Research Paper

Professional Identity Reflection of Iranian EFL Instructors in E-Teaching: Focus on Achievement Orientation Theory

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Abstract

While the main focus of the studies in the literature is centered around EFL teachers' identity construction in face-to-face classes regarding certain cliche factors, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the potential of investigating EFL teachers' professional identity reflection in the developing contexts of distance education. Thus, this study examined the possible association between Iranian EFL instructors' Professional Identity Reflection (PIR) and their use of Achievement Orientation Strategies (AOSs) in the dynamic setting of E-teaching. Besides, this study evaluated the prediction power of the AOSs in determining the PIR of Iranian EFL instructors. One hundred four male and female Iranian EFL instructors were selected based on convenience sampling to participate in this quantitative correlational research. Two instruments, including Measure of Teachers Achievement (MoTA) and Questionnaire of Professional Identity (QPI), were used to collect the required data on the online platform of Type form. The R software's correlation and multiple regression packages were utilized to analyze the gathered data. The results indicated a robust direct association between the PIR of Iranian EFL instructors in E-teaching and their use of AOSs. Moreover, three out of four AOSs significantly predicted the PIR of Iranian EFL instructors in E-Teaching. Furthermore, the mastery-approach strategy had the most predicting power among the other AOSs. This study provides practical interdisciplinary benefits for EFL teachers, EFL teacher trainers, and educational psychologists in training EFL teachers who are aware of how their views toward achieving specific academic goals in E-teaching influence their professional identity in E-teaching.

Keywords: *Achievement Theory, E-teaching, Iranian EFL Teachers, Professional Identity*

بازتاب هویت حرفه ای مدرسان زبان انگلیسی درآموزش الکترونیکی: تمرکز بر نظریه جهت گیری پیشرفت

در حالی که تمرکز اصلی مطالعات حول محور ساخت هویت معلمان زبان انگلیسی در کلاس‌های حضوری با توجه به برخی عوامل کلیشه‌ای است، همه‌گیری COVID-19پتانسیل بررسی بازتاب هویت حرفه‌ای معلمان زبان انگلیسی را در زمینه‌های در حال توسعه نشان می دهد. بنابراین، این مطالعه ارتباط احتمالی بین بازتاب هویت حرفه‌ای مربیان زبان انگلیسی (PIR) و استفاده آن‌ها از استراتژی‌های جهتگیری پیشرفت (AOSs) را در محیط پویای آموزش الکترونیکی بررسی کرده است. علاوه بر این، این مطالعه به ارزیابی قدرت پیش‌بینی AOSs در تعیین PIR مدرسان زبان انگلیسی زبان ایرانی پرداخته است. 144 مدرس زبان انگلیسی مرد و زن ایرانی بر اساس نمونه گیری در دسترس برای شرکت در این پژوهش کمی همبستگی انتخاب شدند. برای جمع آوری داده های مورد نیاز در بستر آنلاین Typeform از دو ابزار سنجش پیشرفت معلمان (MoTA) و پرسشنامه هویت حرفه ای (QPI) استفاده شد. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده های جمع آوری شده از بسته های همبستگی و رگرسیون چندگانه نرم افزار R استفاده شد. نتایج حاکی از ارتباط مستقیم قوی بین PIR مربیان زبان انگلیسی زبان ایرانی در آموزش الکترونیکی و استفاده آنها از AOS ها بود. علاوه بر این، از هر چهار AOS سه مورد به طور معناداری PIR مدرسان زبان انگلیسی زبان ایرانی در آموزش الکترونیکی را پیش‌بینی کردند. علاوه بر این، استراتژی رویکرد تسلط بیشترین قدرت پیش بینی را در میان سایر AOS ها داشت. این مطالعه مزایای عملی میان رشته ای را برای معلمان زبان انگلیسی، مربیان معلم زبان انگلیسی، و روانشناسان آموزشی در آموزش معلمان زبان انگلیسی ارائه می دهد که از چگونگی تأثیر دیدگاه های آنها نسبت به دستیابی به اهداف تحصیلی خاص در آموزش الکترونیکی بر هویت حرفه ای آنها در آموزش الکترونیکی آگاه هستند..

