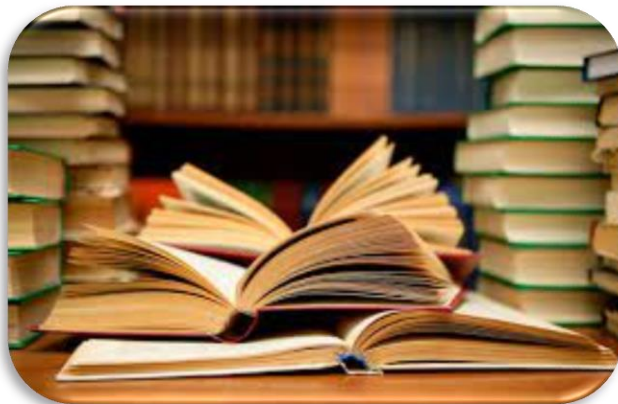**Research Paper**

A Comparative Study on Novice and Experienced EFL Teachers' Expected and Feared Possible Selves: A Mixed-Methods Approach

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ABSTRACT

Professional identity constitutes a main part of the English language teaching (ELT) system. This study aimed at investigating and comparing male and female novice and experienced EFL teachers' expected and feared possible selves. In so doing, a sequential exploratory mixed methods design was used. The target population of the study included all male and female EFL teachers teaching at private language institutes of Iran. The sample of the study included a total number of 30 (15 males and 15 females) EFL teachers from private language institutes in different provinces of Iran through available sampling. Fifteen teachers were categorized as novice teachers (those with 1-5 years of teaching experience) and fifteen ones as experienced teachers (those with more than 5 years of teaching experience). To collect the data, a written reflective journal was used. The collected data were analyzed through qualitative thematic analysis. The results showed that the following expected possible selves were identified for novice and experienced EFL teachers: Professional Improvement, Enthusiasm to Learn Teaching Online, Building Warm Relations with Students, and Seeking to Learn New Teaching Methods. Moreover, the following feared possible selves were identified for novice and experienced EFL teachers: Being Known as an Unsuccessful Teacher, Lack of Ability to Manage Students, Being Exhausted, and Losing Job Satisfaction. Moreover, the results showed that experienced and novice EFL teachers do not significantly differ regarding their expected and feared possible selves. Finally, it was shown that male and female EFL teachers do not significantly differ regarding their expected and feared possible selves. The results have implications for EFL teachers, teacher education curriculum planners, teacher trainers and future researchers.

Keywords: *Identity; Possible Selves; Professional Identity; Teaching Experience*

هویت حرفه ای مهمترین بخش نظام آموزش زبان انگلیسی (ELT) را تشکیل می دهد. هدف این مطالعه بررسی و مقایسه خودهای ممکن مورد انتظار و مورد ترس معلمان زن و مرد تازه کار و با تجربه زبان انگلیسی می باشد. در همین راستا، از یک طرح ترکیبی اکتشافی متوالی استفاده شد. جمعیت هدف این مطالعه شامل کلیه معلمان زبان انگلیسی زن و مرد می شد که در موسسات خصوصی آموزش زبان در ایران فعالیت می کنند. نمونه این مطالعه شامل ۳۰ معلم زبان انگلیسی (۱۵ مرد و ۱۵ زن) از موسسات خصوصی آموزش زبان در استان های مختلف ایران بود که از بین نمونه های در دسترس انتخاب شدند. پانزده معلم به عنوان معلم تازه کار (افرادی که دارای سابقه تدریس ۵-۱ سال بودند) و پانزده نفر به عنوان معلمان با تجربه (افرادی که سابقه تدریس آنها بیش از ۵ سال بود) طبقه بندی شدند. برای گردآوری داده ها، از دفترچه ثبت تاملی وقایع روزنامه استفاده شد. داده های گردآوری شده به روش تحلیل موضوعی کیفی تجزیه و تحلیل شدند. نتایج گویای آن هستند که خودهای ممکن مورد انتظار زیر برای معلمان تازه کار و با تجربه زبان انگلیسی شناسایی شدند: بهبود حرفه ای، اشتیاق برای یادگیری نحوه آموزش آنلاین، برقراری روابط صمیمانه با زبان آموزان و تلاش برای یادگیری روش های نوین تدریس. افزون بر این، خودهای ممکن مورد ترس زیر برای معلمان تازه کار و با تجربه زبان انگلیسی شناسایی شدند: شناخته شدن به عنوان معلم ناموفق، عدم توانایی در مدیریت دانش آموزان، خسته و فرسوده شدن و از دست دادن رضایت شغلی. افزون بر این، نتایج نشان دادند که معلمان تازه کار و با تجربه آموزش زبان انگلیسی تفاوت معنی داری از نظر خودهای ممکن مورد انتظار و مورد ترس ندارند. در نهایت مشاهده شد که معلمان زن و مرد زبان انگلیسی تفاوت معنی داری از نظر خودهای ممکن مورد انتظار و مورد ترس ندارند. نتایج حاوی نکات ضمنی مهمی برای معلمان زبان انگلیسی، برنامه ریزان تحصیلی تربیت معلم، مربیان معلمان و پژوهشگران آتی است.

