

The Relationship between EFL Teachers' Professional Identity, Professional Self-esteem, and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between secondary school English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction in the Sidama National Regional State, Ethiopia. For this purpose, ninety-four (N=94) EFL teachers were selected from 10 government secondary schools. Schools and participants were selected using cluster and availability sampling techniques respectively. Adapted professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction questionnaires were used. The relationship between the variables was examined via the Pearson correlation coefficients. In addition, structural equation modelling (SEM) was applied to test the direct and indirect effects of professional self-esteem and job satisfaction on professional identity. The analysis of the goodness of fit indices yielded a good model fit. The results of correlational analysis indicated that professional self-esteem ($r= 0.81$, $P= 0.000$) and job satisfaction ($r= 0.70$, $P= 0.000$) are positively and significantly correlated with professional identity. SEM analysis also indicated that professional self-esteem positively predicted professional identity ($\beta= 0.66$, $P \leq 0.001$). Congruently, job satisfaction positively predicted professional identity ($\beta= 0.27$, $P \leq 0.001$). Moreover, professional self-esteem indirectly mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and professional identity. Thus, it is recommended to pay a close attention to EFL teachers' professional identity and some of the interplaying variables.

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Introduction

One of the determinants of success or failure of the educational system of a given country is its teachers (Cheng, 2021). It is evident that teachers with a strong professional identity would contribute to the success of the educational system and the growth of a country. Thus, teaching, by definition, necessitates a significant investment of the teacher's self. In this sense, English language teaching (ELT) is multifaceted, involving complex social and psychological dimensions. Moreover, teacher identity is truly holistic, encompassing cognitive, emotional, bodily, and creative aspects. Furthermore, learning about theories and pedagogical approaches is insufficient,

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and discussions about professional identities are frequently avoided because people are hesitant to reveal "perceived weaknesses." As a result, ignoring this aspect of the teacher will result in the omission of an important construct of being a teacher (Alsup, 2006, p.14).

In second language teacher education, the development of teacher professional identity (TPI) is also a fairly new and emerging research field (Varghese et al, 2005). Conversely, defining teachers' identity is a challenging endeavor. This challenge might originate from the multiplicity of the meanings of identity. The vague definition of TPI might be due to its complex nature and the multiple perspectives proposed by scholars in the fields of teaching and teacher education (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 176).

Gee (2000) defines identity as "people's ideas about who they are, what kind of people they are, and how they relate to others" (p. 99). According to Derakhshan, Coombe, Arabmofrad, and Taghizadeh (2020), a teacher's identity is a dynamic construct that creates a balance between teachers' understandings of self in their profession and their roles as teachers. They emphasized that teachers' identity is more related to teachers' conception of who they think they are and what other people think them to be. Equally, Beijaard et al. (2000) state that a teacher's professional identity can be expressed in terms of subject matter experts, didactical experts, and pedagogical experts. In brief, a subject matter expert is a teacher who bases his/her profession on subject matter knowledge and skills, whereas a didactical expert is a teacher who bases his/her profession on knowledge and skills regarding the planning, execution, and evaluation of teaching and learning processes. A teacher who bases his/her profession on knowledge and skills to support students' social, emotional, and moral development is identified as a pedagogical expert (see Beijaard et al. 2000). Thus, a teacher's professional identity subsumes these three sub constructs.

Currently, a large number of high school teachers, including English teachers in Ethiopia, are studying other fields such as accounting and economics with the aim of changing their careers due to lack of job satisfaction and professional status issues. Similarly, the number of students who choose English as a major field of study is declining year after year. If this problem continues, the profession may lose its identity. As a result, more research is required to determine if job satisfaction significantly mediates TPI.

There are several variables that might mediate the professional identity of EFL teachers. Professional self-esteem and job satisfaction are worth mentioning. In this view, Aral et al. (2009) citing Aricak and Dilmac describe professional self-esteem as "the importance and value one attaches to his/her profession and is related to professional adaptation and satisfaction" (p. 424). Unlike the teaching profession, most of the professions today have strong professional prestige. It is not difficult to know what connotations, images, and expectations are associated with doctors, lawyers, and/or journalists; so is almost the case with teachers (Hussain et al., 2012). Viewed from this perspective, the connotations of teaching English, the respect teachers deserve, and the EFL teachers' professional self-image, i.e., how the teaching profession is viewed by the society in Ethiopia are in decline from time to time.

