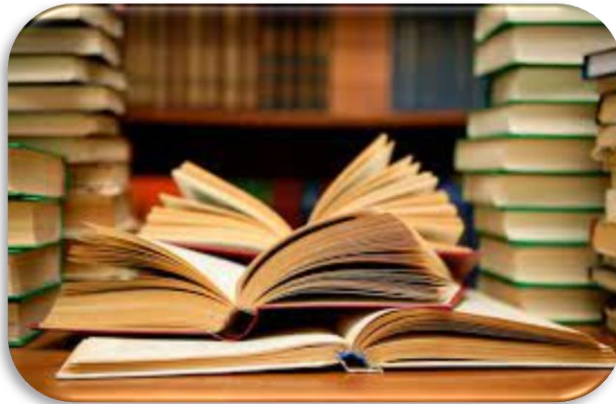


**Research Paper**



**An Investigation on EFL Teachers’  
Defining their Possible Selves in the  
Future: Teaching Experience in Focus**  
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**Received: 26 May, 2023**

**Accepted: 16 July, 2023**

**ABSTRACT**

Possible selves of teachers are not formed overnight, but it is a continuous process on which different factors such as teaching experience may have a significant impact. This study aimed at investigating EFL teachers’ defining their possible selves in the future with a focus on their teaching experience. In so doing, a survey design was used. The target population of the study included all male and female EFL teachers teaching at public high schools of Iran. From the population, a total number of 180 (90 males and 90 females) English language teachers from high schools (N=90) in North West area of Iran participated in the study through available sampling. To collect the data, the Expected Self-goals Questionnaire, and The Selves I Fear Questionnaire were used. To analyze the collected data, descriptive statistics and MANOVA were run. The results showed that prospective teachers of public schools feared that they seem uninspired and were more task-focused than quality-focused; new teachers feared that they cannot control classes and were more task-focused than quality-focused; and experienced teachers of public schools sought to reach professional development and were more quality-focused than task-focused. Further, it was shown that three categories of teachers’ expected selves were significantly different. Moreover, three categories of teachers’ expected selves were different significantly concerning both expected quality-focused and expected task-oriented dimensions. More specifically, prospective teachers reported lower levels of expected professionalism and higher levels of expected learning to teach than the two other categories of teachers. The results of the current study may shed light on our knowledge of EFL teachers’ possible selves as well as the effect of teaching experience on the construction/reconstruction of EFL teachers’ possible selves.

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

**نکاشی در مورد مدرسان زبان انگلیسی در تعریف خودهای ممکن در آینده: با تمرکز بر نقش تجربه تدریس**

خودهای ممکن مدرسان یک شبه شکل نمی گیرد، بلکه فرآیندی مستمر است که عوامل مختلفی مانند تجربه تدریس ممکن است بر آن تأثیر بسزایی داشته باشد. این مطالعه با هدف بررسی تعریف خودهای ممکن در آینده در بین مدرسان زبان انگلیسی با تمرکز بر تجربه تدریس آنها انجام شد. برای انجام این کار، از طرح نظرسنجی استفاده شد. جامعه هدف پژوهش، کلیه مدرسان زن و مرد زبان انگلیسی بود که در دبیرستان های دولتی ایران تدریس می کردند. از این جامعه آماری، تعداد 180 نفر (90 مرد و 90 زن) مدرس زبان انگلیسی از دبیرستان های شمال غرب ایران به روش نمونه گیری در دسترس در پژوهش شرکت کردند. برای جمع آوری داده ها از پرسشنامه اهداف خود انتظاری و پرسشنامه خودی که من از آن می ترسم استفاده شد. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده های جمع آوری شده، از آمار توصیفی و تحلیل واریانس چندمتغیره استفاده شد. نتایج نشان داد که مدرسان آینده مدارس دولتی می ترسیدند که بی الهام به نظر برسند و بیشتر بر وظیفه متمرکز هستند تا کیفیت. مدرسان تازه کار می ترسیدند که نتوانند کلاس ها را کنترل کنند و بیشتر بر وظیفه متمرکز بودند تا کیفیت. و مدرسان باتجربه مدارس دولتی به دنبال دستیابی به رشد حرفه ای بودند و بیشتر بر کیفیت متمرکز بودند تا وظیفه. علاوه بر این، نشان داده شد که سه گروه مدرسان مورد مطالعه از لحاظ خود انتظاری به طور معناداری متفاوت بودند. علاوه بر این، سه گروه مدرسان در دو بعد کیفیت محور و وظیفه محور به طور معناداری با یکدیگر متفاوت بودند. نتایج مطالعه حاضر بر دانش ما از خودهای ممکن مدرسان زبان انگلیسی و همچنین تأثیر تجربه تدریس بر ساخت / بازسازی خودهای ممکن مدرسان زبان انگلیسی می افزاید. واژگان کلیدی: هویت، خودهای ممکن، هویت حرفه ای، تجربه تدریس