کلمات کلیدی: هویت، خودهای ممکن، هویت حرفه ای، تجربه تدریس

INTRODUCTION

Professional identity constitutes a main part of the English language teaching (ELT) system. In the recent years, much emphasis has been put on the teachers' identity formation (Sadeghi & Sahragard, 2016). As put by Kumaravadivelu (2012), for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to be completely aware of their teaching self, they should be informed of their professional identities, thinking, and values. Further, recently, the research path on successful teaching has shifted its orientation from the focus on specific EFL teachers' features to their self and professional identity (Karimi & Mofidi, 2019; Richards, 2008). Moreover, teacher professional identity has taken the ELT researchers' attention in the recent years (Sancar et al., 2021). According to Nguyen (2008), professional identity was proposed for the first time in educational research in 1990s and soon it was turned into one of the main topics in the field of ELT. Gradually, this notion found its way in research in the field, and consequently concerns about it increased (Mahendra, 2020).

Closely related to this, possible selves as a part of identity formation is connected to how people conceive their future (Hamman et al., 2010). Possible selves refer to the ideal selves one seeks to become, could become and fear to become (Day et al., 2006; Mahendra, 2020). In fact, both 'self' and 'identity' are complex constructs because they draw on major and diverse theoretical and research areas, such as philosophy, psychology, sociology and psychotherapy (Day et al., 2006). According to Day et al. (2006), the early writers tended to view self as an essence which is singular, unified and stable and which can be little affected by people's contexts and biographies. According to Markus and Nurius (1986), two main aspects of possible selves in possible selves theory are expected and feared possible selves. Expected possible selves represent what persons would like to become; feared possible selves represent what persons are afraid of becoming. According to possible selves theory, expected selves are vital to behavioral adaptation. Moreover, possible selves theory suggests that feared selves are instrumental in continuance of behavioral adaptation (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Moreover, there is evidence showing that EFL teaching experience influences professional identity formation. This is documented by the proved interplay between professional identity and teaching experience as the basic element of social identity that (Nagatomo, 2012). As argued by Nagatomo (2012), EFL teachers' professional identity formation is under the effect of experience features that affect formation of job trajectories. This is convincing enough to hypothesize that teaching experience may also influence EFL teachers' defining their possible selves in the future. However, this has not been explored as it deserves, to the best knowledge of the researcher.

Given that possible selves formation is not a one-shot process but is occurred continuously under the influence of various factors, investigating the possible effects of the potential variables including teaching experience would be informative and uncovers more in-depth aspects of possible selves (Nazari & Molana, 2020; Sancar et al., 2021).

But reviewing the existing literature shows that the procedure of possible selves formation in EFL teachers has not been treated richly by the previous researchers. In this scarcity, an eye-catching topic which has just been studied in few studies is the role of teaching experience and gender in the formation of possible selves formation in EFL teachers. Moreover, most of the studies in this regard has not been conducted in the context of Iran. The other aspect of the problem is that mixed-method design has not

been followed in the related studies. In order to bridge this gap, this study was set out to answer the following research questions:

1. How do EFL teachers define their expected and feared possible selves in the future?

2. Is there any significant difference between experienced and novice EFL teachers regarding their expected and feared possible selves?

