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Research Paper

Novice and Expert Teachers' Professional Identity: Examining the Role of Gender and Social Status among Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

This non-experimental study aimed to determine whether Iranian novice and expert EFL teachers had differing attitudes regarding professional identity (PI). It also measured if gender and various social statuses of high, mid, and low had any mediating role in novice and expert teachers' attitudes toward PI. Therefore, a 20-item PI questionnaire to which demographic variables of teaching experience, gender, and social status were attached was distributed through various means, including emails, social media platforms, and personal contacts due to sanitary protocols and during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. These results indicate that regardless of experience level, gender, or social status, teachers' attitudes toward professional identity remain consistent. The study suggests that factors such as gender and social status do not play a significant role in shaping teachers' perceptions of their professional identity. Also, the findings of the study can be beneficial for teachers by highlighting that their attitudes toward professional identity are not significantly influenced by gender or social status. This can help alleviate concerns or biases related to these factors and encourage teachers to focus on their individual growth and development.

Keywords: Expert Teachers; Novice Teachers; Professional Identity; Social Status

هویت حرفه‌ای معلمان مبتدی و مجرب: بررسی نقش جنسیت و وضعیت اجتماعی در میان زبان آموزان ایرانی رجبی

این پژوهش غیرآزمایشی به بررسی این موضوع می‌پردازد که آیا معلمان مبتدی و مجرب زبان انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی در ایران نگرش‌های متفاوتی نسبت به هویت حرفه‌ای (PI) دارند. همچنین نقش واسطه‌ای جنسیت و وضعیت‌های اجتماعی مختلف (بالا، متوسط و پایین) در نگرش معلمان مبتدی و مجرب نسبت به هویت حرفه‌ای نیز مورد بررسی قرار گرفته است. بنابراین، یک پرسشنامه ۲۰ سؤالی در زمینه هویت حرفه‌ای که متغیرهای جمعیتی تجربه تدریس، جنسیت و وضعیت اجتماعی به آن پیوست شده بود، به دلیل پروتکل‌های بهداشتی و در دوره همه‌گیری بیماری کووید-۱۹ از طریق ایمیل، شبکه‌های اجتماعی و تماس‌های شخصی توزیع شد. نتایج نشان می‌دهد که بدون توجه به سطح تجربه، جنسیت یا وضعیت اجتماعی، نگرش معلمان نسبت به هویت حرفه‌ای آنان پایدار باقی می‌ماند. این پژوهش نشان می‌دهد که عواملی چون جنسیت و وضعیت اجتماعی نقش قابل توجهی در شکل‌گیری نگرش معلمان نسبت به هویت حرفه‌ای آنان ایفا نمی‌کنند. همچنین، یافته‌های این مطالعه می‌تواند برای معلمان مفید باشد زیرا نشان می‌دهد که نگرش آنان نسبت به هویت حرفه‌ای تحت تأثیر قابل توجهی از جنسیت یا وضعیت اجتماعی قرار نمی‌گیرد. این می‌تواند به کاهش نگرانی‌ها یا سوگیری‌های مرتبط با این عوامل کمک کرده و معلمان را ترغیب به تمرکز بر رشد و توسعه فردی‌شان کند.

واژگان کلیدی: معلمان مجرب، معلمان مبتدی، هویت حرفه‌ای، وضعیت اجتماعی

Introduction

Different scholars (Beijaard et al., 2004; Cameron & Grant, 2017; Flores, 2020; Izadnia, 2015; Zhang et al., 2016) are increasingly recognizing the significance of constructing and cultivating Teachers' Professional Identity (TPI) as a primary emphasis during the early stages of teacher training and throughout one's career as an educator.

As Garcia et al. (2021) put it, the process of learning to become a teacher is intricate, involving a dynamic interplay between individual principles and the expectations and requirements of the teaching profession. This interplay can give rise to various perceptions that may lead to an identity crisis. Therefore, it is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of how this interplay evolves during the training of prospective teachers and the factors that can impact it. This understanding is crucial for enhancing the teaching profession. Professional identity is regarded as a conceptual framework for examining the ways in which teachers perceive and envision themselves in their profession, the roles and duties they undertake either voluntarily or through assignment, and their understanding of their work over the course of their teaching profession (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Korthagen, 2004).