## INTRODUCTION

Professional identity is considered as one of the main components of each educational system including English language teaching (ELT) in Iran. The last two decades have been characterized by taking the notion of identity construction of teachers into account (Sadeghi & Sahragard, 2016). According to Kumaravadivelu (2012), to fully understand their teaching self, teachers should fully understand their professional identities, beliefs, and values. This implies that professional identity and teachers' role in teaching are closely interrelated. Today, the trend of research on effective teaching has moved from the emphasis on certain behaviors and competencies of teachers to teacher self, cognition, beliefs and professional identity that determines their behavior in the classroom (Karimi & Mofidi, 2019; Richards, 2008). In other words, in the recent years, effective teaching is not just considered as associated with certain competencies, characteristics and behaviors of teachers, but the emphasis is also on some other notions which play an important role in effective teaching, among which professional identity is an important one. The importance of teacher professional identity is prevalently observed in the recent trend taken by ELT researchers in general and teacher education researchers in particular (Rots et al., 2013). It has even been reported in some studies that learning to teach involves professional identity construction rather than knowledge acquisition (Nguyen, 2008).

The concept of possible selves as a dimension of identity development is related to the way people conceive their potential and their future (Hamman et al., 2010). Hamman et al. (2010) argue that possible selves present a theoretical ground for exploring future-related, identity-based, and goal-oriented thinking in the present, and the dominance of this thinking for self-regulation to achieve a state in the future. Possible selves are the ideal selves that humans wish to become very much, could become and fear to become (Day et al., 2006; Mahendra, 2020).

Another line of thinking put forth in this regard is that teaching experience affects professional identity. According to this, teachers' professional identity is characterized by its own peculiarities based on teaching experience differences. This argument is supported by referring to the interrelationship between professional identity and teaching experience as the fundamental structural component of social identity that specifies an individual from the angle of his/her membership in novice or experienced groups (Nagatomo, 2012). According to Nagatomo (2012), the professional identity of teachers is under experience constraints that affect the formation of their career trajectories. Given that possible selves are a main part of professional identity construction/reconstruction, it can be hypothesized that teaching experience may play a significant role in teachers' defining their possible selves in the future. However, this issue is among the under-investigated topics in the ELT research. In sum, with a view to the above arguments, it can be said that the possible selves of teachers are not formed overnight, but it is a continuous process on which different factors such as teaching experience may have a significant impact. Thus, it seems that investigating teachers' possible self-formation in relation to such factors leads to enlightening results. Consequently, exploring EFL teachers' possible self-formation and its associated changes in the passage of time have been the subject of debate in recent years (Nazari & Molana, 2020). Moreover, as evidenced in previous research (e.g., Sancar, Atal & Deryakulu, 2021), EFL teaching experience and possible self construction contribute to changes in each other bilaterally.



In spite of the above arguments, field observations show that little attention has been paid to the process of possible self-development in EFL teachers. Moreover, the role of such factors as teaching experience in possible self-formation has not been probed as they deserve. It cannot be neglected that some recent efforts have been conducted by Iranian researchers to investigate the professional identity of EFL teachers from different viewpoints. However, there is still research paucity concerning teachers' professional identity formation based on the selves theory, taking teaching experience into account in Iran as an EFL context. To be more particular, there is research scarcity on EFL teachers' possible self-construction, with a view to the role of teaching experience in this regard. To fill this gap, this study was launched to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. How do prospective, new, and experienced language teachers of public schools define their possible selves in the future, and how might their definition reflect a task versus quality focus?

RQ2. What differences might exist in the composition of public school language teachers' possible selves based on the teachers' status?

