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EXPLORING EFL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES: ADAPTATION AND VALIDATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY SCALE IN KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract. The purpose of the present study was to adapt and validate the EFL Teacher Professional Identity Scale (EFLTPI) in the Kazakhstani context. The EFLTPI was completed by 470 English language teachers from diverse schools in the Turkistan region, Kazakhstan. A comprehensive approach was employed, utilizing a survey methodology to collect data using a Google Form questionnaire. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to validate the measurement model, revealing satisfactory fit indices (Chi-square/sd = 1.862, RMSEA = 0.031, SRMR = 0.054, NFI = 0.933, NNFI = 0.968, CFI = 0.973, AGFI = 0.872). The scale demonstrated high reliability and validity, with Cronbach's alpha values varied between 0.86 and 0.94 for all factors. A second-level CFA indicated significant relationships among the factors, suggesting a unidimensional structure representing EFL teacher professional identity. Key findings highlighted high levels of perceived professional identity among teachers, particularly in serving as effective role models, creating effective teaching environments, possessing management skills, and imparting knowledge and experience. This study confirms the scale's applicability in Kazakhstan, providing a robust tool for assessing EFL teachers' professional identity and instilling confidence in the thoroughness of the research process.

Keywords: EFL teachers; professional identity; confirmatory factor analysis; Kazakhstan; survey method.

Introduction

Developing a professional identity is crucial for educators, particularly those engaged in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), to progress and achieve greater success. A person's professional self-concept and function within the educational setting are defined by their ideas, attitudes, and practices, which collectively comprise their professional identity. EFL teachers' experiences, cultural settings, and work situations all influence their sense of self. These elements shape how educators perceive their responsibilities, interact with students, and develop as professionals. A professional identity is not static but changes over time due to ongoing reflection and modification. Given the frequent necessity to operate in multicultural and diverse settings, it is of the utmost importance for those teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to develop a comprehensive understanding of their professional identities. The internalization of the standards and principles of the teaching profession, the adaptation to new educational regulations, and addressing the shifting needs of students are all components of this ongoing process. EFL teachers' professional identity enables them to maintain a coherent sense of self while navigating diverse institutional and cultural contexts, ensuring consistency in their interactions with students and instructional methods.

Further research in the Kazakhstani context is required to address the increased professional identity of EFL teachers. The reason for this is the impact of the factors above on instructional strategies, teacher motivation, and student results (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Norton, 2013). However, most current research is focused on Western and East Asian contexts, which has resulted in a significant knowledge gap regarding the construction of EFL professional identities in other countries, particularly in Central Asia. Investigating how Kazakhstani EFL teachers construct their professional identities may yield valuable insights into understanding the distinctive challenges and opportunities they encounter, thus contributing to the global discourse on teacher identity.

Perception and evaluation of EFL teachers' professional identities are crucial to improve instruction quality and student outcomes. The EFL Teacher Professional Identity Scale (EFLTPI) is a comprehensive instrument for evaluating the various dimensions of professional identity. The scale permits a sophisticated

comprehension of the various elements that contribute to a teacher's sense of professional identity, including their beliefs about teaching, their attitudes toward their students, and their practices in the classroom. Also, it enables researchers to comprehend better the intricate interrelationship between these factors and their collective influence on forming a teacher's professional identity.

This study aims to validate the EFLTPI in Kazakhstan by applying structural equation modeling (SEM) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). This will acquire distinctive insights into interrelationships between the constituent elements of professional identity and their influence on the efficacy of pedagogical practice in the specific geographical context. The study underscores the importance of assisting EFL teachers in professional development by examining the existing body of research on professional identity and its measurement. The validation of the EFLTPI in the Kazakhstani context is of particular importance, as it can assist in identifying the distinctive factors that contribute to the professional identity of EFL teachers in this region. Such factors may include the influence of local cultural and educational norms, the impact of national language policies, and the challenges and opportunities EFL teachers face in Kazakhstan. A deeper comprehension of these factors can furnish invaluable insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and teacher educators, thereby facilitating the formation of context-specific strategies to bolster the professional advancement of EFL teachers in Kazakhstan.

Literature Review

An EFL teacher's self-image and perspective of their position, duties, and tasks within the broader educational context is termed their "EFL professional identity." Many factors, including social influences, career experiences, educational background, and personal values, shape this identity. It is a complex notion that reflects the inherent challenges of teaching English to non-native speakers of the language.

As posited by Beijaard et al. (2004) identity is a dynamic and continuous process of reading and reinterpreting events. This perspective emphasizes that the professional identities of EFL teachers are malleable and evolve as they gain experience and encounter new challenges. Given their background and experiences as learners, teachers' views on teaching and learning significantly influence their engagement with students in the classroom (Richards, 2008).