Consequently, it is evident that high school English teachers in Ethiopia are not enjoying the professional pride and respect associated with the teaching profession. Cristina Neamtu, cited in Voinea and Pălășan (2014), state:"... teachers with high self-esteem levels, who think of

themselves as competent and meet all the requirements of their profession, act in certain ways, which lead to high levels of self-esteem among their students" (p.362). Conversely, teachers with low self-esteem levels exhibit deviant behaviors when facing failure, which leads to low levels of self-esteem amongst their students (Cristina & Neamtu, cited in Voinea & Pălășan, 2014). From these research findings, one can deduce that professional self-esteem appears to have a strong association with the professional identity of teachers. Therefore, examining the relationship between EFL teachers' professional identity and their professional self-esteem is crucial.

Job satisfaction is the most important factor in teachers' reactions to their profession. It is linked to teachers' emotional attachment to their teaching and is viewed as a function of the alleged relationship between what teachers seek from teaching and what they perceive it to offer them (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004). Teachers who are satisfied with the job are more successful and tend to continue in the profession. The study conducted by Elleni (2017) on job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in selected schools in Addis Ababa in the Ethiopian high school context revealed that teachers are dissatisfied in most aspects of their work. The key question here could be is the kind of relationship between EFL teachers' professional identities and job satisfaction. Zhao and Zhang (2017), citing Moore and Hofman, state that "teachers with lower professional identities easily perceived lower work satisfaction and higher work stress, whereas teachers with higher professional identities were more likely to overcome dissatisfaction with harsh working conditions" (p.2). Thus, the mediating effect of job satisfaction on TPI requires more attention.

Different studies have been conducted on the issues of teachers' professional identity and professional self-esteem (Motallebzade & Kazemi, 2018). For example, in their recent study, Ostad, Ghanizadeh, and Ghanizadeh (2019) found out that EFL teacher professional identity was influenced by their feelings and perceptions about their job. Yet, the study by Motallebzade and Kazemi mainly focused on treating professional identity and self-esteem separately, neglecting the important aspect, i.e., job satisfaction. This calls for a study to examine the relationship between EFL teachers' professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ethiopia. In general, the researchers are unaware of any previous study that attempted to investigate this issue altogether.

As a result, this study has attempted to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the relationship between EFL teachers' professional self-esteem and professional identity? (2) What is the relationship between EFL teachers' job satisfaction and professional identity?

Review of Related Literature

This section highlights the current empirical research findings and literature review along with the theoretical framework of the study.

Relationship between EFL Teachers' Professional Identity and Professional Self-esteem

Mbuva (2016) defines self-esteem as "how we value ourselves, how we perceive our value in the world, and how valuable we think we are to others" (P. 61). Likewise, self-esteem is an important human construct that helps us develop trust, worth, and pride in ourselves and our profession. Further, Tabassum and Ali (2012), citing Tinsely, noted that "professional self-esteem

is an individual's self-esteem in regard to his or her professional position and acceptance in that professional role" (p.207). Across the globe, some studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between professional self-esteem and professional identity. Aral et al. (2009), for example, emphasize that a high level of professional self-esteem on the part of teachers fosters better results both for themselves and the children. Being other things equal, this would imply that strong professional self-esteem might contribute for a strong professional identity and satisfaction in the profession.

A study conducted by Tabassum (2015) on the professional self-esteem of teachers at the secondary level in Pakistan indicated that most secondary school teachers exhibit high professional self-esteem and there is always a positive link between self-esteem and the esteem or prestige of one's profession. This might imply that the greater the self-esteem, the stronger the professional esteem. Hence, there might be a significant effect of professional self-esteem on teachers' professional identity. In the same way, Mbuva (2016) states that teachers with positive self-esteem were optimists, and were able to solve challenges. Mbuva further states, teachers with low self-esteem may have a negative view of life and consistently show blaming behaviour.

A study by Motallebzadeh and Kazemi (2018) indicates there is a significant relationship between teachers' professional identity and professional self-esteem. On the other hand, Moslemi and Habibi's (2019) study shows that EFL teachers' professional identities can predict their self-efficacy and critical thinking skills. Similarly, Sheybani and Miri (2019) discovered a highly positive and significant relationship between professional identity and critical thinking among EFL teachers teaching at various language institutes in several cities in Iran. Based on the empirical review and the literature discussed above, there is a significant gap towards investigating the effects of professional self-esteem on teachers' professional identities in an EFL context in Ethiopia.

