7	0.00	Authenticity	4.85	20.950	7	0.004
Reciprocity	3.38				Reciprocity	4.82			
Inclusivity	4.54				Inclusivity	3.11			
Trust	3.89				Trust	3.76			
Challenge	5.58				Challenge	5.01			
Community	5.4				Community	4.85			
Empowerment	4.49				Empowerment	4.74			
Responsibility	4.65				Responsibility	4.86			

The results suggested that the highest motivational value from both the female and male participants' point of view were for the challenge value component; however, reciprocity and inclusivity were the value components with the lowest motivational values from the male and female participants' point of view, respectively. The bar chart below also represents the differences.

**Figure 1.** Comparing the Motivational Effects of the Partnership Values for Both Genders

In order to present the final results, three interview questions along with sample responses have been recorded below.

Q # 1. What do you think is the rationale behind the PA?

“Language learners can achieve success by setting their own goals and by directing their studies towards their own expectations.”

“Students can help themselves achieve their goals by determining their own language needs and by defining why they want to learn the language.”

“Having goals and expectations leads to increased motivation, which in turn, leads to a higher level of language competence.”

Q # 2. Do you feel belonging and being valued in a group?

“For me, the feeling of being a member of the group is one of the strongest motivational factors.”

“Group work can relax me and enhance the friendly atmosphere, which will increase the desire and attitude to learn and develop the language skills.”

“I think a learner-centered, low-anxiety classroom environment makes me feel valued and has a great impact on my language acquisition.”

Q # 3. Do you participate eagerly in the group activities?

“Feeling safe and comfortable encourages me to take chances.”

“When I work in a group, I feel more interested and motivated to read aloud or speak in front of others in the class without the fear of being criticized.”

“A safe and comfortable environment in which I feel like a part of the whole is one of the most significant factors in encouraging motivation and good attitude.”

Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, and to answer the first two questions addressed in the study, both male and female EFL participants held positive attitude towards the PA. Although the participants' positive attitude towards the eight value components of the PA was of statistical significance, female participants held higher positive attitude comparing to the male participants which is in line with Eshghinejad (2016) and also with Mori and Gobel, (2006). This difference was statistically significant for all the value components except for the inclusivity value. Such a finding suggests that female EFL students are more likely to be successful in team-work and group activities. It is important to note that, most probably, students have different individual experiences of partnership and engagement. Different factors such as age, gender, level of proficiency, and motivation may influence such experiences. In this relation, it is claimed that students who naturally have this tendency to

enjoy their learning experience, most favorably evaluate the PA and their engagement in the learning process. Those with intrinsic motivation to learn usually immerse in the learning process and learn more deeply while the manifestation of learning for those with extrinsic motivation is surface learning (Pauli, Raymond-Barker, & Worrell, 2016).

In relation to the third question, the results indicated that the challenge value component had the highest motivational value for both male and female participants. It means all the participants were into taking risks and developing and practicing new ways of doing and learning. Through learning another language, one will gain access into a new perspective, understand the interdisciplinary connections, and promote intercultural understanding. In teaching another language, different methods and approaches are employed to satisfy the requirements of the course and teach the language as effectively as possible. Collaborative/cooperative language learning and teaching has long been used to teach English to the students of other languages. As an exhaustive form of cooperative teaching and learning, PA, with an especial focus on students-as-partners, encompasses the students' involvement and their cooperation in all aspects of language learning and teaching including materials development, learning, teaching, and assessment. Based on the participants' responses to the questionnaire items, partnership gives them the right to choose topics and tasks, participate in course design, decision makings, assessment processes, and encourages them to participate in the learning process actively and more meaningfully which was also underpined by Cook-Sather et al. (2014).

Reciprocity had the lowest motivational value for the male participants which supports the finding that female participants held higher positive attitude towards the PA. The results also revealed that mutual fairness and respect, as well as having equal chance to get involved, give the participants more confidence to work in group; however, inclusivity proved to have the lowest motivational value for the female participants indicating that there exist preventive barriers to have equal chance to get involved in partnership practices. The participants' positive attitude towards the community component of the PA indicates that partnership develops the sense of belonging to the group and makes the learners feel being valued and learn better in group which is supported by Thomas (2012) and also Lech et al. (2017).

In relation to the empowerment value, the participants' positive attitude means having equal power and value contributes to the attainment of the group objectives which is in line with SooHoo (1993) who claimed empowerment encourages students to learn, and Barnes, et al., (2010) who maintained that changing the power relations can lead to more gains for the

students. Before establishing any kind of collaboration, partnership and collaboration need to be a balance-centered approach. Such an aim can be achieved through balancing the power relations in the classroom. Furthermore, trust and mutual respect as other values of the PA can foster the students' engagement and promote their commitment to the group which is supported by Tschannen-Moran (2004).

The participants' positive attitude towards the responsibility value highlights the importance of maintaining mutual fairness and respect from their viewpoint. They claimed that creating a friendly and low-stress atmosphere in the classroom, being expected to take responsibility of their own learning, as well as the learning of their peers, and having the opportunity to have a degree of autonomy in their choices contributed to their success and higher achievements which is line with Kuh (2009) and Cook-Sather and Aug (2013). Based on the participants' responses to the interview questions, partnership provides the students opportunities to take responsibilities and develop better personalities. This is also reinforced by Kalantar Goreyshi et al. (2013) and Shirani et al. (2016). It means, as a continuous process, undergraduate students need to reflect on their identity as learners. It makes their meaningful engagement possible and gives them more confidence to get involved.