Professional identity development is contingent upon participation in professional communities, wherein educators exchange practices, attitudes, and objectives (Wenger, 1998). Engagement in professional development activities, networking with colleagues, and affiliation with teaching organizations facilitate a sense of belonging and career advancement among EFL teachers. Furthermore, language use in social, cultural, and political contexts also shapes identity (Norton, 2013).

EFL teachers operate within many cultural contexts, and these factors, in conjunction with local perspectives on English, educational methodologies, and the language's position in society, collectively inform their professional identities. A further crucial element of an EFL professional identity is agency, which may be defined as the capacity of teachers to act with intention and make decisions within their professional environment (Lasky, 2005). EFL teachers exhibit agency by modifying their educational strategies, outlining their professional needs, and pursuing changes for professional development. It can be argued that maintaining a good professional identity is contingent upon having a sense of agency, especially in demanding educational settings. The interaction of personal, professional, and environmental elements highlights the intricacy of the EFL professional identity. The dynamic relationship between an individual and their surroundings shapes a teacher's identity, which always changes (Day et al., 2006).

The EFLTPI, developed by , assesses various dimensions of EFL teachers' professional identity. The scale includes 41 items distributed across 13 factors, such as creating a relaxed learning atmosphere, imparting knowledge and experience, having management skills, etc. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is widely used to validate measurement models, ensuring their reliability and structural validity

The high standardized factor loadings (>0.70) and significant Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) values further confirm the scale's validity and reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014; Nunnally, 1967).

Professional identity in teaching is multifaceted, encompassing various interrelated factors. The significant correlations between the latent variables in the EFLTPI measurement model suggest strong interrelationships among these factors

It is essential to grasp how the identity of EFL professionals can be gauged to gain insight into the multifaceted aspects of teaching English in various contexts. Several scales and models have been developed globally to assess the various dimensions of this professional identity. Among the most notable of these are the Teacher Professional Identity Scale (TPIS), the Professional Identity of EFL Teachers Questionnaire (PIEFLTQ), the Teacher Identity and Professional Development (TIPD) Model, the EFL Teacher Identity Scale (EFL-TIS), the Language Teacher Identity (LTI) Framework, and the teaching Perspectives Inventory (TPI).

The TPIS developed by Beijaard et al. (2004) focuses on three main dimensions: subject matter expertise, didactic competence, and pedagogical expertise. The PIEFLTQ, developed by (Cheung, 2008), comprises items that assess teachers' beliefs, self-perceptions, and attitudes toward their profession. The TIPD model, proposed by Gee (2000), offers a sociocultural perspective on teacher identity. The EFL-TIS, developed by Varghese et al. (2005), captures the specific aspects of EFL teachers' professional identity. The LTI framework proposed by Barkhuizen and Consoli (2021), offers a narrative approach to understanding teacher identity. The TPI, developed by Pratt et al. (2000), identifies the dominant teaching perspectives of teachers. Pennington and Richards (2016) employ a range of scales and qualitative methods to investigate the professional identity of EFL teachers in diverse contexts. Trent (2013) used narrative inquiry to investigate the professional identity of novice EFL teachers in Hong Kong. Xu (2014) employed the PIEFLTQ to study the professional identity of Chinese EFL teachers.

These studies highlight developing and utilizing various scales and models for measuring EFL professional identity. These scales have enabled researchers to comprehend better the multifaceted nature of EFL teachers' professional identity and its influence on pedagogical practices, job satisfaction, and career advancement.

The measurement of EFL professional identity is grounded in several theoretical frameworks that provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of teacher identity. These frameworks encompass sociocultural theory, identity theory, reflective practice, and narrative inquiry.

Sociocultural theory, based on the work of , highlights the role of social interaction and cultural context in developing professional identity. As articulated, identity theory provides a comprehensive lens to examine how individuals perceive and construct their professional identities. The frameworks provide a foundation for developing and applying diverse scales, ensuring their capacity to capture the multifaceted aspects of professional identity. Forming an EFL professional identity is not solely contingent upon individual beliefs and experiences; it is also significantly shaped by cultural and contextual factors. Such factors include societal attitudes toward the English Language, educational policies, and institutional cultures. EFL teachers frequently report a heightened sense of professional status and importance in contexts where English is highly valued. Conversely, EFL teachers may encounter obstacles in asserting their professional identity in societies where English is viewed with ambivalence or resistance. Educational policies and curriculum standards represent pivotal contextual factors that influence the formation of EFL professional identity. Policies that emphasize the importance of English and allocate resources for EFL programs can reinforce teachers' professional identity by providing them with the requisite support and recognition.

The culture of educational institutions significantly impacts the professional identity of EFL teachers. Institutional cultures conducive to collaboration, professional development, and teacher autonomy can reinforce this identity. The broader sociopolitical environment also profoundly influences the formation of EFL professional identity. EFL teachers may encounter conflicting expectations and pressures in contexts where political ideologies influence language policies.