Relationship between EFL Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Professional Identity

In general education literature, there are plenty of literatures concerning job satisfaction issue. Yet, there seems a dearth of literature which describes the relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and professional identity in an EFL context. In brief, Ho and Au (2006) state that job satisfaction is a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from teaching and what one perceives teaching to offer him/her. Moreover, Lopez (2018) states that job satisfaction is more than just liking or enjoying what one does; it is about determining whether employers and clients are meeting an individual's personal and professional needs. It is also a combination of psychological and emotional workplace experiences.

Moreover, Hong (2010) stressed that understanding teachers' professional identities leads to "gaining insight into key aspects of teachers' professional lives such as career decision making, motivation, job satisfaction, emotion, and commitment"(p.1531). As a result, job satisfaction, according to Hong (2010), is an essential component of teachers' professional lives and identities.

On the other hand, language teaching is a multifaceted process that incorporates both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. In this view, Ibnian (2016), citing Davis and Wilson, stresses that intrinsic factors like a sense of accomplishment, self-worth, and personal growth have the greatest

impact on job satisfaction. In the same manner, Ibnian citing Periea and Baker, stresses that “job satisfaction may also be derived from the success of working with students, interactions with colleagues, and the success of daily classroom activities” (p.40).

Gilman (2016) highlighted that “it is possible to see a connection between identity and job satisfaction”(P.17). Correspondingly, Caza and Creary (2016) specified that “high levels of professional identification are associated with more satisfied employees and more extra-role supportive behaviours”(9). Further, the results of the study by Derakhshan, Coombe, Arabmofrad, and Taghizadeh (2020) in Iran indicated that university EFL lecturers' success was predicted positively and significantly by both professional identity and autonomy. Eventually, a study by Butakor, Guo, and Adebajji (2021) revealed that emotional intelligence positively affected professional identity directly and indirectly through job satisfaction.

Above all, in the Ethiopian context, one can sense that the teaching profession and the respect teachers deserve is declining. As a result, the low status given to the profession could have an effect on EFL teachers' professional identities. In sum, investigating this issue is important to fill the existing gap.

Theoretical Framework

Theorizing language teacher identity is difficult and problematic due to its complexity and fluidity. This might imply that the very nature of language instruction involves multiple professional self-involvements of the teachers. Barkhuizen (2016) emphasizes that“... when graduate research students begin to explore the theoretical and empirical literature, things become a bit murky and decisions are difficult to make” (p.1). Hence, in the context of the present study one theory could not underpin the three research variables namely professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction altogether. As a result, this study employed multiple theoretical frameworks, which Varghese et al. (2005) suggested the importance of multiple theories because only in this way we can hope to gain a fuller picture of an immensely complex phenomenon such as teacher identity.

In the current study, EFL teachers' professional identity is examined in relation to their professional self-esteem and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the majority of research works based their theoretical framework on Wenger's (1998) theory of community of practice (henceforth, CoP). According to Wenger (1998), a community of practice is a group of people who share a common enterprise and pursue mutual goals as well as a common skill or profession. The basic assumption of CoP is the social nature of learning, commonly termed as the social theory of learning, since learning and identity formation are inseparable. In this regard, Zhou and Brown (2015) put “social learning theory focuses on what people learn from observing and interacting with other people” (p.19). Thus, EFL teachers' professional identity is a continuous process of negotiating and defining what it means to be a teacher in a given context. Further, teachers' professional identity is expressed in terms of subject-matter field, didactical field, and pedagogical expert field (Beijaard et al., 2000). The combinations of these constructs make up TPI.

In a more comprehensive way, Kelchtermans (1993) identified five interrelated constructs of professional self, such as self-image, self-esteem, job-motivation, task perception, and future