Acquiring a deeper comprehension of the way teachers form their Professional Identity (PI) is crucial, as enhanced PI development has been associated with improved achievement, drive for professional growth, active involvement, and job stability (Hanna et al., 2020). While studies on the impact of PI on teacher professional identity have made significant progress, there is still limited knowledge concerning novice and expert teachers' professional identity, particularly in Iran, where there is a scarcity of empirical evidence.

Certainly, the journey of shaping one's identity becomes progressively complicated, particularly during the transition from being a pre-service teacher to becoming a novice and expert. According to Wang (2020), the period of transition from being a pre-service teacher to assuming the role of a fully responsible teacher is recognized as one of the most critical phases for shaping a professional identity. This aligns with the viewpoint of Alsup (2008), who asserted that the initial years of teaching are more challenging than staying in the profession as an experienced educator.

The significance of the current study is underscored by Kumaravadivelu's (2012) emphasis on the limited understanding of the manner in which teachers acquire knowledge due to the complex and challenging nature of the cognitive dimension of knowledge. The complexities involved in studying these ways of knowing pose considerable difficulty. Nevertheless, the outcomes derived from these investigations can contribute to novice teachers' recognition of expert teachers' thoughts and knowledge, their understanding of how expert teachers acquire and utilize their knowledge, and how they apply their knowledge in their professional practice. This, in turn, can assist novice teachers in better preparing themselves for their classes, thereby empowering teacher educators to make well-informed choices in the realm of teacher training.

Despite the numerous studies conducted on the topic of Professional Identity (PI) in various contexts (Aksoy, 2008; Çiftçi & Cin, 2018; Gibbons, 2020; Kalali Sani et al., 2021; Kızılaslan, 2012; Ivanova & Skara-Mincane, 2016; Motallebzadeh&Kazemi, 2018), and the focus on the role of gender, age and social status (Kobayashi, 2002; Li & Xie, 2022; Nagatomo, 2012; Niknaghsh & Khodareza, 2021; Pérez-Gracia et al., 2022), there is a scarcity of Iranian PI surveys specifically for novice and experienced teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of demographic variables, including age, gender, and social status, on teachers' professional identity. Given the lack of research on the influence of these factors in the Iranian context, this study measures their effects using instruments designed by Shahmoradi et al. (2023).

Furthermore, the researcher hopes to uncover the challenges faced by teachers and propose potential remedies. Additionally, the study aims to offer valuable insights into the functioning of

Age, gender, and social status on the teachers' professional identity and inform teacher educators responsible for training future professionals. The present article addresses the following research questions.

Q1: Are there any statistically significant differences between novices and expert teachers in terms of professional identity?

Q2: Are there any statistically significant differences in terms of professional identity among male and female novice teachers with various types of social statuses?

Q3: Are there any statistically significant differences in terms of professional identity among male and female novice teachers with various types of social statuses?

Literature Review

Professional Identity

According to Fejes and Köpsén (2014), professional identity can be understood as a collection of beliefs and ideas related to how individuals perceive themselves in the role of educator. Individuals have the ability to shape their social and professional identities through their career paths and institutional affirmations. Professional identity entails an individual's self-perception, encompassing their beliefs, values, motivations, and experiences as they relate to their future career prospects (Slay & Smith, 2011).

Establishing a professional identity is crucial for effectively conducting teaching and delivering a speech in an educational environment. Without cultivating a professional identity, individuals may lack the confidence and ease required to efficiently deliver subject content. Expert teachers serve as examples for aspiring teachers, having already established their professional identities in various areas that student teachers should also consider.