واژگان کلیدی: تئوری پیشرفت، آموزش الکترونیکی، معلمان زبان انگلیسی ایرانی، هویت حرفه‌ای

Introduction

Professional identity is defined mainly as the knowledge, skills, and in some cases, beliefs of the teachers shared with other individuals, particularly among their peers in professional groups, which has shown significant effects on the academic growth of the EFL teachers in terms of reaching their targeted goals (Wang, 2021). It has been proved that the possible effects of EFL teachers' professional identity reflection were not limited to their scientific or academic progress but were bound to their critical aspects or characteristics, such as the way of thinking (Sheybani & Miri, 2019), levels of self-efficacy (Moslemi & Habibi, 2019), and autonomy levels (Derakhshan et al., 2020). According to Nazari et al. (2021), while various studies attempted to individualize, contextualize, and even culturalize the views toward the professional identity of EFL teachers in the mainstream old-fashioned way of face-to-face instructional contexts, there is a critical need to investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' achievements or goals orientations as a practical, valuable, and frequently-used evaluation domain by EFL teachers and their Professional Identity Reflection (PIR), particularly in the under-developed or developing contexts of distance education such as E-teaching contexts in the middle east and north Africa region. Moreover, setting professional goals is a critical step to construct professional identity among teachers to not only evaluate their academic functions but also to enhance their rate of progress (Cruess et al., 2019).

Looking at EFL teachers' professional identity, especially in E-teaching through the lens of their goal or achievement orientation, requires a valid, reliable, and up-to-date framework such as Achievement Orientation Theory (AOT) in distance education, which is defined as an Emotional Intelligence Competency (EIC) rooted in academic and career motivation that includes four different strategies, namely Performance Approach (PAP), Performance Avoidance (PAV), Mastery Approach (MAP), and Mastery Avoidance (MAV) (Yesilbursa & Sayar, 2014). The PAP refers to performing equally as well as other teachers to reach competency in a particular area in E-teaching; PAV addresses the situations that teachers avoid as being competent in a specific area in E-teaching is not certainly achievable in comparison to other teachers, MAP states learning about an issue in teaching to an extent to reach high-level competency in that field, MAV addresses the situations in which different barriers influence the related competency among teachers in teaching (Karaman & Edling, 2021). In some other previous versions of AOT, there was a distinct component for professions that was helpful to determine the construction of professional identity and its reflection, mostly in non-teaching contexts with a focus on an action-motivation theory among the workforce in different organizations or companies (Porath & Bateman, 2006).

To better understand the strategies in the AOT, there are some examples provided by Aubrey and Riley (2020) that are stated here. Regarding the PAP, for instance, a teacher's performance in E-teaching is in the equal range to the performance of his peers. Some reasons were mentioned for this situation, such as the exact preferences of different teachers to show off their skills and abilities in E-teaching through confronting various challenging issues in the dynamic setting of E-teaching. In contrast to the PAP, in the PAV, for example, a teacher evaluates his ability as weak or low compared to his peers; thus, he decides not to engage in the E-teaching tasks, particularly those that need critical specific interdisciplinary knowledge. In the MAP, for instance, a teacher decides to compete with his peers by gaining knowledge about different aspects of E-teaching not through involving with different associated E-teaching challenges but by gaining knowledge through studying individually. Finally, in the MAV, for example, as a teacher possess low skills and abilities to perform in an equal range compared to his peers, he decides not to gain knowledge about that particular aspect in E-teaching in which they are less competent.

Due to the complexity and multifacetedness of the intervening variables influencing professional identity reflection of teachers in the field of EFL and the dynamic, fast-paced changing environment of E-teaching, and the possible confliction of EFL teachers' professional identity with their internet persona, investigating EFL teachers' professional identity reflection in E-teaching in the developing context of distance education in Iran based on the valid and reliable framework of the AOT possess great and significant research potentials (Meihami & Esfandiari, 2021). In addition, the number of related studies in the literature that targeted the evaluation of EFL instructors' professional identity reflection in E-teaching, particularly in the developing Iranian context of distance education, is limited to some recently published ones in which none of them benefited from the utilization of AOT framework (Fanaee & Davaribina, 2021). Concerning the above-mentioned points, this study aimed to shed light on the relationship between the PIR of Iranian EFL instructors in E-teaching and their use of AOSs. Furthermore, the prediction power of the AOSs in determining Iranian EFL instructors' PIR was another objective of this study. According to the objectives of this study, the research questions were raised as follows:

Q1. Is there a significant relationship between Iranian EFL instructors' Professional Identity Reflection (PIR) and their Achievement Orientation Strategies (AOSs)?
Q2. Which AOSs can best predict Iranian EFL instructors' PIR in E-teaching?

Literature Review

This study was based on two specific theories, including identity theory in professional occupational settings (Burke & Stets, 2009) and goal orientation theory (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007). The first theory states that the professional identity of individuals is determined through different variables and varies across different settings. Besides, during the Coronavirus pandemic, the reflection of the professional identity of teachers and particularly EFL teachers as instructors who engage with a language other than their mother tongue in their instruction have entered into a new dynamic context of distance education which is rationally supposed to be different from the mainstream setting of face-to-face classes (Sani et al., 2022). According to the second theory, different individuals, according to various factors such as biological, contextual, and psychological ones, prefer different types of orientations in achieving their goals. Recently, the achievement orientation framework of EFL teachers in distance education seemed to have a critical association with different variables, including their professional identity (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022).