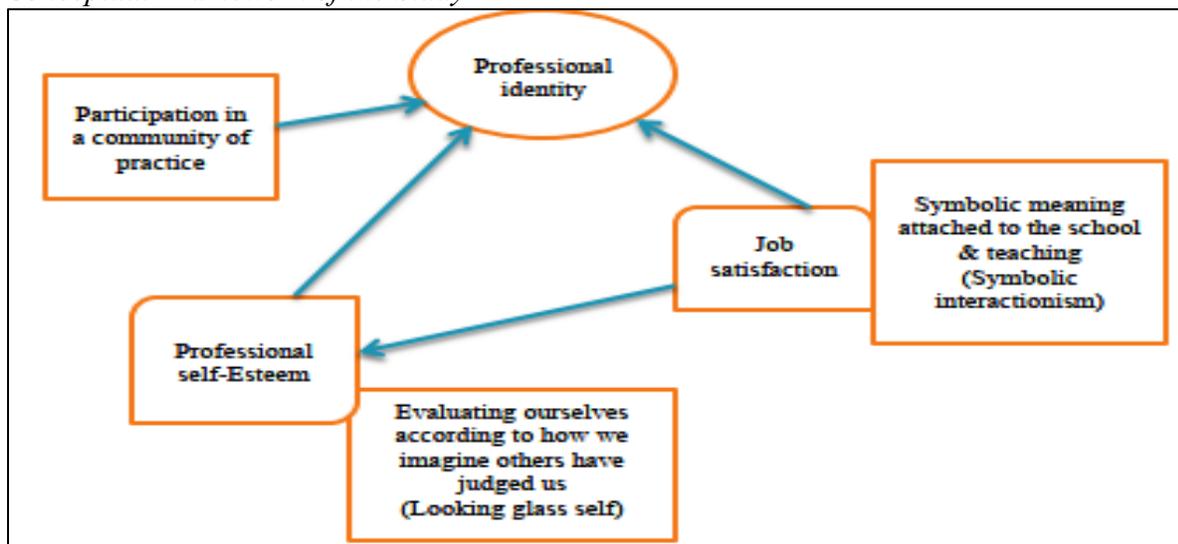
perspective. Among these constructs, self-esteem can be considered as a key construct in the present study since it aims at the evaluation of oneself as a teacher, that is, how good or otherwise as defined by self or others. In a similar sense, professional self-esteem is understood in this study as the value or worth one attaches to his/her profession. Likewise, Cooley (1902) has developed a concept of the "looking glass self" and the "mirror" metaphor drawn from sociology underpin the professional self-esteem of a teacher in this study. This view incorporates teachers' imagination of how to appear to others, and the judgment in which they receive on that appearance. This is pivotal to teachers' professional self-esteem. In brief, the broader society, colleagues, and students could provide feedback on teachers' professional appearance and performance. Consequently, the overall judgement EFL teachers receive from the teaching staff and the professional worth they (EFL teachers) give to the English teaching profession have a significant effect on their professional self-esteem.

Furthermore, the connotation associated to the teaching profession in general influences the job satisfaction of teachers. In this sense, the concept of symbolic interactionism theorized by Mead (1934) looks suitable to view teachers' job satisfaction. In symbolic interactionism, humans respond to the environment on the basis of the meanings that elements of the environment have for them as individuals. In this regard, particular school environments, like classroom facilities, the location of the school, and the school administration could depict different meanings to the teacher. If the teaching environment becomes hostile to teachers, teachers would definitely be dissatisfied with their job. The symbolic meaning attached to the school environment or the view the teachers and the society have towards the teaching profession appears to determine the job satisfaction of teachers.

In sum, a single theoretical framework cannot meet the theoretical assumption of this study. Thus, multiple theoretical frameworks such as Cooley's (1902) "looking glass self," symbolic interactionism by Mead (1934), and communities of practice by Wenger (1998) underpin this study. The following figure shows the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



The above figure indicates that this study employed multiple theories. This is because one theory cannot provide a complete picture of the study. To begin with, EFL teachers' professional identities begin to emerge when they develop the initial motivation to enter the profession, if not before. Then, participating in a community of practice leads to identity formation.

Furthermore, the figure indicates the interplay between the three main variables namely: job satisfaction, professional self-esteem, and professional identity of secondary school EFL teachers. Accordingly, job satisfaction directly interacts with teachers' professional identity. On the other hand, professional self-esteem also interacts with professional identity. In a similar way, professional self-esteem indirectly mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and professional identity. Thus, job satisfaction and professional self-esteem indirectly drawn from different theories predict the professional identity of secondary school EFL teachers.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from high school EFL teachers in the Sidama National Regional State of Ethiopia regarding their professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in Hawassa city administration and a few selected 'Woreda' or districts of Sidama National Regional State Secondary Schools with a focus on teachers teaching English in grades 9–12. Sidama National Regional State is the newly established regional state in Ethiopia. Hawassa City is the administrative capital of the region, located 275 kilometers south of Addis Ababa. The present study was carried out in the region's selected secondary schools, involving EFL teachers as the participants of the study. This region was chosen because of the geographical proximity and familiarity of the research context to the researchers. This in turn would minimize the financial and time constraints. Furthermore, the region has a large number of high school EFL teachers when compared to the nearby zones of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR).