Since professional identity can be regarded as the core element of teacher learning that would help improve teaching and learning processes, this study can directly or indirectly contribute to teaching and learning improvements. Moreover, this study, by revealing a clear idea of past, current, and prospective selves of EFL teachers, assists teachers in constructing their beliefs of how to be and how to act in their teaching profession. Additionally, this study reveals the role of teaching experience as an important dimensions of teachers' selves and missing links in teacher professional identity research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Chen, Tigelaar, and Verloop (2016) aimed to gain a better picture of EFL teachers' selves. They analyzed several studies to explore the contributing factors to the formation of teachers' selves. They found three interrelated groups of factors that are involved in the formation of teachers' intercultural identities. (a) Factors that were associated with personality characteristics; for example, ideas towards language and culture; actual and perceived linguistic, intercultural, and teaching competence; and teachers' own language learning experiences. (b) Factors that were associated with the teaching context, such as relationships with their parents, colleagues, non-native English-speaking students, and teaching curricula. (c) Factors that were associated with the more general sociocultural context, including influences from society and family, and points of view toward the dominant culture and their own culture. Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, Tavakoli, and Hamman (2016) investigated EFL teachers' possible selves and showed that experience plays a significant role in the formation of possible selves among teachers. Nazari and Molana (2020) explored the path of identity formation in a novice English teacher. The findings revealed that the formation of identity is under the contribution of some groups of people including policy-makers, learners, parents, colleagues, and the teacher herself. 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' critical thinking and teaching experience were significantly related. A similar association was reported between their teaching experience and professional identity as well as between their critical thinking and professional identity. Furthermore, the findings from multiple regression analysis specified that teaching experience could



predict the professional identity of the participants. In another recent study on the 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 finally provided policy-makers and teachers with suggestions for promoting awareness among different groups on using technological instruments to accelerate the adjustment to online teaching practices. Amiri Shayesteh and Baleghizadeh (2022) aimed to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of their professional development in terms of their possible selves. The results indicated that benefits, barriers, and needs of professional development were the main components of EFL teachers' professional development perceptions. Coşgun and Savaş (2023) aimed to explore the possible self-development of EFL teachers, with emphasis on teachers' experiences in teaching at high schools. The findings demonstrated that novice and experienced teachers' possible selves were similar. It seems that research in the field of possible selves suffers from scarcity, specifically as influenced by different factors such as teaching experience. To fill this gap, the present study was conducted.

## METHOD

### Design of the Study

In this study, a survey design was used wherein the quantitative data were gathered and analyzed via a questionnaire to recognize the possible selves of teachers (McMillan, 2000).

### Participants

The target population of the study included all male and female EFL teachers teaching at public high schools in Iran. From the population, a total number of 180 (90 males and 90 females) English language teachers from high schools (N=90) in North West area of Iran, participated in the study through available sampling. Since the research considered teaching experience as a moderating variable, teachers were categorized according to their teaching experience (prospective, new and experienced teachers) based on their years of teaching EFL. The age range of the participants was 22-50. 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.

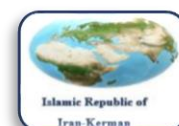
### Instruments

To collect the data, the following instruments were used:

#### Expected Self-goals Questionnaire

The Expected Self-goals Questionnaire, designed by Hamman et al. (2013), was used to identify the expected teacher's possible selves in terms of quality and task dichotomy. It consists of nine Likert-type six-point items in a range from 'absolutely do not expect' to 'absolutely do expect'. The reliability of the scale was calculated by Hamman et al. (2013) as .92. Moreover, they confirmed its validity through factor analysis.

#### Selves I Fear Questionnaire



The Selves I Fear Questionnaire, designed by Hamman et al. (2013), was used to measure the feared teacher possible selves of the participants. It consists of nine Likert-type six-point items in a range from absolutely do not fear this to absolutely do fear this. The reliability of the scale was calculated by Hamman et al. (2013) as .90 using internal consistency reliability indexes. Moreover, its validity was confirmed through factor analysis.

### Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Data collection of this study started with selecting the sample, taking research ethics into account. Then, the link between the two questionnaires (described above) was sent to the participants through accessible social networks so that sanitary protocols and social distance could be observed in a post-pandemic period. Next, the participants filled out the two questionnaires and returned them to the researcher. Data analysis was conducted at the quantitative level. That is, descriptive statistics, and MANOVA tests were run. Descriptive statistics aimed at uncovering the participants' expected and feared possible selves. MANOVA tests were run to explore differences regarding the possible selves, taking teachers' teaching experience into account.