The related studies in the literature are categorized into three different groups according to their objectives and paradigm. The first group of studies focused on constructing the EFL teachers' professional identity and the possible variables influencing its reflection in the face-to-face context of instruction. For example, Lomi and Mbato (2020) reported that different contextual (i.e., types of university), cultural (i.e., the position and roles of teachers in the culture), and academic factors (i.e., the relationship between EFL teachers and students and their academic background) influenced the construction of the professional identity of amateur Indonesian EFL teachers positively or negatively. While the previous study targeted the professional identity construction of amateur EFL teachers, Soodmand Afshar and Donyaie (2019) investigated the professional identity construction of experienced Iranian EFL teachers through Consciousness-Raising (CR) activities. The findings of the CR activities shed light on mostly the adverse effects of the contextual variables rooted in the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers and their peers (i.e., a sense of arrogance) on the construction and reflection of the professional identity. Unlike the approach of the studies in this category, Kalali Sani et al. (2021) attempted to look at the Iranian EFL teachers' professional identity through the lens of meeting their expectations or reaching their goals according to some specific strategies they use to reach

those goals. They reported a significant association between Iranian EFL teachers' professional identity levels and their orientation in reaching their pre-considered goals. In another study in the Iranian context, Abednia (2012) reported no correlation between Iranian EFL teachers' professional identity and their educational achievement behaviors. Besides, he identified three major shifts as the reasons behind the determined results, elaborated in the discussion.

Consequently, the second category of the related studies in the literature belonged to the ones that considered investigating the professional identity of EFL learners and their goals orientation.

As an example of the second group in the related body of research, Keskin and Zaimoglu (2021) found significant roles of Turkish EFL teachers' performance-approach and performance avoidance in determining their levels of professional identity in the in-person context of instruction. In another study, Cheng (2021) found that the mastery approach and avoidance played significant roles in determining the type and extent of EFL and ESL teachers' professional identity and impacted their emotions as well. In confirmation with the outcomes of the previous studies but from a new perspective, in the Iranian EFL context, Qaleshahzari et al. (2020) determined that Iranian TEFL Ph.D. candidates as instructors evaluated their professional identity through the extent that they have reached their academic goals. Meanwhile, they have practiced different strategies, mostly performance and mastery approaches to reflect their professional identity among their peers. With a focus on the face-to-face context of instruction, the related studies in the literature, including the mentioned ones in the second category, provided a comprehensive body of information regarding EFL teachers' professional identity and their goals orientation. Recently and specifically since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a minimal number of studies in the non-Iranian contexts investigated the EFL teachers' professional identity in E-teaching by considering different variables. Accordingly, the third category of the studies in the literature allocated to the studies which focused on the professional identity of EFL teachers and their orientations in reaching their goals in distance education.

As an instance for the third category, Aboud (2020) found a significant association between Arab EFL teachers' professional identity and their achievement behaviors in E-learning courses significantly different from those reported in face-to-face classes. In the Indonesian context of distance education, Ashadi et al. (2022) examined the EFL teachers' professional identity in E-teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and its relationship with their Self-Directed Learning (SDL). They reported that Indonesian EFL teachers used performance and mastery strategies more than the others through SDL E-learning to enhance their professional identity in virtual courses conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. In another study, Huang (2021) compared the levels of professional identity of Chinese EFL teachers in face-to-face vs. online courses and the possible relationships with their orientations in achieving their goals. He found significant associations between the professional identity of Chinese EFL teachers in face-to-face and online courses with their orientations in reaching their goals. Besides, it was found that in the face-to-face context of instruction, most EFL teachers tend to use avoidance-based strategies, and in online courses, performance-based ones were frequently used. Recently, in a multi-continental need-analysis study, Lasekan and Alarcon (2022) reported that there should be a significant body of research investigating the way EFL teachers show or reflect their professional identity in E-teaching according to their achievement behavior based on a valid and reliable framework.