Sampling

A cluster sampling technique was employed to select high schools. This type of sampling, according to Cohen et al. (2007), is used when the population is large and widely dispersed. In cluster sampling, the population is divided into multiple clusters and these clusters are further divided and grouped into various subgroups based on certain criteria such as geographical location or strata. In this regard, the geographical location or the urban-rural mix was considered to cluster the schools. Further, the schools were clustered as Hawassa and other 'woreda', or district clusters. This was done to incorporate a reasonable sample of teachers and schools from different settings. A total of 10 schools were included into the study, specifically four high schools from the Hawassa

city administration cluster and six high schools from other "woredas," or district clusters, in the region. The schools were randomly selected from each cluster, and the teachers were involved in the study using the availability sampling technique.

In order to determine the sample size, Singh (2006) suggests that "... descriptive research typically uses larger samples; it is sometimes suggested that one should select 10-20 per cent of the accessible population for the sample" (p.94). In this regard, there were 104 high school EFL teachers in Hawassa city administration unlike the remaining districts which constituted 366 EFL teachers in the year 2021/2022. Based on the suggestion forwarded by Singh, out of a total of 470 EFL teachers, 94 teachers (20%) were selected for the study. In brief, 73 male and 21 female teachers participated in the study.

Instruments

In the present study, different instruments have been used. The validity of the instruments was verified by TEFL experts.

Professional Identity Questionnaire

A professional identity questionnaire developed by Beijjaard et al. (2000) was adapted. Originally, they developed a total of 14 items, 4 subject-matter field items, 6 didactical field items, and 4 pedagogical expert field items. These items were designed to gather data from different disciplines of teachers concerning their current and prior perceptions of their professional identity in terms of the distinct aspects of experts such as subject matter experts, didactical experts, and pedagogical experts in the south-western part of the Netherlands. In order to add more items in the Ethiopian context, eight new items (three subject matter experts, three didactical experts, and two pedagogical experts) were designed. The new items were designed based on the national standards set by the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia (MoE) (2013) for English language teachers. Meanwhile, the teachers were asked to show their agreement or disagreement with the given items. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient is .83, which would imply good internal consistency.

Professional Self-esteem Questionnaire

Professional self-esteem was assessed using the scale employed in the study conducted by Khezerlou (2017) in Iran. The intent of Khezerlou's study was to measure the perceived professional self-esteem of Iranian and Turkish EFL teachers. Khezerlou attempted to employ a shortened English version of the professional self-esteem scales (16 items) that were adapted from Aricak (1999). In the present study, the same professional self-esteem scale items were used after certain modifications. In view of this, five items were removed after checking their reliability. Meanwhile, five new professional self-esteem items were designed based on the literature discussed. Thus, the teachers were asked to respond to the questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The items in the current study have a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .75, which is deemed to be satisfactory.

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire

Job satisfaction of the teachers was examined using Ibnian's (2016) job satisfaction questionnaire. Primarily, it was designed to study the level of job satisfaction among teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Jordan. In the present study, the questionnaires used by Ibnian (2016) were slightly adapted. Consequently, the teachers were asked to respond to the questionnaire items which are about the teachers' degree of satisfaction. In the end, the item reliability analysis was conducted, and the Cronbach's alpha value was .91, which could show high internal consistency.

Procedures

Data for this study was collected between July 2021 and September 2021. Initially, a letter of cooperation was collected from the department of foreign languages and literature, Addis Ababa University. The researchers then communicated with Sidama region and Hawassa city administration education bureau officers regarding the purposes of the study. After this, the officers directed the researchers to the concerned secondary schools. Hence, the researchers first visited Tabor secondary and preparatory school on July 15, 2021. In this school, the researchers informed the school principal about the purpose of the study and obtained permission to communicate with the head of the English Department. At this stage, the researchers communicated with the head of the English Department about the purpose of the study and the participants to be included. The head of Department then gave a brief overview of the English teachers at the school and facilitated the data collection processes. Consequently, English teachers were requested to fill out different types of questionnaires designed to collect the data. The same procedure was followed in this school and the other schools which were included in the study.