Teacher Identity in Studies on EFL

Research on second language teacher identity has been increasingly popular, with scholars such as Block (2005), Bucholtz & Hall (2005), Gray & Morton (2019), Pavlenko (2003), and Sivell & Sivell (2014) contributing to the field. Teacher identity is studied in relation to student learning, teacher development, and pedagogy. Teachers play a crucial role in students' learning process, and their mental state can greatly impact student outcomes. Mercer (2018) argued that the relationship between teacher and learner psychologies is significant, suggesting that teacher psychology can influence students both individually and as a group. This highlights the importance of teacher identity in shaping students' learning experiences. Additionally, the construction of teacher identity is closely linked to teacher learning, demonstrating the complex relationship between the two.

Teacher's Professional Identity

Describing identity within the educational setting is a complex task that requires teachers to find a balance between their personal self-image and their role in the act of teaching. It is essential for teachers to have a deeper understanding of their professional, cultural, and political identities, as well as their language teaching and learning, in order to effectively navigate the complexities of their identity in the classroom. This highlights the need for more research in this area to further explore and understand teacher identity (Kalali Sani et al., 2022). Also, Richter et al. (2021) asserted that examining the components of teachers' professional identity is crucial for enhancing teacher education initiatives and, in turn, nurturing more adaptable and skilled teachers.

Scholarly research on teacher professional identity emphasized the need for structured educational methods to help aspiring teachers develop a strong connection to their profession. Various studies have shown that a teacher's professional identity encompasses multiple.

Interpretations and values related to the teaching profession, as well as teachers' personal and

formal understanding of teaching and learning. Additionally, professional identity includes teachers' perception of themselves in their role and their confidence in their professional abilities (Beijaard, 2019).

Day et al. (2013) emphasized that teachers' professional identity is shaped by their personal lives, previous experiences, opinions, and teaching methods. Therefore, Hamman et al. (2010) proposed that there should be a more thorough examination of the development of a teacher's professional identity, taking into account both personal and professional experiences. Ivanova and Skara-Mincane (2016) claimed that teachers who cultivate a robust and positive professional identity are better equipped to be influential and self-directed in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching throughout their careers. Lifelong learning is now essential for being a successful teacher.

Eslamdoost, King, and Tajeddin (2020) emphasized that teachers' professional identities are in a continual state of formation and reformation over time, influenced by their interpretations and reinterpretations of internal and external situations. Rodriguez and McKay (2010) suggested that new teachers, often categorized as novices with less than two years of teaching experience (Gatbonton, 2008), differ from expert teachers who have taught for over five years in terms of their knowledge, skills, and beliefs. Consequently, novice and expert teachers may encounter distinct challenges in shaping their professional identities. In contrast, expert teachers have relatively established professional identities rooted in their extensive face-to-face teaching experiences. This background may provide them with a deeper understanding of how their professional identities evolve as they adapt to new pedagogical approaches, technology-driven instruments, and various manners of communication in an online teaching environment.

Empirical Studies

The growing recognition of the significant role of professional identity in the professional lives of teachers has promoted investigators to investigate L2 teachers' professional identity in teacher education, aiming to understand how teacher education programs can support the construction of professional identities for language teachers (e.g., Pennington, & Richards, 2016; Trent, 2010; Varghese, 2017).

One study worked on the responsibility as a primary concern for educators and those committed to the teaching and learning process. This is because a strong sense of responsibility in teachers can positively impact various aspects of the learning environment. Therefore, researchers sought to explore the potential connection between language teachers' sense of responsibility and their professional identity. The study was conducted with 100 Iranian EFL teachers from language schools and universities, using validated questionnaires as research instruments. Data analysis through regression revealed a significant relationship between teachers' professional identity and their sense of responsibility. Specifically, it was found that there is a strong and positive correlation between teachers' responsibility and motivation, which is a criterion of their professional identity (Habibi & Ganjali, 2021).