Cultural norms and values about teaching and learning also influence the formation of an EFL professional identity. EFL educators are likely to possess a robust sense of professional identity and pride in their work in cultures that hold teachers in high esteem. The immediate classroom context, including the diversity of students and the resources available, also influences EFL teachers' professional identity.

Li and Xu (2023) explored the growth of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers' educational identity through learning, using Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as their theoretical framework. The article examines the two EFL Chinese teachers' learning processes and describes that contradictions and reflections are sources of teacher learning. Teachers form their identities through agency and negotiation with others. The authors place emphasis on the fluid and transformative character of the teacher identity and argue

that this situation contributes to the better understanding of teacher learning and identity development processes.

Existing research on EFL professional identity in Kazakhstan and similar contexts has provided valuable insights into the particular challenges and opportunities faced by EFL teachers in these regions. However, there is a shortage of studies in this area. Shamim (2008) conducted a comparative study on the professional identity of EFL teachers in Pakistan and Kazakhstan, elucidating the impact of socio-political factors and educational policies on teachers' perceptions of their professional roles. Sercu et al. (2005) conducted a comparative study involving EFL teachers from eight countries, including Kazakhstan, to understand how cultural and contextual factors influence professional identity. The results of these studies demonstrate that the professional identity of EFL teachers is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon shaped by educational reforms, language policies, and societal attitudes toward English. These studies emphasize the necessity of providing ongoing professional development, institutional support, and peer collaboration opportunities to enhance EFL teachers' professional identity and effectiveness.

Lunenburg (2017) emphasized the crucial role of teachers as role models in shaping professional identity. Similarly, Wyatt (2018) underscored the importance of self-efficacy and role modeling in enhancing teachers' professional identity and instructional practices. Jia and Derakhshan (2023) investigated the interrelationships of Chinese English teachers' professional identity, commitment to the teachings and the professional achievement. Their study of 300 teachers based on every region in the country shows that both professional identity and commitment are significant factors of professional success as well. The authors point out the effect of such factors as emotional attachment of teachers to their career on the classroom efficiency and argue that positive professional identity and commitment can support more successful teaching (Jia & Derakhshan, 2023).

Effective teaching environments are essential for fostering student engagement and facilitating language acquisition (Borg, 2003). EFL teachers' high perceptions of their ability to create supportive and interactive classrooms align with research emphasizing the importance of conducive learning atmospheres for effective language instruction. Classroom management is vital for maintaining order and optimizing instructional time, contributing to student achievement and classroom efficiency (Evertson & Weinstein, 2015; Marzano et al., 2003). The commitment to imparting knowledge and experience reflects teachers' dedication to linguistic and cultural education, which is crucial for comprehensive language teaching (Richards, 2008).

Respectful interactions are essential, but other dimensions may be more salient in teachers' daily practice (Day et al., 2006). Similarly, there is a need for balanced instructional approaches and cultural competence in EFL teaching (Ellis, 2009; Kramsch, 2014).

The scale's comprehensive framework captures the multifaceted nature of professional identity, offering valuable insights for research, professional development, and educational policy. By understanding and supporting the various dimensions of professional identity, stakeholders can contribute to EFL teachers' professional growth and effectiveness.

Research Method

In the present study a survey method was used to collect data from 470 English language teachers from a variety of schools in Turkistan. The survey was conducted using a Google form. The questionnaire was sent to the participants by e-mail, and they completed it voluntarily.

The "EFL teacher professional identity scale" was used in this study. Preliminarily, a scale reading study was conducted with 15 English teachers with different academic degrees to determine whether a scale with 41 items under 13 factors is a comprehensive tool for measuring the professional identity of English teachers in Kazakhstan. As a result of a reading study, it was decided that the factors and items included in the scale were appropriate for the Kazakhstani educational system, and an application study was conducted.

According to the original EFLTPI scale a total of 41 items were distributed under the 13 factors as follows: (1) creating a relaxed learning atmosphere 4 items; (2) having the tendency to impart knowledge and experience five items; (3) having respectful behavior three items; (4) having the ability to develop/select EFL materials four items; (5) having management skills four items; (6) having error correction skills three items; (7) having communication skills three items; (8) creating an effective teaching environment three items, (9) having the tendency to develop professionally two items; (10) familiarity with target language and culture two

items; (11) serving as an effective role model 3 items; (12) valuing L1 culture two items; and (13) being concerned about students' ability and development three items (Hashemi et al., 2021)

The data collected were analyzed using SEM analysis to examine the relationship between the components of the scale and their impact on teacher identity. SEM analysis was used to simultaneously estimate measurement and structural models, comprehensively analyzing the hypothesized relationships. The first step was evaluating the measurement model to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument. Further, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to assess the fit of the measurement model to the data and to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity of the construct. Finally, second-level CFA was carried out to determine the effects of the components on EFLTPI acceptance.