Data Processing and Analysis

Pearson's correlation was used to analyze the relationship between professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction. To interpret the output of a correlation coefficient in the present study, the rules of thumb suggested by Schober, Boer, and Schwarte (2018) were used. The rules of thumb are as follows: 0.00–0.10 negligible correlation; 0.10–0.39 weak correlation; 0.40–0.69 moderate correlation; 0.70–0.89 strong correlation; and 0.90–1.00 very strong correlation. Accordingly, the analysis was conducted using statistical software Stata 15 and analysis of moment structures (AMOS) 23. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to create model paths and to test the relationship between professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction. In addition, the model helped the researchers to analyze the direct and indirect effects and total effects of the specified variables. Various model fit indices were used to assess how well the model fits the data. Thus, to assess the overall model fit, four tests were used: standardized root mean squared residuals (SRMR), comparative fit index (CFI), goodness of fit index (GFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). More specifically, SRMR is an absolute fit index as it assesses how far a hypothetical model is from a perfect model. In contrast, CFI, GFI, and TLI are incremental fit indices that compare the fit of a hypothesized model with that of a baseline

model, that is, a model with the worst fit (see Xia & Yang, 2019). Meanwhile, scholars (Xia & Yang, 2019; Quintana & Maxwell, 1999) suggest if CFI, GFI, and TLI values are above 0.90, it is an acceptable model fit. Likewise, if the SRMR value is below 0.08, it means the model fit is acceptable.

Results

Descriptive Statistics of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity

Three subscales were used to assess EFL teachers' professional identities. As a result, the descriptive statistics for these scales, as well as the teachers' professional self-esteem and job satisfaction, are shown below.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of EFL teachers' professional identity

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total professional identity	94	22	110	52.67	19.69
Subject matter expert	94	7	35	15.17	6.88
Didactical expert	94	9	45	23.43	7.86
Pedagogical expert	94	6	34	14.13	6.63
Professional self-esteem	94	16	80	38.32	14.04
Job Satisfaction	94	20	100	49.18	19.11

The above table indicates EFL teachers' professional identity scale which includes teachers as subject matter experts (7 items), teachers as didactical experts (9 items), and teachers as pedagogical experts (6 items). The result indicates, professional identity received the highest mean from the didactical expert ($M = 23.43$, $SD = 7.86$) and obtained the lowest mean score from the pedagogical expert ($M = 14.13$, $SD = 6.63$). This could imply that EFL teachers see themselves as more of a didactical expert and less of a pedagogical expert. A professional self-esteem questionnaire with 16 items was also used to assess teachers' feelings of professional worth. The mean score and standard deviation of professional self-esteem are $M = 38.32$, $SD = 14.04$. Similarly, the job satisfaction questionnaire is composed of 20 items, and it was used to assess the job satisfaction of EFL teachers. The mean score and standard deviation of job satisfaction are $M = 49.18$ and $SD = 19.11$.

Relationship Between Professional Identity, Professional Self-esteem, and Job Satisfaction of EFL Teachers

Person correlation was run to examine the relationship between professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction among EFL teachers. Hence, Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients of the variables.

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients of Professional Identity, Professional Self-esteem and Job Satisfaction

	1	2	3
1. Professional Identity	1.00		
2. Professional self esteem	0.81**	1.00	
3. Job Satisfaction	0.70**	0.70**	1.00

Note. **: $p < 0.001$

The Pearson's correlation analysis shows that professional self-esteem was positively and significantly correlated with professional identity ($r = 0.81$, $P = 0.000$). This could indicate that there is a strong correlation between the professional values that teachers ascribe to their profession and their professional identity as EFL teachers. In the same vein, teachers' job satisfaction was positively correlated with professional identity ($r = 0.70$, $P = 0.000$). In addition to Pearson's correlation, structural equation modeling (SEM) was run to see the relationship among three variables. Consequently, Table 3 presents the overall goodness of fit indices.

Table 3

Goodness of Fit of the Model

Measures	Value	Cut-off Point	Decisions
Chi-square statistic	373.255**	p-value > 0.05	Significant and good
SRMR	0.02	SRMR < 0.08	Very good
CFI	0.992	CFI ≥ 0.90	Very good
GFI	0.971	GFI ≥ 0.90	Very good
TLI	0.979	CFI ≥ 0.90	Very good

Four goodness-of-fit indices were used to test the model. These subsume the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). As indicated in Table 3, the analysis of the structural equation model yielded a good model fit. The chi-square statistic is 373.3 (10), $p = .000$. In addition, the overall fit of the model in the present study is high and acceptable: SRMR = 0.02, CFI = 0.992, GFI = 0.971, TLI = 0.979, which surpassed the .90 cut value.

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Results Regarding the Relationship among Professional Identity, Professional Self-esteem, and Job Satisfaction

This section presents the model paths and standardized coefficients on synthesized relationships among professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction in figure2. In addition, table 4 displays the total, direct, and indirect effects of model paths.