3. Is there any significant difference between male and female EFL teachers regarding their regarding their expected and feared possible selves?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional identity and possible selves have been explored in several studies. More recent studies are reviewed here. Chen et al. (2016) explored EFL teachers' possible selves to see what factors contribute to the construction of teachers' possible selves. Three main factors were recognized in the construction of teachers' possible selves: Personality-related factors, contextual factors, and sociocultural factors. Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, Tavakoli and Hamman (2016) investigated the role of gender of EFL teacher in forming their possible selves and showed that male and female EFL teachers' possible selves are not significantly different. Nazari and Molana (2020) examined the trajectory of identity construction in a case study on a novice EFL teacher. The findings confirmed that policy-makers, students, parents, peers, and the teacher herself have a role in the formation of professional identity of the teacher. Parsi and Ashraf (2020) investigated the connections among pedagogical experience, professional identity, and critical thinking in EFL teachers. Based on measures of Pearson correlations, EFL teachers' pedagogical experience and professional identity were significantly related. A similar association was reported between their critical thinking and professional identity. In another recent study on identity formation of teachers in online settings, Nazari and Seyri (2021) addressed this issue through their exploration of changes in the identity formation of teachers from face-to-face to distance learning classroom settings during the COVID-19 outbreak. The researchers found that online teaching affects EFL teachers' professional identity construction. Amiri Shayesteh and Baleghizadeh (2022) addressed English teachers' perceptions of their professional identity. The findings showed that merits, challenges and needs of professional development serve as the important elements of EFL teachers' professional identity. Coşgun and Savaş (2023) sought to investigate professional identity development of EFL teachers who are already teaching at high schools. The findings confirmed that some expectations and fears play the most important role in professional identity formation of high school teachers. The reviewed studies show that EFL teachers' possible selves formation has not been explored as connected to teachers' experience. This research gap is the topic of the present study.

METHOD
Design of the Study
The present study benefited from a sequential exploratory mixed methods design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McMillan, 2000). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), in this type of design, the qualitative data precede the qualitative data.

Participants

Male and female EFL teachers teaching at private language institutes of Iran were considered as the target population of the study. The sample of the study included a total number of 30 (15 males and 15 females) EFL teachers from private language institutes in different provinces of Iran through available sampling. They were selected through virtual groups of EFL teachers in Telegram. Fifteen teachers were categorized as novice teachers (those with 1-5 years of teaching experience) and fifteen ones as experienced teachers (those with more than 5 years of teaching experience). This categorization was supported in the existing literature (Motallebzadeh & Kazemi, 2018). The age range of the participants was 30-45. Research ethics was observed in the sampling procedure by informing the participants of the aims of the present study. Moreover, they were promised about their personal information anonymity and confidentiality.

Instruments

Demographic Information Scale

A demographic information scale was used to collect the information on the participants' gender and teaching experience.

Reflective Journal

To collect the data, a written reflective journal was used. Reflective journaling is a participatory research method to elicit individuals' perceptions in the form of creative expressions, self-reflection and participatory act (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). In the present study, the participants were asked to write whatever comes to their mind regarding their future fears and expectations in teaching profession without any limitation in the form of reflective journals in English. English was the preference of the participants themselves.

Data Collection Procedure

To start data collection, following the research morality, the sample was selected. Then, they were informed about the objectives of the study. Next, they were asked to write whatever comes to their mind related to their future fears and expectations in teaching profession without any time constraint. For the convenience of the participants, they were asked to write their reflective journal in English in Telegram and send it to the researcher. The collected written reflective journals were exposed to data analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data analysis was done through qualitative thematic analysis in four steps (Creswell & Clark, 2007). In the first step, the researcher attempted to familiarize herself with the data by looking through the reflective journals. In the second step, the main phrases or sentences showing the participants' views about their future fears and expectations in teaching profession were highlighted. In the third step, the similar highlighted sentences or phrases were categorized under the same themes. In the fourth step, the highlighted phrases or sentences were compared with the themes to corroborate the accuracy of the thematic analysis. For

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comparison of male and female, as well as experienced and novice EFL teachers' expected and feared possible selves, Chi-square test was run.

RESULTS
Results of the First Research Question
To answer the first research question *How do EFL teachers define their expected and feared possible selves in the future?* the following expected possible selves were identified for male and female novice and experienced EFL teachers through the qualitative thematic analysis:

Professional Improvement
Male novice Teacher 4 (T4) stated:

I deeply expect to improve in English teaching. Job improvement is very important for me in the future. This is achieved through different means including teaching experience.

In the words of male experienced T1:

A goal of mine that is pivotal for me in teaching is to enhance the quality of my teaching. Being a developed teacher is a significant matter for me that I expect to touch in the next 10 years. Development in teaching is a favorite thing for me as a teacher.

Female experienced T18 stated:

I want to be a professional teacher. I use whatever is at my hand to be a developed person. I set this as my goal.

Enthusiasm to Learn Teaching Online
In the saying of male experienced T8:

We live in a world replete with diverse technological opportunities for education. Although I already use some simple forms of educational technologies in the classes, I wish to expand my knowledge and practice of applying various technologies in my job.