In the EFL context, it is important to understand the dynamic nature of the partnership and its constant function. It is also essential to explain the underlying partnership values and principles to the students and staff, because it can significantly increase the opportunity for more interaction. In general, wide spectrum of activities are involved in different types of partnership. In educational settings, such activities encompass various forms of relationships among those involved such as university staffs, administrators, teachers, and students. In universities, these activities are employed to increase and broaden participation. The objective is to promote the relationship between the students, particularly undergraduate students, students and teachers, also students and faculties of education. Such partnership activities entail organized initial teacher-training programs, enlightening the students as to the nature of partnership and participation, and the way to take advantage of such activities.

Conclusion

The findings of the study lead us to conclude that there are some other factors rather than the language learners' talents and language abilities such as motivation and attitude which may influence the efficiency of the learning process and the learners' academic achievements. The integration and internalization of the partnership values can help in shaping the students'

participation and motivate them to engage in the learning process and gain more. Successful partnership draws upon shared values, shared goals, mutual commitment, and a wide range of expertise and material resources. Effective partnership working will be gained through collaborative enquiry which promotes and drives exchange of understanding and learning across the membrane between the partners.

It is of utmost importance to prepare through explicit discussion of the underlying principles, values, and ethos of the partnership pedagogies to promote perceptions of formal teaching and learning based on the partnership pedagogies. In this relation, modifying traditional teaching methods, and modeling and practicing partnership through the development of learning communities can foster future research and development. In addition, in order to create a friendly, enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom and make the learning process more attractive for the learners, teachers need to build up rapport with their students. It is important that teachers employ more effective approaches and strategies to create positive attitudes among the students toward the language learning. Partnership activities can boost the learners' self-confidence and motivation. Students' engagement and their willingness to participate in the partnership activities positively affect the quality of the classroom discussion and enhance the opportunity for learning. Teachers need to help the learners set their learning objectives and help them in pursuing them by trying to immerse the students in the language learning process.

This study was conducted in a restricted setting, so its findings cannot be generalized to every EFL context. EFL learners begin to learn the language at different ages and have different language backgrounds and experiences. Hence, the age of the learners can influence the way they perceive the foreign language. In the future, interested researchers can replicate the study in other similar settings and with drawing up on larger data population and different age groups to examine if they find the same or similar results. Similar studies can also be conducted in other disciplines to investigate the role of attitude and motivation towards the partnership values in the individuals' overall success.

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Appendix

Questionnaire on the Role of Partnership Values in Motivating Students' Participation in Learning and Teaching Processes

The objective of this study is to investigate how Partnership values such as authenticity, reciprocity, inclusivity, trust, challenge, community/plurality, empowerment, and responsibility are important to motivate students' participation in group activities. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. The researcher assures you that the analysis/ your response / opinion will be kept highly confidential and will only be used for the current research. None of the research outcomes or components will be used for any other purpose except purely academic.

Age -----

Gender -----

Years completed at university -----

Read the following statements and number each of the items based on your personal perception according to the following scale.

Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1)

-1- There is a rationale behind the participants' engagement.
-2- All participants contribute to the partnership honestly.
-3- All participants know about the objectives of the partnership.
-4- The ultimate goal of the Partnership Approach is to enhance learners' learning.
-5- All participants eagerly engage in the partnership.
-6- The features of the Partnership Approach enable me to be an active learner.
-7- Partnership makes me feel less lost in the classroom.
-8- This kind of learning is quite interesting and enjoyable.
-9- Partnership Approach provides opportunities for all the potential participants to have equal chance to get involved.
-10- No barrier prevents students from getting involved in group activities.
-11- I like it that all participants contribute in deciding about and designing teaching material.
-12- I like it that participants are both learners and teachers in the same classroom.
-13- I feel more confident to speak in a group.
-14- There is mutual fairness and respect in the group.
-15- I feel safe and easy in the group.

-16- All participants try to help each other in achieving the group objectives.
-17- My active interaction with peer students and the teacher is more and can help me learn better.
-18- More discussion is generated that is challenging and leads to better understanding of the material.
-19- Partners freely take risks and are encouraged to critique.
-20- Participants develop and practice new ways of doing and learning.
-21- Partnership Approach and collaborative learning make the class less stressful for the students.
-22- Partnership encourages learning through collaboration and I can achieve more when learning through partnership in a group.
-23- Learning through experimentation and participation is much more effective than mere receiving of information from the teacher.
-24- I like observing what other students do and how they participate.
-25- Students learn interesting tips regarding how to improve their learning.
-26- It is a good way to test our knowledge and abilities and have more control over our learning.
-27- All participants have power and value in the group.
-28- All partners engage in constructing new ways to attain the group objectives.
-29- Providing and receiving peer feedback is more effective than in other forms and makes students more responsible.
-30- This kind of activity encourages me to develop solutions for the problems I encounter.
-31- Partnership Approach gives opportunities for both the teacher and the students to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively.
-32- All participants take responsibility for their roles in the group and the contributions they make.