Demographic Information

This study involved 470 English language teachers from various schools in the Turkistan region, with different teaching experiences, genders, and ages. The following Table 1 presents the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1

Socio-demographic information

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	63	13,5%
	Female	407	86,5%
Age	20-25	17	4%
	26-30	159	34%
	31-35	105	22%
	35 +	189	40%
Teaching experience	0-5 years	28	6%
	6-10 years	117	25%
	11-15 years	206	44%
	16 +	119	25%

As can be seen from the table, the gender distribution of the participants is 86.5% female and only 13,5% male. The age distribution was found to be 4% between 20-25 years old, 22% between 31-35 years old, 34% between 26-30 years old, and 40% of participants over 35 years. The distribution of participants according to their teaching experience was as follows: 6% with 0-5 years, 25% with 6-10 years, another 25% with more than 16 years, and 44% with 11-15 years of experience.

Findings

The measurement model aims to reveal how and to what extent observed variables explain latent variables. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is commonly used to develop measurement models and provides significant convenience. This method creates latent variables (factors) based on variables observed through a previously created model (Byrne, 2017; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006; Schumacker, R & Lomax, 1996).

The scale used in this study consists of 41 items grouped under 13 latent variables. To determine whether the scale is statistically valid and reliable, a first-level CFA was conducted using LISREL 9.3.3.14 software.

The results of the first-level CFA revealed that the measurement model is statistically acceptable. The model's fit criteria are given in Table 2.

Table 2*Fit indices of the measurement model*

Fit Index	Value	Fit
Chi-square /sd	1.862	Good Fit
RMSEA	0.031	Good Fit
SRMR	0.054	Acceptable
NFI	0.933	Acceptable
NNFI	0.968	Acceptable
CFI	0.973	Good Fit
AGFI	0.872	Acceptable

A review of the standardized factor loadings of all items in the measurement model revealed that the minimum loadings of all items were above 0.70, indicating each item's sufficient power. Moreover, the standardized loadings of all items were found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level, with the corresponding t-values presented in Table 3.

Table 3*CFA Results (Standart loading, t-value, Cronbach's Alpha, CR, AVE)*

Factor/ Item	Standard loading	t- value	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
FACTOR			0.918	0.918	0.736
RA1	0.87	-			
RA2	0.88	24.97			
RA3	0.85	23.96			
RA4	0.84	23.22			
FACTOR			0.943	0.944	0.770
IK1	0.85	-			
IK2	0.88	25.12			
IK3	0.93	27.93			
IK4	0.90	26.44			
IK5	0.83	22.80			
FACTOR			0.915	0.915	0.783
RB1	0.91	-			
RB2	0.89	28.12			
RB3	0.85	25.63			
FACTOR			0.936	0.937	0.788
DM1	0.90	-			
DM2	0.89	28.58			
DM3	0.91	29.98			
DM4	0.85	26.19			
FACTOR			0.862	0.865	0.616
MS1	0.82	-			
MS2	0.82	19.22			
MS3	0.73	16.59			
MS4	0.76	17.36			
FACTOR			0.897	0.900	0.751
ES1	0.91	-			
ES2	0.91	27.36			
ES3	0.78	21.41			
FACTOR			0.916	0.919	0.792
CS1	0.91	-			
CS2	0.93	30.72			
CS3	0.82	24.48			
FACTOR			0.904	0.906	0.763
TE1	0.83	-			
TE2	0.91	23.79			
TE3	0.88	23.07			
FACTOR			0.881	0.889	0.801
DP1	0.96	-			
DP2	0.83	14.42			
FACTOR			0.949	0.948	0.900
FL1	0.96	-			
FL2	0.94	25.65			

Factor/ Item	Standard loading	t- value	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
FACTOR			0.936	0.939	0.793
RM1	0.83	-			
RM2	0.93	26.32			
RM3	0.92	26.12			
RM4	0.88	23.89			
FACTOR			0.925	0.928	0.865
VL1	0.90	-			
VL2	0.96	22.43			
FACTOR			0.908	0.911	0.774
SA1	0.92	-			
SA2	0.89	27.24			
SA3	0.83	24.28		0.918	0.736

The Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) values calculated for the measurement model provided strong evidence for the validity and reliability of the model. To ensure scale reliability, CA and CR values must be greater than 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). In this study, the overall Cronbach's alpha value was calculated to be greater than 0.70 for each factor, with an overall alpha value of 0.944, as illustrated in Table 3. Similarly, CR values for all factors were above 0.70, and all AVE values were above 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014)

The following Table 4 presents the correlations between the latent variables.