In the same vein, a research study was carried out by (Li & Xie, 2022) on 822 teachers from 10 vocational colleges in Jiangsu Province, using questionnaires that were designed and revised by the researchers themselves. The study revealed that teachers exhibited the highest level of professional identity in terms of their professional behavior, while their professional reputation had the lowest level of identity. The research also showed a significant positive connection between social support and professional identity, as well as between professional identity and personal teaching efficacy. However, there was no significant link between general teaching efficacy and other variables. The study also found that social support directly and positively influenced professional identity, as well as personal teaching efficacy. Furthermore, it was

discovered that professional identity played a complete intermediary role in the relationship between social support and personal teaching efficacy. As a result, the study recommended the establishment of a social support system that considers both personal and environmental factors, as this can enhance the development of professional identity and teaching efficacy, ultimately benefiting the training of personnel in vocational colleges.

A study (Mahmoodarabi et al., 2022) investigated how Prospective Teachers (PTs) in a four-year Second Language initial teacher education program develop their professional identity. The study used both a questionnaire and interviews to assess the PTs' professional identity as they progressed through their teacher training. The results indicated that language awareness and teaching practicum experiences were influential in shaping the PTs' professional identity. In their second year, PTs identified as language analysts and users, while in their third year, they aligned themselves with school policies and rules, shaping their formal teacher identity. By their fourth year, PTs developed a learner-oriented attitude, focusing on the needs of their prospective students.

Zarei and Dobakhti (2023) conducted a study to explore how the professional and institutional identities of Iranian EFL teachers are related to their use of critical pedagogy. The study used a mixed-method approach, including surveys and interviews, with 121 EFL teachers from various private language institutes participating. The data was analyzed using statistical methods and qualitative content analysis. The results showed a significant connection between teachers' institutional and professional identities and their use of critical pedagogy in the classroom. Additionally, the study suggested that teachers' institutional identity can predict their implementation of critical pedagogy. Their findings have important implications for teacher training and language schools.

In the foreign context, one study discussed the findings of a study that examined the professional identity of seven female Japanese English teachers in higher education. The study used a narrative approach and Gee's (2000) four perspectives of identity as a theoretical framework to analyze interview data from the participants, who ranged in age from their early thirties to their early sixties. The study revealed that gender significantly influences the development of their professional identity, from their early exposure to English language education to obtaining academic qualifications and being recognized within their academic communities. The paper came to the conclusion that there is a complex correlation between gender and power in relation to English study in Japan and the recruitment of female teachers teaching at university (Nagatomo, 2012).

Kao and Lin (2015) examined a quantitative research study that assessed the professional identity of teachers in elementary and junior high schools in Taiwan. It utilized an analysis framework to examine the impact of self-expectation, teachers' duties, and external influential factors on pedagogy, instructional skills and knowledge, and teachers' behavior. These six latent concepts were analyzed using structural equation modeling techniques to test their relationships. The findings indicated that most of the scores for the 22 items were above 3.75, suggesting a strong professional identity among the teachers. Additionally, self-expectation, teachers' duties, and external influential factors had a significant direct effect on pedagogy and instructional skills and knowledge, which in turn influenced teachers' behavior. The standardized total effects of self-expectation, teachers' duties, and external influential factors on citizenship behavior were .49, .38, and .09, respectively. The study provided implications for educational practices and suggested areas for future research.

Davaribina and Fanaee (2021) believed that the influence of the educational environment on the professional identity of teachers is a crucial factor in their ability to exercise autonomy and advance in their careers. Therefore, they examined in their article the impact of the shift to online teaching on the professional identity of three experienced EFL teachers. The study found that the

transition led to reconstructions in their daily routines and Knowledge/skills, but their teaching beliefs underwent different changes. Additionally, changes in routines and knowledge/skills did not necessarily lead to belief negotiation, and existing beliefs may either hinder or facilitate their adaptation to the changes. Understanding these dynamics is essential for supporting teachers in navigating the challenges they face.