Figure 2

Model Paths and Standardized Coefficients on Synthesized Relationship among Professional Identity, Professional Self-esteem and Job Satisfaction

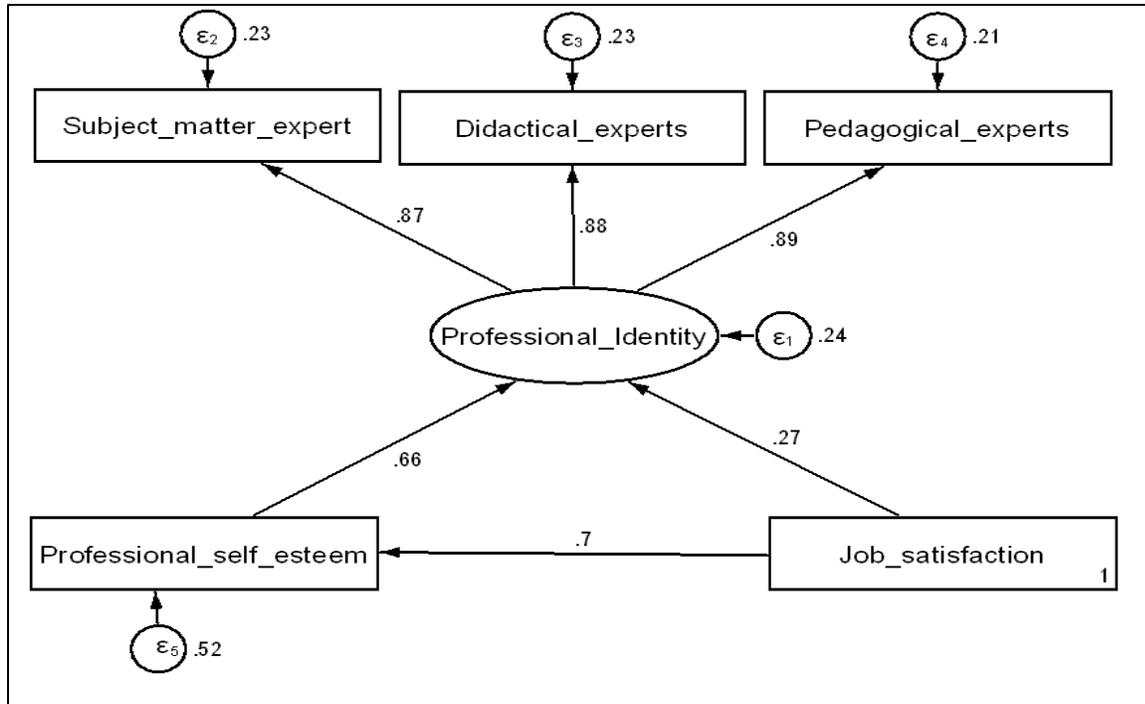


Table 4

Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects of Model Paths

Model Path	Total Effect	95% CI	Direct Effects	95% CI	Indirect Effects	95% CI
Job Satisfaction→ Professional self esteem	.70**	(0.60,.78)	.70**	(0.60,.78)	-	
Job Satisfaction→ Professional Identity	.73**	(.55, .83)	.27**	(.10, .43)	.46**	(.29, .71)
Professional self-esteem→ Professional Identity	.66**	(.52, .81)	.66	(.52, .81)	-	
R-square (R ²)	.553					

As shown in figure 2, the relationships between job satisfaction, professional self-esteem, and professional identity were tested using structural equation modeling. The results suggested that professional self-esteem directly predicted professional identity ($\beta = 0.66, P \leq 0.001$) and job satisfaction positively predicted professional identity ($\beta = 0.27, P \leq 0.001$). This would imply that professional self-esteem has more power to predict professional identity. Yet, job satisfaction and professional self-esteem could explain 55.3% of the variance in professional identity. Job satisfaction predicted professional self-esteem positively ($\beta = 0.70, P \leq 0.001$). Moreover, professional self-esteem indirectly mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and professional identity [indirect effect = 0.46, 95% confidence interval (CI): .29, .71]. The standardized indirect (mediated) effect of job satisfaction on teachers' professional identity is .462. That is, when job satisfaction goes up by 1 standard deviation, professional identity goes up by 0.462 standard deviations.