## RESULTS

### Results for the first research question

To answer the first research question 'How do prospective, new and experienced language teachers of public schools define their possible selves in the future, and how might their definition reflect a task versus quality focus?', descriptive statistics of the expected and feared possible selves were run whose results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Three Groups of Public Schools Teachers' Possible Selves*

Variable	Professionalism	Learning to teach	Uninspired instruction	Loss of control	Uncaring teacher
<b>Prospective teachers</b>					
Mean	3.35	3.11	4.18	4.00	3.20
SD	.40	.78	.65	.51	.42
<b>New teachers</b>					
Mean	3.40	3.30	4.50	4.75	4.33
SD	.34	.48	.37	.95	.81
<b>Experienced teachers</b>					
Mean	4.77	4.50	3.41	3.35	3.67
SD	.36	.55	.61	.34	.40

As shown in Table 1, in prospective teachers of public schools, the highest mean was observed for the uninspired instruction sub-scale ( $M=4.18$ ). This shows that prospective teachers of public schools feared that they seemed uninspired. It also indicates that they were task-focused. In new teachers, the highest mean was related to the loss of control sub-scale ( $M=4.75$ ). According to this result, new teachers feared



that they could not control classes and they were task-focused. Finally, for inexperienced teachers, the highest mean belonged to professionalism ( $M=4.77$ ). Accordingly, it can be stated that experienced teachers of public schools sought to reach professional development. Thus, they were quality-focused.

### Results of the second research question

To answer the second research question ‘What differences might exist in the composition of public school language teachers’ possible selves based upon the teachers’ status?’, two tests of MANOVA were conducted.

To explore the differences among the three categories of teachers’ possible selves, a MANOVA test was run. Examination of Pillai’s Trace and Wilks’ Lambda, as shown in Table 2, indicates that the EFL teachers’ status has a significant contribution to their expected possible selves.

**Table 2**

*The result of Multivariate Analysis of the Public Schools Teachers’ Status Effect on their Expected Possible Selves*

Effect		Value	F	Error df	Sig.	Partial eta squared
ETPS	Pillai's Trace	0.98	29.67	87	0.0001	0.68
	Wilks' Lambda	0.59	13.92	85	0.0001	0.58

In the next step, the univariate effects of the public schools' EFL teachers’ status on dimensions of the expected possible selves were examined. The result of this analysis is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Expected Teacher Possible Selves (ETPS) Type by Status in Public Schools Teachers*

Variable	Prospective	New	Experienced	F	Sig	Effect size	Partial eta squared
<b>ETPS</b>							
<b>M</b>	4.22	4.60	4.80				
<b>SD</b>	.65	.46	.24	98.00	.000	.50	.022
<b>ETPS professionalism</b>							
<b>M</b>	3.35	3.40	4.77	112.55	.008	.76	.038
<b>SD</b>	.40	.34	.36				
<b>ETPS learning to teach</b>							
<b>M</b>	4.50	4.00	3.50	50.22	.003	.31	.004
<b>SD</b>	.78	.48	.55				

As it can be observed in Table 3, prospective, new, and experienced teachers’ expected selves were significantly different ( $F(2,87)=98.00$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial eta squared = .022). Moreover, prospective, new, and experienced teachers’ expected selves were different significantly concerning both expected quality-



focused (i.e., professionalism) ( $F(2,87) = 112.55$ ,  $p < .05$ , partial eta squared = .038) and expected task-oriented (i.e., learning to teach) dimensions ( $F(2,87) = 50.22$ ,  $p < .05$ , partial eta squared = .004)

As revealed by investigating the mean scores, prospective teachers expressed lower degrees of expected professionalism ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = .40$ ) in comparison to new ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .34$ ) and experienced teachers ( $M = 4.77$ ,  $SD = .36$ ). But prospective teachers showed higher degrees of expected learning to teach ( $M = 4.50$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) as compared to new ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = .48$ ) and experienced teachers ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = .55$ ).

To examine the differences in the three categories of teachers' feared task versus quality teacher possible selves, another MANOVA test was run whose results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*The Result of Multivariate Analysis of the Teachers' Status Effect on their Feared Possible Selves in Public Schools.*

Effect		Value	F	Error df	Sig.	Partial eta squared
ETPS	Pillai's Trace	2.78	11.60	86	0.0001	0.49
	Wilks' Lambda	1.13	7.51	84	0.0001	0.38

Examination of Pillai's Trace and Wilks' Lambda, as shown in Table 4, indicates that the public schools' EFL teachers' status has a significant contribution to their feared possible selves.