Cuadra-Martínez et al. (2023) conducted a study to explore the link between teacher professional identity, the selected teacher education model, the type of teacher educator, and the academic performance of teacher education students. The researchers recruited 662 preservice teachers from three Chilean universities using a purposive and convenience sampling method. The participants completed a socio-demographic survey and a teacher professional identity scale. Data analysis involved Spearman correlation, the Kruskal-Wallis test, and multiple linear regression. The results showed that different types of teacher educator profiles and teacher education models were positively correlated with professional identity. In addition, levels of professional identity varied depending on the student's year in their teacher education program. The study also found that the profile of teacher trainers, who are also schoolteachers, and the critical-intellectual educational model were predictors of teacher professional identity.

In Turkey, a study was conducted with the objective of investigating the formation of professional identity among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers working in rural schools in Turkey. Five EFL teachers from four different regions of Turkey, all teaching at the middle school level, participated in the research. The study focused on three main areas: (1) understanding the experiences of professional identity construction among EFL teachers in rural schools, (2) examining the impact of the teaching context on the construction of professional identity for rural EFL teachers, and (3) identifying the needs and expectations of EFL teachers working in rural school settings. A qualitative case study design was utilized, and data collection methods included field visits, a metaphor elicitation task, and semi-structured interviews. After collecting field notes and conducting a metaphor elicitation task, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant on two occasions. Data analysis involved transcribing the data and coding and categorizing procedures. The results of the study provided insights into the experiences of professional identity construction among rural EFL teachers, the challenges of teaching English in a rural school setting, and the training and preparation needs of rural EFL teachers. The study also highlighted the impact of teaching contexts on the practices and expectations of rural teachers. The findings have implications for the design of preparation courses for pre-service EFL teachers and the planning of professional development activities for rural EFL teachers (Şahin, 2021).

Method

Participants

The participants included 300 male and female (168 novice and 132 experienced) EFL teachers who participated in the survey. According to Araujo et al. (2016), individuals with 0 to 3 years of experience are novice teachers, whereas those who have been teaching for more than 3 years are categorized as experienced teachers. In order to truly differentiate novice and experienced teachers, those who had less than 2 years were seen as novice, and those who had more than 12 years of experience were considered as experienced in this study. Out of 168 novices (70 males and 98 females), 37 teachers had a high social status, 99 of them were mid, and 32 were low. In addition, the 132 experts (56 males and 76 females) were of various social statuses as well (32 high, 78 mid, and 22 low). It is worth noting that teachers were chosen through availability sampling. Moreover, research ethics was followed in the sampling procedure by informing the teachers that the data were used for research purposes. Table 1 summarizes the demographic

variable of the study as follows:

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Participants

Novice	N	Experienced	N
Male	70	male	56
female	98	female	76
High ST	37	High St	32
Mid-ST	99	Mid-St	78
Low ST	32	Low ST	22

Instruments

To check novice and expert teachers' professional identity, a 20 Likert-scale item was designed by Shahmoradi et al., on a six-point scale ranging from 1. Absolutely do not expect, 2. Do expect, Sort of do not expect, 4. Sort of do expect, 5. Do expect to 6. Absolutely expect the first nine items to range from 1. Absolutely do not fear this; 2. Do not fear this, 3. Sort of don't fear this, 4. Sort of do fear this, 5. Do fear this, to 6. Absolutely do fear this, was disseminated among the participants for the eleven remaining items. The reason for the differences between the Likert scales is that some items of the questionnaire reflected the preferred professional identity and some items avoided professional identity. This point should not be taken for granted that the questionnaire on professional identity comprises two underlying factors: 'preferred teacher identity' and 'avoided teacher identity.' The preferred teacher identity encompasses 8 items that teachers aspire to possess. This factor included 5 items on 'achieving professional development' and 4 items on 'willingness to learn to teach.' On the other hand, the avoided teacher identity is another underlying factor that refers to the traits that teachers are afraid of being associated with. In other words, these are the characteristics that teachers try to avoid. This factor is associated with three sub-categories: 'being perceived as an unknowledgeable teacher' (4 items), 'lack of classroom management skills' (4 items), and 'being perceived as an uncommitted teacher' (4 items).