Discussion

This study attempted to investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' professional identity, professional self-esteem, and job satisfaction in secondary schools. The results of correlational analyses demonstrated that there is a positive ($r = 0.81$) and significant ($P = 0.000$) relationship between professional self-esteem and professional identity among EFL teachers. This would imply that EFL teacher's professional identity is strongly determined by the value they attach to their profession. Nevertheless, the respect and worth of the teaching profession in general and ELT in particular appear to be declining in Ethiopia. Teachers are not given the expected status and respect in society. This might be due to the low-income teachers earn. In sum, this would lead to burnout, which could endanger the stability of the profession. Further, the value teachers give to their profession significantly predicts their professional identity. In this view, Mbuva (2016) asserts that teachers with positive self-esteem are optimists who can say no to challenges. The findings of the current study are consistent with Motallebzadeh and Kazemi (2018), who concluded that there is a significant association between teachers' professional identity and professional self-esteem. Therefore, professional self-esteem has a strong power to determine the professional identity and effectiveness of EFL teachers. Hence, not paying close consideration to EFL teachers' professional self-esteem might lead to low level of professional identity and ineffectiveness in the profession.

The second objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' job satisfaction and professional identity. The findings indicated that job satisfaction has a positive correlation with professional identity ($r = 0.70, P = 0.000$). This might mean teachers with high levels of job satisfaction tended to have a strong professional identity, which again leads to effective teaching and success in the profession. As it has been stated by Hong (2010), job satisfaction is an indispensable component of teachers' professional lives and identities. Thus, understanding the association between teachers' professional identity and job satisfaction is helpful to gain insight into important aspects of teachers' professional lives such as career decision making, motivation, emotion, and commitment.

In order to examine the direct and indirect effects of job satisfaction and professional self-esteem on professional identity the structural equation modelling analysis was applied. The results suggested that professional self-esteem positively predicted professional identity ($\beta = 0.66$, $P \leq 0.001$). It has a direct positive effect on professional identity. Similarly, job satisfaction positively predicted professional identity ($\beta = 0.27$, $P \leq 0.001$). Furthermore, professional self-esteem indirectly mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and professional identity. This would imply job satisfaction mediates professional self-esteem, which in turn predicts professional identity. Therefore, job satisfaction indirectly mediates professional identity through professional self-esteem. In line with this finding, Ostad, Ghanizadeh, and Ghanizadeh (2019) in their study in Iran stated that professional identity is likely influenced by our feelings and perceptions about our job. A recent study by Butakor, Guo, and Adebajji (2021) revealed that emotional intelligence positively affected professional identity directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. These studies did not directly investigate the effects of job satisfaction on professional identity. Yet, from their finding, it can be inferred that job satisfaction brought a direct effect on TPI. Meanwhile, a teacher's success is predicted positively and significantly by both professional identity and autonomy (Derakhshan, Coombe, Arabmofrad & Taghizadeh, 2020). The result of the present study appears to be new in the EFL context of Ethiopia and it can be used to frame second language teacher education and the ELT profession.

Conclusions and Implications

In conclusion, teachers' professional identity can be influenced by different variables. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that both professional self-esteem and job satisfaction have a strong association with EFL teachers' professional identity. Professional identity can be predicted by job satisfaction and professional self-esteem. Nevertheless, professional self-esteem mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and professional identity strongly and significantly. Furthermore, the current study implies that teacher education colleges or universities in Ethiopia should consider EFL teachers' professional identity dynamics as a key element in teacher training program. EFL teachers should be consistently aware of their professional identity and some of the mediating variables. The other implication of the study is that a clear understanding of the impact of job satisfaction and professional self-esteem on professional identity could be helpful in improving the well-being of professionals and the ELT profession. Besides, defining clearly the professional worth and the status of one's profession is important to develop pride and trust in the profession. Furthermore, policymakers and the Ministry of Education (MoE) should consider EFL teachers' professional identity and professional association issues seriously to improve the status and the attractiveness of the profession. In addition, the government of Ethiopia should take action to improve job satisfaction for teachers since this has a strong implication for the professional self-esteem and professional identity of teachers.

Consequently, further investigation is needed involving different constructs or sub-scales of job satisfaction, professional self-esteem, and emotional intelligence. On the other hand, more

studies can be conducted to look into the comparative study of EFL teachers' and other subject teachers' professional identities in a wider context.

Limitations of the study

The study had some limitations. First, some participants were reluctant to fill out the questionnaires in time. Second, the researchers could not include a large number of samples due to financial and time constraints. If the study had included a large number of samples, the findings could have been different.

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Declaration

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

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