As stated by female novice T20:

I am a hot proponent of online teaching. This is why I like to be digitally literate. I try to invite technology to my teaching to transform my teaching method.

In the opinion of female experienced T30:

Technological advancements have surrounded teachers. They have no way but to take advantage of technological education. Fortunately, the ground is relatively ready for this.

Building Warm Relations with Students
As expressed by male novice T9:

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A thing which is not less important than content knowledge in teaching is having good relations with the students. At the moment, I think my relation with my students is a bit unfriendly. I expect to make better relations with them.

According to male experienced T10:

To build better relations in the classroom environment is my expected aim. Teachers should be friends of students so that classroom is not a boring place for them. If students like their teacher, they learn better.

According to female experienced T14:

I work hardly to build a warm atmosphere in the classroom. This strategy helps me to attract my students' attention to instruction and lessons.

Seeking to Learn New Teaching Methods

As perceived by male experienced T3:

The time has reached to substitute traditional teaching approaches with new ones. Needs of new generation of students are different from those of previous generations. This means that traditional methods do not work for new generations. I seek to increase my knowledge of new methods with any possible means.

As said by female novice T12:

Those days have passed wherein one or two teaching methods were popular throughout the World. Now, we live in the era of multi-Methodism. I expect to become familiar with innovative methods.

As viewed by female experienced T16:

I am working to find about new teaching methods. Being in the same path with new teaching methods is a green point for me.

Moreover, the following feared possible selves were identified for novice and experienced EFL teachers:

Being Known as an Unsuccessful Teacher

In the words of male novice T2:

I fear to be classified as an unsuccessful teacher among surrounding people. This will threaten my position in the society. I want to avoid any thing which leads to a bad fame for me.

According to male experienced T5:

Teaching success is a great achievement and every normal teacher tries to be known as a successful teacher among students and colleagues and even administrators. A thing that is very frightening for me is that others put me in the circle of unsuccessful teachers.

In the saying of female novice T11:
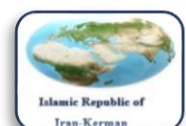
I'm afraid of failure. I feel so sorry if I fail to achieve my goals. I fear that other teachers belittle me due to my defeat. Lack of Success is a big defeat for me. I do my efforts to be successful.

According to female experienced T17:
Others' thinking about me is very important to me. I fear others' negative attitudes about me. I fear lest others think that I am unsuccessful in teaching.

Lack of Ability to Manage Students

As said by male experienced T5:
Class control is an important and daunting part of EFL teaching. A nightmare of teaching is to control classroom. This problem is intensified by naughty students' behavior in the class. I fear to be slave of these students and lose the thread of class control.

According to female novice T15:
A teacher knows that students should be managed well in classroom. But, different procedures are needed for classroom management. I am really anxious about classroom management.

As said by female experienced T13:
A beginning stage of successful EFL teaching is identification of helpful processes for managing the classroom. I think I am weak in this aspect of teaching. This makes me nervous because it is a big weak point for every teacher.

Being Exhausted

As worded by male novice T7:
I fear that burnout exhausts me very soon. Unfortunately, our job is susceptible to burnout which is exhausting very much. Demotivating factors outnumber motivating factors in teaching profession.

As suggested by male experienced T3:
I don't want to be weakened by exhaustion and boredom. I am anxious that my performance is debilitated by such elements as low wage, crowded classes, low proficiency students, etc.

As said by female experienced T30:
Job fatigue is a bad syndrome and I dislike it. Depreciation is what prevents teachers from teaching outcomes.

Losing Job Satisfaction

According to male novice T9:
Feeling satisfaction in your job is the biggest pleasure any teacher can feel. I am concerned with this satisfaction and fear to lose this. When I am not satisfied with my job, nothing in it is enjoyable for me.

As put by male experienced T10:

I see my colleagues who are like robots with no satisfaction from teaching. I'm trying my best to prevent generation of this state in myself. I care my emotions to remain absorbed in my job. I love my job and don't want to be an unsatisfied teacher.

As expressed by female experienced T18:

Being unsatisfied in teaching is like an enemy for teachers. Teachers should combat it in any possible way. I fear losing teaching satisfaction.