In the next step, the univariate effects of EFL teachers' status on dimensions of their possible selves were examined. The result of this analysis is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Feared Teacher Possible Selves (FTPS) Type by Status in Public Schools Teachers*

Variable	Prospective	New	Experienced	F	Sig	Effect size	Partial eta squared
<b>FTPS</b>							
<b>M</b>	4.28	3.30	3.10				
<b>SD</b>	.10	.67	.85	74.00	.001	.40	.013
<b>FTPS uninspired instruction</b>							
<b>M</b>	4.90	3.66	3.23	82.50	.000	.49	.019
<b>SD</b>	.10	.67	.85				
<b>FTPS loss of control</b>							
<b>M</b>	3.08	3.69	4.25	34.03	.009	.42	.037
<b>SD</b>	.81	.85	.74				



**FTPS  
uncaring  
teacher**

<b>M</b>	2.37	2.90	3.17	31.82	.005	.12	.025
<b>SD</b>	.71	.82	.70				

As demonstrated in Table 5, the feared possible selves of three categories of teachers were significantly different ( $F(2,87)=74.00$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial eta squared = .013). Moreover, the three categories of teachers were significantly different in terms of feared uninspired instruction ( $F(2,87) = 82.50$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial eta squared = .019), feared loss of control ( $F(2,87) = 34.03$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial eta squared = .037), and feared uncaring teacher ( $F(2,87)= 31.82$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial eta squared = .025).

Examination of the descriptive statistics also confirmed that prospective teachers demonstrated higher feared task-focused (i.e., uninspiring instruction) selves level ( $M = 4.90$ ,  $SD = .10$ ) than new teachers ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) and experienced teachers ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = .85$ ). On the other hand, experienced teachers demonstrated higher levels of feared loss of control ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = .74$ ) and uncaring teacher ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = .70$ ) as quality-focused selves, in comparison to new teachers ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = .85$ ), ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = .82$ ) and prospective teachers ( $M = 3.08$ ,  $SD = .81$ ), ( $M = 2.37$ ,  $SD = .71$ ).

These findings revealed that prospective teachers were more task-focused in considerations of their expected teacher possible selves, this is while new and experienced teachers were more quality-focused when considering future teacher possible selves.

## DISCUSSION

This study sought to answer two research questions. In this section, the results of the research questions are discussed and compared with those of the previous studies. On the first research question on how the three categories of teachers define their possible selves in the future, and how might their definition reflect a task versus quality focus?, it was shown that prospective teachers of public schools feared that they seem uninspired and were more task-focused than quality-focused; new teachers feared that they cannot control classes and were more task-focused than quality-focused; and experienced teachers of public schools sought to reach professional development and were more quality-focused than task-focused.

Consistent with this study, in the study by Hamman et al. (2010), prospective teachers defined their possible selves as showing higher feared uninspired instruction with task focus. Moreover, Hamman et al. (2010) reported a higher level of feared loss of control with task focus among new teachers. In the same vein, they showed that experienced teachers expressed a higher level of expected professionalism with quality focus. The same results were reported by Conway and Clark (2003).

To interpret these findings, it can be argued that since prospective teachers have no teaching experience, they conceive their possible selves in terms of their immediate teaching role and environment. That is, seemingly they cannot go beyond surface teaching characteristics and complexities and think deeply about what is really needed in the teaching profession. That is why they do not care about such dimensions as professionalism and teaching quality.

Similarly, new teachers' experience in teaching is not long enough to orient them toward professional quality. Accordingly, the dominant orientation in them is also the feared dimension of possible selves





(i.e., loss of control) and task focus. This convinces us to take it for granted that low experience does not make much difference in teachers' defining possible selves. In other words, changing possible selves requires relatively high experience in teaching.

Finally, experienced teachers, thanks to their high experience in teaching, are able to think beyond contextual and immediate teaching matters and seek to reach professional development and remain quality-focused. In their view, professionalism is more important than other teaching issues.