Table 2

Factors and items of the Professional Identity Questionnaire

Preferred Teacher Identity	N	Avoided Teacher identity	N
1. achieving professional development'	4 items	1. Being perceived as an unknowledgeable teacher'	4 items
2. willingness to learn teaching'	4 items	2. lack of classroom management skills	4 items
		3. being perceived as an uncommitted teacher'	4 items

For the convenience of the participants, the Google Form of the questionnaire was distributed among the participants in WhatsApp. The instruments enjoyed a reliability index of .77. This point is worth mentioning that the demographic information of the participants, including gender, age, and social status, was inquired about by adding these points to the top of the survey in Google Doc form.

Data Collection Procedures

First, an online survey was created in Google Doc forms and distributed through various means, including emails, social media platforms, and personal contacts due to sanitary protocols and

during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey link was easily accessible and could be opened by simply double-clicking on it. Second, the survey link was further disseminated to as many teachers and colleagues as the researchers knew. The researchers actively encouraged participation by regularly checking the survey link and sending reminders to friends and Colleagues. After 3 months, the survey reached 300 responses, and with no further significant increase, the data was downloaded and formatted for analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data through the questionnaire were entered into SPSS 24 for data analysis. In order to answer the first research question as to the statically significant differences between novice and expert teachers, descriptive statistics and independent-sample t-test was run on the data. To answer the second and third research questions as to the role of gender and social status among novices and experts, a series of independent-sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA was performed on the data.

Results

Results for the First Research Question

Are there any statistically significant differences between novices and expert teachers in terms of professional identity?

Table 3

PI Descriptive Statistics for Novice and Experts

	Novice	Expert	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PI	Novice		168	3.3080	.58778	.04535
	Expert		132	3.2451	.52542	.04573

As shown in Table 2, the mean score of novice teachers in terms of PI (N: 168. M: 3.30) outscores their expert counterparts (N: 132, M: 3.24). However, the inferential statistics in Table 3 should be consulted in order to find out if the mean differences are statistically significant.

Table 4

Independent Samples Test for Novice and Experts in terms of PI

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
PI	Equal variances assumed	1.157	.283	.965	298	.336	.06296	.06528	-.06550	.19142
	Equal variances not assumed			.978	293.034	.329	.06296	.06440	-.06379	.18971

As shown in Table 3, because the assumption of homogeneity of variance under the Sig value is greater than 0.05, the equal variance assumed under the first row should be checked. As a result, the p-value (2-tailed) of .33 indicates no discernible difference between novice and expert in terms of PI.

Results for the Second Research Question

Are there any statically significant differences in terms of professional identity among male and female novice teachers with various types of social statuses?

Table 5
PI Descriptive Statistics for Novice Male and Female Teachers

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PI	male	70	3.2936	.53324	.06373
	Female	98	3.3184	.62633	.06327

As shown in Table 4, the male mean score of novice teachers in terms of PI (N: 70, M: 3.29) is lesser than their female counterparts (N: 98, M: 3.31). However, the inferential statistics in Table 5 should be consulted in order to find out if the mean differences of male and female teachers in terms of PI are statistically significant.

Table 6
Independent Samples Test for Novice Male and Female Teachers in terms of PI

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means								
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
PI	Equal variances assumed	3.024	.084	-.269	166	.788	-.02480	.09224	-.20691	.15732
	Equal variances not assumed			-.276	160.871	.783	-.02480	.08981	-.20214	.15255

As shown in Table 5, as the assumption of homogeneity of variance under the Sig value is greater than 0.05, the equal variance assumed under the first row should be checked. As a result, the p-value (2-tailed) of .78 indicates no noticeable difference between novice male and female teachers in terms of PI.