Table 4

CFA Results (Standard loading, t-value, Cronbach's Alpha, CR, AVE)

Factor / Item	Standard loading	t- value	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
FACTOR			0.918	0.918	0.736
RA1	0.87	-			
RA2	0.88	24.97			
RA3	0.85	23.96			
RA4	0.84	23.22			
FACTOR			0.943	0.944	0.770
IK1	0.85	-			
IK2	0.88	25.12			
IK3	0.93	27.93			
IK4	0.90	26.44			
IK5	0.83	22.80			
FACTOR			0.915	0.915	0.783
RB1	0.91	-			
RB2	0.89	28.12			
RB3	0.85	25.63			
FACTOR			0.936	0.937	0.788
DM1	0.90	-			
DM2	0.89	28.58			
DM3	0.91	29.98			
DM4	0.85	26.19			
FACTOR			0.862	0.865	0.616
MS1	0.82	-			
MS2	0.82	19.22			
MS3	0.73	16.59			
MS4	0.76	17.36			
FACTOR			0.897	0.900	0.751
ES1	0.91	-			
ES2	0.91	27.36			
ES3	0.78	21.41			
FACTOR			0.916	0.919	0.792
CS1	0.91	-			
CS2	0.93	30.72			
CS3	0.82	24.48			
FACTOR			0.904	0.906	0.763
TE1	0.83	-			
TE2	0.91	23.79			
TE3	0.88	23.07			
FACTOR			0.881	0.889	0.801
DP1	0.96	-			

Factor / Item	Standard loading	t- value	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
DP2	0.83	14.42			
FACTOR			0.949	0.948	0.900
FL1	0.96	-			
FL2	0.94	25.65			
FACTOR			0.936	0.939	0.793
RM1	0.83	-			
RM2	0.93	26.32			
RM3	0.92	26.12			
RM4	0.88	23.89			
FACTOR			0.925	0.928	0.865
VL1	0.90	-			
VL2	0.96	22.43			
FACTOR			0.908	0.911	0.774
SA1	0.92	-			
SA2	0.89	27.24			
SA3	0.83	24.28		0.918	0.736

All correlations between latent variables were found to be statistically significant. In summary, the results demonstrate that the subscales of the scale, which consist of questions to measure the EFL teacher's professional identity, are reliable and structurally valid.

Table 5
Correlation Matrix of Latent Variables

	RA	IK	RB	DM	MS	ES	CS	TE	DP	FL	RM	SA	VL
RA	1												
IK	0.43	0.521											
RB	0.346	0.572	1										
DM	0.387	0.473	0.382	1									
MS	0.418	0.452	0.470	0.518	1								
ES	0.381	0.378	0.398	0.442	0.591	1							
CS	0.341	0.491	0.421	0.463	0.413	0.543	1						
TE	0.470	0.422	0.431	0.418	0.523	0.485	0.521	1					
DP	0.299	0.247	0.284	0.369	0.395	0.354	0.373	0.398	1				
FL	0.246	0.425	0.319	0.351	0.339	0.305	0.349	0.391	0.344	1			
RM	0.295	0.534	0.497	0.481	0.386	0.382	0.494	0.458	0.330	0.477	1		
SA	0.379	0.380	0.347	0.371	0.438	0.421	0.396	0.488	0.311	0.352	0.464	1	
VL	0.196	0.439	0.441	0.401	0.384	0.277	0.370	0.363	0.406	0.566	0.616	0.389	1

Once the first-level factor analysis established that each item within the scale's sub-dimensions accurately and consistently measures the corresponding dimensions, a second-level confirmatory factor analysis should be conducted to determine the effects of these sub-dimensions on the scale. In this section of the study, the second-level measurement model was constructed by measuring the effect of each sub-dimension on the scale.