As far as the second research question on the differences in the composition of teachers' possible selves based upon the teachers' status is concerned, the expected selves of the three categories of teachers were significantly different. Moreover, the expected selves of the three categories of teachers were different significantly on both expected quality-focused and expected task-oriented dimensions. More specifically, prospective teachers reported lower levels of expected professionalism and higher levels of expected learning to teach than new and experienced teachers.

Further, the feared possible selves of the three categories of teachers were significantly different. In addition, statistically significant differences were shown for feared uninspired instruction, feared loss of control, and feared uncaring teacher: prospective teachers expressed higher degrees of feared task-focused selves in comparison to the two other categories of teachers. However, experienced teachers indicated higher degrees of feared loss of control and uncaring teachers as quality-focused selves, compared to the two other categories of teachers.

The results are consistent with several studies some of which are presented here. Consistent with this study, Hamman et al. (2010) reported significant differences between the possible selves of prospective, new and experienced teachers. In another similar study, Motallebzadeh and Kazemi (2018) described possible selves as stemming from teachers' experiences generated throughout their personal and working lives. Moreover, in line with the present study, Motallebzadeh and Kazemi (2018) found a significant association between possible selves and factors such as teaching experience. Additionally, Day, Elliot and Kington (2005) concluded that besides teachers' personal, and emotional aspects of teaching, their teaching experience plays a role in their possible self formation. Furthermore, in line with the present study, in Beijaard et al.'s (2005) study, it was suggested that teachers' possible self-formation is significantly associated with their professional experience. Last but not least, the findings are in line with Hersi's (2018) study which demonstrated that the generation of possible selves and teaching skills and experiences are interconnected notions.

To justify these results, the argument by Urzua and Vasquez (2008) can be referred to according to which motivation mechanisms of teachers work differently in different periods of their work. These differences lead to different goal orientations in teachers and consequently different possible selves in them. It can also be argued that teachers' possible selves are formed as influenced by a combination of hopes and fears, personal experiences, personal ideas and perceptions, environmental factors, etc. (Beijard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Possible selves may reflect teachers' future expectations for becoming a successful teacher, or their personal experiences from past experiences of being students of teachers with different identities. Another relevant line of argument is the one proposed by Rodgers and Scott (2008) which says that because selves are in process, they are subject to change in the passage of time.



Furthermore, the results convince us to accept that possible self-formation is under the influence of others in the same way it is affected by self. This is why experienced teachers who had more experiences of interactions with their colleagues and students were willing to achieve professional development. This reflects the fact that possible self-formation is both a personal and social process wherein some factors beyond the individual herself/himself have also a hand. The other line of argument which can be put forth in the interpretation of the results is that the formation of possible selves is a dynamic entity rather than a static one. Accordingly, environmental and situational factors including teaching experience can impact its construction and reconstruction (Riahipour, Tavakoli & Eslami Rasekh, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the teaching status of teachers played a significant role in their definition of their possible selves in the future, and how might their definition affect a task versus quality focus? The results are convincing enough to conclude that the possible selves notion is an EFL teacher characteristic that is under the significant effect of teaching experience. These lead us to conclude that the construction/reconstruction of possible selves is more affected by the professional features of the EFL teaching job. This conclusion confirms a previously dominant conclusion made in professional identity research according to which professional identity construction and reconstruction is a social process just to the same extent that is a personal process.

The results of the current study may shed light on our knowledge of EFL teachers' professional identity. The results of the present study also give direction to the new pieces of academic works on EFL teachers' professional identity, widening researchers' views of how different factors play a role in EFL teachers' possible self construction and reconstruction. As a whole, the results of the present study contribute to future researchers' broadening EFL teachers' possible selves knowledge base and research in ELT. Based on the results, ELT policymakers are suggested to design courses that are customized for EFL teachers teaching at different working life periods so that student teachers can be theoretically trained for the important professional skills that are necessary for them in teaching as a novice, new, or experienced teacher.

Future research can replicate the present study within a qualitative or mixed-methods approach. In this way, the validity of the present study is enhanced. Moreover, future studies can replicate the present study with other tools including reflective journals, observations, diaries, narratives, etc. Furthermore, this study was limited in terms of the setting, future studies can broaden the findings of this study by replicating it in a broader setting. Additionally, investigating the potential relationships between teachers' possible selves and such factors as students' English achievement, teaching effectiveness, teachers' professional development, job satisfaction, and so on may lead to enlightening results.

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