Table 7
Various Social Statuses and Novice Teachers' PI

N	Mean	Std.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Minimu	Maximu
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			Deviation		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	m	m
High	37	3.3486	.60593	.09961	3.1466	3.5507	1.85	4.50
Mid	99	3.2985	.62981	.06330	3.1729	3.4241	1.45	4.60
Low	32	3.2906	.42225	.07464	3.1384	3.4429	2.50	4.35
Total	168	3.3080	.58778	.04535	3.2185	3.3976	1.45	4.60

Table 6 describes the mean scores of high, mid and low novice EFL teachers in terms of PI. As it can be seen in Table 6, novice teachers of high social status (N: 37, M: 3.34) have the highest mean score. Novice teachers of mid-social status stand in second place (N:99, M: 3.298), and the third place goes to low-social-status teachers (N:32, M: 3.29) in terms of PI.

Table 8

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.615	2	165	.076

As shown in Table 7, the Sig value is .07, which is above the threshold of 0.05, substantiating the equality of variance.

Table 9

ANOVA as to Various Social Statuses

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.080	2	.040	.114	.892
Within Groups	57.617	165	.349		
Total	57.697	167			

The sig value in Table 8 revealed no statistically significant differences among high, mid, and low social statuses ($p=.89$, $F=.11$)

Results for the Third Research Question

Are there any statically significant differences in terms of professional identity among male and female expert teachers with various types of social statuses?

Table 10

PI Descriptive Statistics for Expert Male and Female Teachers

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PI	male	56	3.2795	.44821	.05989
	Female	76	3.2197	.57735	.06623

As shown in Table 9, the male mean score of expert teachers in terms of PI (N: 56, M: 3.27) is higher than their female counterparts (N: 76, M: 3.21). However, the inferential statistics in Table 10 should be consulted in order to find out if the mean differences of male and female expert teachers in terms of PI are statistically significant.

Table 11
Independent Samples Test for expert male and Female Teachers in terms of PI

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
PI Equal variances assumed	3.285	.072	.644	130	.521	.05973	.09274	-.12375	.24320
PI Equal variances not assumed			.669	129.618	.505	.05973	.08929	-.11693	.23639

As shown in Table 10, as the assumption of homogeneity of variance under the Sig value is greater than 0.05, the equal variance assumed under the first row should be checked. As a result, the p-value (2-tailed) of .52 indicates no noticeable difference between expert male and female teachers in terms of PI.

Table 12
Various Social Statuses and Expert Teachers' PI

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
High	32	3.2031	.52301	.09246	3.0146	3.3917	1.85	4.40
Mid	78	3.2455	.54051	.06120	3.1236	3.3674	1.75	4.75
Low	22	3.3045	.49060	.10460	3.0870	3.5221	2.20	4.45
Total	132	3.2451	.52542	.04573	3.1546	3.3355	1.75	4.75

Table 11 describes the mean scores of high, mid and low expert EFL teachers in terms of PI. As it can be seen in Table 11, expert teachers of low social status (N: 22, M: 3.30) have the highest mean score. expert teachers of mid-social status stand in the second place (N:78, M: 3.24), and the third place goes to high-social-status teachers (N:32, M: 3.20) in terms of PI.

Table 13
Test of Homogeneity of Variance

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.465	2	129	.629

As shown in Table 12, the Sig value is .62, which is well above the threshold of 0.05, substantiating the equality of variance.



Table 14
ANOVA as to Various Social Statuses

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.134	2	.067	.240	.787
Within Groups	36.030	129	.279		
Total	36.164	131			

The sig value in Table 13 revealed no statistically significant differences among high, mid, and low expert teachers' social statuses ($p=.78$, $F=.24$)

Discussion

The present study examines the role of Gender and Social Status in the existing literature on professional identity in teaching by examining the potential differences in attitudes towards professional identity between novice and expert teachers, as well as the mediating role of gender and social status. The findings of the current study revealed that neither novice nor expert teachers, as well as gender and social status, had any mediating role in terms of attitudes toward professional identity. This suggests that gender and social status do not significantly influence teachers' attitudes towards their professional identity. These results are consistent with some previous studies that have also found no significant relationship between gender and professional identity in teaching (e.g., Smith et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2019).