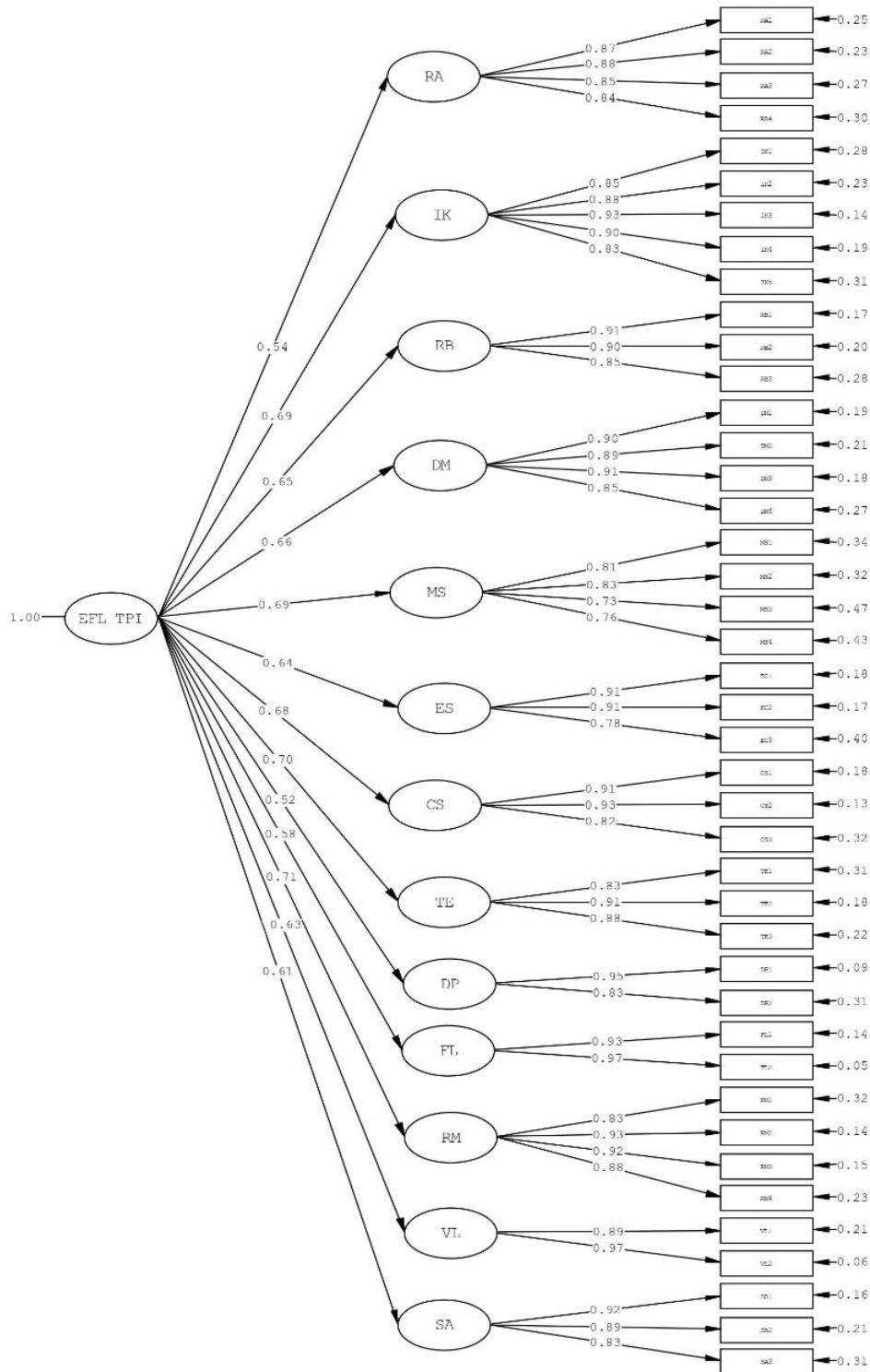
The results of the analysis provided statistical evidence that the model was the correct one. These results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Fit indices of the measurement model

Fit Index	Value	Fit
Chi-square /sd	1.862	Good Fit
RMSEA	0.043	Good Fit
SRMR	0.054	Acceptable
NFI	0.916	Acceptable
NNFI	0.968	Acceptable
CFI	0.959	Good Fit
AGFI	0.854	Acceptable

This model was employed to examine the relationship between the EFLTPI latent variable and its sub-dimensions, which are suggested to constitute the scale in theory. The second-level measurement model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Measurement model



As shown in Figure 1, the standardized regression coefficients are above 0.50 and range between 0.52 and 0.71. The latent variable that exerts the most significant influence on EFLTPI is the RM (serving as an

effective role model) sub-dimension, with a coefficient of 0.71. In contrast, the variable that exerts the most minor influence is DP (tending to develop professionally), with a coefficient of 0.52.

The effects of the remaining sub-dimensions on EFLTPI are as follows: 0.70 TE (creating an effective teaching environment), 0.69 MS (having management skills), 0.69 IK (having the tendency to impart knowledge and experience), 0.66 DM (having the ability to develop/select EFL materials), 0.65 RB (having respectful behavior), 0.64 ES (having error correction skills), 0.63 VL (valuing L1 culture), 0.61 SA (being concerned about students' ability and development), 0.58 FL (familiarity with target language and culture) and 0.54 RA (creating a relaxed learning atmosphere). All regression coefficients in the second-level measurement model were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

After determining the items' discrimination power and obtaining Cronbach's alpha (CA), CR, and AVE values, it was concluded that the scale's validity and reliability were statistically at the desired level.

Given that the EFL teacher professional identity inventory used in this study has been used in previous studies (Hashemi et al., 2021), a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test its validity. The structural models were obtained through CFA. The optimal model was identified through the use of fit indices. In the EFLTPI scale, two models were considered: a first-level and a second-level multi-factor model. The suitability of these models was then evaluated.