Results of the Second Research Question

To answer the second research question *Is there any significant difference between experienced and novice EFL teachers regarding their expected and feared possible selves?,* the frequency and percentage of the themes extracted for experienced and novice EFL teachers was calculated. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of the Themes Extracted for Experienced and Novice EFL Teachers

Theme	Frequency (experienced)	Percentage (experienced)	Frequency (novice)	Percentage (novice)
Professional Improvement	12	80	10	66.66
Enthusiasm to Learn Teaching Online	14	93.33	13	86.66
Building Warm Relations with Students	13	86.66	12	80
Seeking to Learn New Teaching Methods	12	80	11	73.33
Being Known as an Unsuccessful Teacher	13	86.66	13	86.66
Lack of Ability to Manage Students	14	93.33	13	86.66
Being Exhausted	15	100	14	93.33
Losing Job Satisfaction	12	80	11	73.33

Then, Chi-square test was run to see whether there is a significant difference between the frequency and percentage of the themes extracted for experienced and novice EFL teachers. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Chi-square Test Results for Difference between Experienced and Novice EFL Teachers

Test Statistics	Extracted themes
Chi-square	.13
Df.	1
Asymp. Sig.	.22

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As the Table 2 indicates, there is no significant difference between the frequency and percentage of the extracted themes for experienced and novice EFL teachers (p >.05). This implies that teaching experience does not play a significant role in how EFL teachers define their possible selves in the future.

Results of the Third Research Question

To answer the third research question *Is there any significant difference between male and female EFL teachers regarding their regarding their expected and feared possible selves?,* the frequency and percentage of the themes extracted for male and female EFL teachers was calculated. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage of the Themes Extracted for Male and Female EFL Teachers

Theme	Frequency (male)	Percentage (male)	Frequency (female)	Percentage (female)
Professional Improvement	13	86.66	12	80
Enthusiasm to Learn Teaching Online	12	80	14	93.33
Building Warm Relations with Students	14	93.33	13	86.66
Seeking to Learn New Teaching Methods	11	73.33	12	80
Being Known as an Unsuccessful Teacher	12	80	11	73.33
Lack of Ability to Manage Students	13	86.66	13	86.66
Being Exhausted	14	93.33	13	93.33
Losing Job Satisfaction	13	86.66	11	73.33

Then, Chi-square test was run to see whether there is a significant difference between the frequency and percentage of the themes extracted for male and female EFL teachers. The results are demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Chi-square Test Results for Difference between Male and Female EFL Teachers

Test Statistics	Extracted themes
Chi-square	.18
Df.	1
Asymp. Sig.	.35

As it can be seen in the Table 4, there is no significant difference between the frequency and percentage of the extracted themes for male and female EFL teachers (p >.05). This confirms that gender does not play a significant role in how EFL teachers define their possible selves in the future.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to answer three research questions. On the first research question *How do EFL teachers define their expected and feared possible selves in the future?* the following expected possible selves

were identified for novice and experienced EFL teachers: Professional Improvement, Enthusiasm to Learn Teaching Online, Building Warm Relations with Students, and Seeking to Learn New Teaching Methods. Moreover, the following feared possible selves were identified for novice and experienced EFL teachers: Being Known as an Unsuccessful Teacher, Lack of Ability to Manage Students, Being Exhausted, and Losing Job Satisfaction.

This finding is consistent with the study by Hamman et al. (2010) which showed that English teachers define their possible selves by showing willingness to professional development, fear of teaching inefficiency, and fear of inability to classroom management. Moreover, this result supports the results of the study by Conway and Clark (2003) that revealed that EFL teachers define their possible selves by expecting to learn teaching methodology and achieve professional development, and fearing that they seem as an ineffective and unknowledgeable teacher.

To interpret these findings, it can be argued that apparently regardless of their teaching experience, EFL teachers cannot define their possible selves without being concerned with teaching challenges and problems. This is why both novice and experienced teachers feared that they appear as an unsuccessful teacher and cannot manage classroom well, become exhausted, do not keep their job satisfaction feeling. Similarly, the results provide evidence that professional development in teaching is not a sense that is fully satisfied after some years of teaching experience. It is for this reason that even experienced teachers expected to reach professional development. Further, teaching quality as a necessity is not vanished with increase in teaching experience. This is why teaching experience could not prevent EFL teachers from thinking about teaching in online contexts, and building good class communication. Additionally, it can be interpreted that some types of selves are jointly formed in all teachers regardless of the amount of their teaching experience. In spite of the role of experience in different aspects and dimensions of teaching, this commonality reveals joints aspects of selves formation.