However, it is important to note that there are also studies that have reported gender differences in professional identity among teachers. For example, a study by Brown and Bimrose (2015) found that female teachers tended to have a stronger sense of professional identity compared to male teachers. Another study by Guo and Jamal (2007) revealed that male teachers were more likely to identify with the professional identity of being a "teacher" compared to female teachers. In addition, Gee (2000) revealed that gender significantly influences the development of professional identity. These contrasting findings highlight the need for further research to better understand the complex relationship between gender and professional identity in teaching. Another reason for the differing findings regarding professional identity is the peculiar context and particular instrument through which PI was measured. Regarding the role of social status, the current study found no significant mediating effect on teachers' attitudes toward professional identity. This aligns with some previous research that has also reported no significant relationship between social status and professional identity among teachers (e.g., Day et al., 2014; Kyriacou et al., 2018). However, it is worth noting that social status can encompass various dimensions, such as socioeconomic background, educational qualifications, or professional experience. Future studies could explore these dimensions separately to gain a more nuanced understanding of how different aspects of social status may influence professional identity in teaching.

Furthermore, the current study's findings align with previous research that has identified preferred and avoided teacher identities as underlying factors of professional identity. The preferred teacher identity includes characteristics related to professional development and willingness to learn to teach, while the avoided teacher identity represents traits that teachers try to avoid, such as being perceived as unknowledgeable or uncommitted. These findings are consistent with studies that have highlighted the importance of these dimensions in shaping teachers' professional identity (e.g., Beijaard et al., 2004; Day et al., 2011).

Conclusion

Overall, this study aimed to investigate the differences in attitudes towards professional identity between novice and expert teachers, as well as the potential mediating role of gender and social status. The findings of the study revealed that neither novice nor expert teachers, as well as gender and social status had any significant mediating effect on teachers' attitudes towards professional identity. These results indicate that regardless of experience level, gender, or social status, teachers' attitudes toward professional identity remain consistent. The study suggests that factors such as gender and social status do not play a significant role in shaping teachers' perceptions of their professional identity.

These findings contribute to our understanding of professional identity in the teaching profession and highlight the importance of focusing on individual aspirations and concerns rather than generalizing based on gender or social status. This study makes several contributions to the existing literature and can provide valuable insights for teachers, students, and policymakers.

In general, the study adds to the literature by examining professional identity and factors such as gender and social status among novice and expert teachers. By exploring these dynamics, the study expands our understanding of how various factors may or may not influence teachers' attitudes toward their professional identity. This contributes to the broader body of knowledge on professional development and identity formation in the teaching profession.

Also, the findings of the study can be beneficial for teachers by highlighting that their attitudes toward professional identity are not significantly influenced by gender or social status. This can help alleviate concerns or biases related to these factors and encourage teachers to focus on their individual growth and development. In addition, the study indirectly benefits students by emphasizing the importance of teachers' professional identity. When teachers have a strong sense of professional identity, it can positively impact their teaching practices, instructional strategies, and overall commitment to student learning. Students may benefit from teachers who are motivated to continuously improve their skills and are dedicated to their profession. Finally, the study's findings have implications for policymakers in the field of education. By understanding that gender and social status do not significantly influence teachers' attitudes toward professional identity, policymakers can focus on creating inclusive and supportive environments that foster professional growth for all teachers, regardless of these factors. Policies can be designed to promote professional development opportunities, encourage a culture of continuous learning, and address the specific concerns identified in the study's preferred and avoided teacher identity categories. This point should not go unaddressed, as this questionnaire was locally developed; therefore, the findings only address preferred professional identity and avoided professional identity included in the questionnaire. Future studies can conduct comparative studies across different educational systems, cultural contexts, or even disciplines to shed light on the generalizability of the findings. Comparing teachers' attitudes toward professional identity in diverse settings can help identify commonalities, differences, and potential cultural or systemic influences on professional identity development. In addition, Considering the intersectionality of various identities, such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background, in relation to professional identity can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by teachers. Exploring how these intersecting identities interact with gender and social status can deepen our understanding of the complexities involved in professional identity formation.

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