When the correlations between the factors were examined, a significant relationship was determined, indicating that the factors in the scale could be represented by a single structure, namely the EFL teacher professional identity scale. As a result, the measurement tool used within this study's scope has been proven valid. Additionally, the initial theory that the dimensions of the measurement tool can be represented in a single structure has been confirmed.

In addition, the findings of this study revealed a high level of perceptions of English language teachers regarding their professional identity as teachers. In particular, their perceptions regarding RM (serving as an effective role model), TE (creating an effective teaching environment), MS (having management skills), and IK (tending to impart knowledge and experience) were identified as being at a high level. Other factors related to teacher identity were found to be at moderate levels.

Discussion

This study's first-level confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) aimed to validate the EFL Teacher Professional Identity Scale (EFLTPI) measurement model. The measurement model's fit indices indicate an acceptable fit, with Chi-square/df = 1.862, RMSEA = 0.031, SRMR = 0.054, NFI = 0.933, NNFI = 0.968, CFI = 0.973, and AGFI = 0.872. These values suggest that the model meets the criteria for good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999), corroborating previous studies utilizing CFA to validate similar scales (Byrne, 2017; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006).

The standardized factor loadings for all items in the measurement model exceeded 0.70, demonstrating sufficient power and statistical significance at 0.05 (Hair et al., 2014). The reliability and validity of the measurement model were further supported by high Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) values, all exceeding the recommended thresholds (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1978). These results affirm that the EFLTPI is a reliable and valid instrument for assessing EFL teachers' professional identity, aligning with the findings of Hashemi et al. (2021).

The validation of the EFLTPI through CFA is consistent with previous research on teacher professional identity scales. For instance, Hashemi et al. (2021) reported similar fit indices and reliability measures, reinforcing the robustness of the EFLTPI across different contexts. Moreover, studies by Wang et al. (2016) and Beijaard et al. (2004) have highlighted the importance of using reliable measurement models to capture the multifaceted nature of professional identity in EFL teaching.

The correlations between the latent variables in the measurement model were statistically significant, indicating strong interrelationships among the factors. This finding suggests that the various dimensions of professional identity are interconnected and collectively contribute to the overall construct. Similar interrelationships have been observed in other studies, where self-efficacy, professional commitment, and interaction with students and colleagues were significantly correlated (Day et al., 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

The second-level confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to determine the effects of the sub-

dimensions on the EFLTPI. The fit indices for the second-level model (Chi-square/df = 1.862, RMSEA = 0.043, SRMR = 0.054, NFI = 0.916, NNFI = 0.968, CFI = 0.959, AGFI = 0.854) indicate an acceptable fit, further validating the model's structure. The standardized regression coefficients, ranging from 0.52 to 0.71, demonstrate significant effects of the sub-dimensions on the overall construct, with RM (serving as an effective role model) exerting the most significant influence (0.71) and DP (tending to develop professionally) the least (0.52).

The significant impact of the RM sub-dimension on professional identity aligns with findings from other research. For instance, Lunenburg (2017) emphasized the critical role of teachers serving as role models in shaping professional identity. Similarly, Wyatt (2018) highlighted the importance of self-efficacy and role modelling in enhancing teachers' professional identity and instructional practices.

The moderate influence of the DP sub-dimension suggests that professional development, while essential, may not be as strongly perceived as other aspects of professional identity. This finding is consistent with the work of Vangrieken et al. (2017), who noted that while continuous professional development is crucial, its perceived impact can vary depending on the context and the specific developmental activities undertaken.

The second-level measurement model was validated by the statistical significance of all regression coefficients ($p < 0.05$), thereby reinforcing the model's reliability. The results above demonstrate the interdependence among the sub-dimensions and their collective impact on the overarching concept of professional identity. The sub-dimension and the overall construct demonstrate robust correlations that align with the theoretical framework of . The framework proposes that interrelated elements constitute professional identity.

EFL teachers demonstrate a profound dedication to moral conduct and professional conduct, as evidenced by their high regard for the role of an effective role model (RM). This is a pivotal aspect in the context of EFL, given that teachers frequently serve as linguistic and cultural role models for their pupils (Duff & Uchida, 1997). The findings of Lunenburg (2017) underscored the influence of role modeling on student motivation and learning outcomes, aligning with the high RM ratings.

EFL teachers demonstrate high confidence in their ability to construct dynamic and supportive learning environments, as evidenced by their high rating on the Teaching Environment (TE) scale. This aspect has great consequences for language acquisition. It supports by Borg (2003) study, which emphasizes the role of a supportive classroom atmosphere in encouraging student participation and learning. The high TE scores indicate that EFL teachers attach great importance in creating learning-friendly environments to deliver effective language instruction.