As far as the second research question *Is there any significant difference between experienced and novice EFL teachers regarding their expected and feared possible selves?* is concerned, expected and feared possible selves of novice and experienced teachers were not different. This showed that teaching experience does not play a role in how EFL teachers define their expected and feared possible selves in the future. This finding is supportive of the conclusion made by Coşgun and Savaş (2023) who aimed to explore the possible selves development of EFL teachers, with emphasis on teachers' experiences in teaching and proved that novice and experienced teachers' possible selves were similar. This outcome is also consistent with the investigation by Hamman et al. (2010) which reported no significant differences between possible selves of experienced and inexperienced EFL teachers. Also, similar with this study, Motallebzadeh and Kazemi (2018) regarded teachers' possible selves as unrelated to teachers' experience in teaching. Additionally, Day, Elliot and Kington (2005) argued that teaching experience cannot significantly influence possible selves formation in teachers. Finally, in Beijaard et al.'s (2005) and Hersi's (2018) study, it was concluded that teachers' possible selves formation is not significantly associated with their professional experience.

To justify these results, the argument by Urzua and Vasquez (2008) can be referred to according to which some mechanisms of teachers work consistently in different periods of their work. This consistency contributes to similar goal setting approaches and consequently, similar possible selves in teachers. It can also be suggested that teachers' possible selves are formed as impacted by a set of hopes

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and wishes, personal fears, professional ideas and contextual factors (Beijard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004) that are not related to working experience. The same argument has been put forth by Rodgers and Scott (2008) and Riahipour, Tavakoli, and Eslami Rasekh (2020) as they concluded that some aspects of possible selves are fixed and insusceptible to changes in the passage of time. As discussed above, although selves are not fixed constructs, they follow some prevalent patterns in their path of construction or reconstruction between novice and experienced teachers.

On the third research question *Is there any significant difference between male and female EFL teachers regarding their regarding their expected and feared possible selves?*, the results showed no significant difference between male and female EFL teachers regarding their expected and feared possible selves. In comparing these findings with those of the previous studies, consistent with the present study, in the research by Henry and Cliffordson (2013), male and female teachers were found to have similar possible selves. No more similar studies were found in the existing literature in this regard.

To justify these results, it is worth noting that possible selves are composed of a set of diverse factors which are shared in males and females, among which personal, social, affective, cognitive and metacognitive factors can be mentioned (Lee, Huang, Law & Wang, 2013). While diversity and variety are there in these factors, they act similarly in both genders in professional elements (Day & Kington, 2008). Moreover, as put by Beijaard et al. (2004), possible selves are agentic since they are linked to trans-personal tendencies to interpret contexts and justify actions. When something is agentic in a trans-personal manner, the probability of being influenced by personal factors is low. This is the main reason or rationale for the findings of this research question. In sum, gender was found as ineffective on how teachers define their possible selves.

Based on the results of the present study, it can be concluded that Iranian EFL teachers also seem to define their expected and feared possible selves in the future in terms of their tendency to achieve professional development, to learn teaching online, learn various teaching methods, and have conducive relations with students. Further, fear to be regarded as an ineffective teacher, incapability in classroom management, being burnt out, and loosing job satisfaction were the kinds of fears guiding how EFL teachers define their expected and feared possible selves in the future. What is more, the results support the conclusion that possible selves transformation in EFL teachers is not considerably influenced by teaching experience and gender. Related to this, it can be concluded that possibly construction/reconstruction of possible selves is under the impact of other worth-investigating features of EFL teachers than teaching experience. This conclusion confirms a previously dominant conclusion made in professional identity research according to which professional identity construction and reconstruction is a social and dynamic entity just to the same degree that it is a personal notion.

The results of the present study may broaden the knowledge base of EFL teachers' professional identity and possible selves. The results also open the door of the new avenues of academic endeavors on EFL teachers' possible selves. They can broaden scholars' views of how different factors can/cannot be influential on EFL teachers' possible selves construction/reconstruction. Additionally, the results contribute to unravelling detailed aspects of EFL teachers' possible selves formation. Based on the outcomes, teacher education curriculum planners are recommended to develop future courses for in-service and student teachers in a way that they can be theoretically educated regarding the fears and

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expectations that guide both novice and experienced teachers' possible selves reconstruction. Finally, teacher trainers are suggested to inform in-service and student teachers about the expectations and fears they may expose in their job.

To add to the validity of the findings of the present study, future researchers are recommended to replicate this study with a larger sample size. Moreover, exploring the role of other factors such as age of EFL teachers in their possible selves formation is worth tackling. Moreover, replicating the present study via a quantitative design may support the findings. Finally, investigating long-term changes in possible selves of EFL teacher can lead to informative results.

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