The observation that EFL teachers hold their management skills in high regard indicates their capacity to plan and direct lessons in the classroom. Effective management of the learning environment and utilizing instructional time are essential for attaining these goals (Marzano et al., 2003). These findings are consistent with those of other studies highlighting the value of management abilities in raising student success and improving classroom effectiveness (Evertson & Weinstein, 2015).

The Imparting Knowledge and Experience (IK) factor evidences EFL teachers' dedication to sharing knowledge and promoting student learning. The high IK ratings demonstrate the value educators place on transferring linguistic and cultural information, which is crucial for comprehensive language understanding (Richards, 2008). The findings are consistent with Hashemi et al. (2021), who also identified that EFL teachers had high expectations for the transfer of information.

The level of respectful behavior (RB) demonstrated by the participants was perceived to be high, although it was not as strongly felt as observed in the conduct of RM, TE, MS, and IK. This suggests that, despite an awareness of the value of courteous communication, other aspects of EFL teachers' professional identities may be more prominent in their day-to-day work. This result is consistent with the findings of Day et al. (2006), who highlighted that an individual's professional identity encompasses a range of attitudes and actions that are accorded varying degrees of importance.

EFL teachers may prefer alternative instructional techniques over error correction, as indicated by their moderate perception of error correction skills (ES). The importance of error correction in language acquisition is widely acknowledged; however, its significance varies according to the teaching styles employed and the classroom dynamics (Ellis, 2009). This research underscores the importance of adopting a balanced approach

to teaching that incorporates error correction without compromising other key aspects of the learning process.

The modest assessment of familiarity with the target language and culture (FL) indicates that, although EFL teachers place a high importance on cultural understanding, other characteristics of their professional identity may be of greater significance. This result is consistent with the findings of earlier studies, which suggest that cultural familiarity is an important factor in the context of EFL but may be superseded by managerial and pedagogical abilities (Kramsch, 2014).

The study's findings underscore the importance of targeted professional development initiatives that address the overlooked facets of professional identity. To assist EFL teachers in developing a more comprehensive professional identity, professional development programs that emphasize improving error correction skills (ES) and respectful behavior (RB) may prove beneficial. Furthermore, programs encouraging immersion in the target language and culture (FL) can enhance teachers' pedagogical approaches and cultural competency.

It is imperative that educational policies acknowledge and encourage the diverse professional identities of EFL teachers. The comprehensive professional identity of EFL teachers may be enhanced by policies that facilitate collaboration among educators, provide resources for professional growth, and cultivate a conducive learning atmosphere (Day et al., 2006). Policies that recognize and honor educators for their efforts to set a good example for students and provide productive learning environments may also serve to reinforce their dedication and motivation.

Conclusion

The present study employed first- and second-level confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to validate Kazakhstan's EFL Teacher Professional Identity Scale (EFLTPI).

The study's findings illustrate that EFL teachers in Kazakhstan perceive themselves as highly professional, particularly in their capacity to serve as role models, design productive learning environments, demonstrate managerial abilities, and disseminate information and expertise. These factors significantly influenced teachers' professional identities, underscoring their pivotal role in the educational context.

The suggestion of targeted professional growth topics is based on moderate impressions of other aspects, including proficiency with the target language and culture, error repair abilities, and courteous demeanor. Enhancing these elements will facilitate the development of a more comprehensive professional identity among EFL teachers, enhancing their efficacy and self-assurance in the classroom.

To sum up, the study's results support the validity and reliability of the EFLTPI in the Kazakhstani context, providing a valuable tool for assessing and understanding the professional identities of EFL teachers. The findings substantiate the necessity for sustained professional development and governmental initiatives that acknowledge and promote the multifaceted nature of teacher identity. Consequently, those involved in education may enhance EFL teachers' effectiveness and professional development, ultimately improving language learning outcomes.

This study's validation of the EFL Teacher Professional Identity Scale confirms its efficacy in assessing EFL teachers' professional identities. The strong correlations between the components and the validation of the single-structure model demonstrate the intertwined nature of professional identity. The positive perceptions held by EFL teachers of themselves as managers, knowledge transmitters, competent role models, and designers of successful learning environments reinforce the positive aspects of their professional identities.

These findings emphasize the importance of providing EFL teachers with the support they require to develop their professional identities. They also have significant implications for educational policy and professional development. Future studies should address this study's shortcomings and investigate the use of mixed methods, cross-cultural comparisons, and the evolution of professional identity over time. Investigating and supporting EFL teachers' professional identities can enhance their efficacy and, subsequently, the quality of students' educational outcomes.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

Author Contributions

Lazura Kazykhankyzy, Meruyert Seitova, Ziyoda Khalmatova, and H. Eray Çelik contributed equally to the conceptualization, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, interpretation of the findings, preparation of the original manuscript, review and editing, supervision, and finalization of the study. All authors participated equally in all stages of the research and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Declaration of Use of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

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