What makes this study significant and novel compared to the reviewed studies in the associated literature are summarized in four major points. First, while most of the studies focused on EFL teachers' identity formation, this study looked at their PIR as a representative of their identity formation in a unique attempt. Second, the targeted contexts in most of the related research are face-to-face or in-person settings, but in this study, the concentration was centered around E-teaching, which belongs to the primary paradigm of distance education. Third, the

professional identity formation of EFL teachers was examined in terms of certain stereotypical variables such as biological, contextual, and even cultural factors; this looked over the reflection of the professional identity among Iranian EFL teachers concerning the use of certain strategies of achievement orientation. Finally, in contrast to a considerable number of the studies in the related body of literature conducted in the developed contexts of EFL distance education, this research was carried out in the Iranian EFL setting of distance education which is considered a developing one.

Method

Design and Context of the Study

In line with this study and the restrictions exposed by the Coronavirus outbreak, the correlational quantitative research design was used to answer the research questions in focus. This study was conducted in Isfahan, Iran, from July 2021 to January 2022 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants

As this study was conducted amid the Coronavirus pandemic, the convenience sampling procedure was used to select the participants. At first, 83 male and female Iranian EFL instructors with an age range of 28-44 years old were selected from the Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) branch to participate in this study. Specific ethical guidelines in social science were considered in this study. Ethical principles included confidentiality (keeping the participants' information confidential), justice (treating participants in a fair and equal way), fidelity (safeguarding the rights of the participants at all times), non-maleficence (avoiding any psychological or physical harm caused by the study), beneficence (making sure the research is beneficial for the pre-targeted groups or individuals), and veracity (making sure about the credibility and integrity of the outcomes of the study). Seventy-six Iranian EFL instructors filled out the questionnaires. Researchers selected male and female participants with a wide age range to avoid sample selection bias. Besides, attrition bias was controlled by checking the excuses reported by the participants and classifying them into voluntary or involuntary attrition bias.

Instruments

Two valid and reliable instruments, including the Measure of Teachers Achievement (MoTA) (Papaioannou & Christodoulidis, 2007) and the Questionnaire of Professional Identity (QPI) (Lentillon-Kaestner et al., 2018), were used in this study.

MoTA. This instrument is a questionnaire based on AOT, including 12 five-point Likert-scale-based items in which every component of AOT, including performance approach, performance-avoidance, mastery approach, and mastery avoidance, is evaluated based on three items. It has a not-balanced uni-polar response anchor ranging from rarely, occasionally, sometimes, almost every time, and every time. The face and content validity and reliability ($0.82 < \alpha < 0.93$) of the MoTA have been approved in the international context (Lentillon-Kaestner et al., 2018) and the Iranian one (Kalali Sani et al., 2021).

QPI. This instrument is based on a five-point Likert-scale-based questionnaire that is consisted of 11 items seeking to investigate the extent of teachers' professional identity reflectivity. Similar to the previous instrument, the QPI enjoys a not-balanced uni-polar response anchor ranging from rarely, occasionally, sometimes, often, and always. It should be mentioned that the face and content validity and internal consistency as the reliability ($0.91 < \alpha < 0.94$) were confirmed in the international setting (Lentillon-Kaestner et al., 2018) and the Iranian one (Moradkhani & Ebadijalal, 2021).

Data Collection Procedure

As this study was conducted amid the COVID-19 outbreak, many different limitations impacted the process of collecting the required data. While the instruments proved to be valid and reliable based on the reports of the previous studies in different contexts, their face and content validity and reliability or internal consistency were re-examined. Regarding face validity, two assistant professors in applied linguistics evaluated the items' layout, style, wording, and clarity. Content validity was checked by an expert panel based on Average Congruency Percentage (ACP), in which every expert rates each item according to certain qualities such as relevancy, then an average value based on percentage is calculated after that based on a percentage mean of the experts' ratings, the content validity is checked (Yusoff, 2019). Besides, in terms of the instruments' reliability, they were piloted by 13 randomly selected Iranian EFL instructors. Next, the questionnaires, including MoTA and QPI, were uploaded to the online platform of Typeform, and a link was provided for both of them to be shared among the participants across different social groups. After receiving necessary permissions from the head of the English department in the Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) branch. Typeform is an alternative to Google form, which includes many more features in generating different types of dynamic and creative online questionnaires, managing them, and reporting their outcomes. Typeform enjoys a variety of customizable form templates, different interactive ways of managing and sharing the forms, and utilizing a series of plugins to enhance the forms regarding their graphical organizers. The average required time for both of these questionnaires to be filled was less than 15-20 minutes.

Data Analysis Procedure

The latest versions of R statistical computing software's correlation and multiple regression packages were utilized to analyze the gathered data. While the validity and reliability of the instruments were checked and reported in the subsequent sections, the reliability of the instruments was checked based on a pilot study conducted for 13 Iranian EFL instructors to make sure about their reliability in the context of this study. The pre-correlation statistical assumptions confirmed that a parametric correlation test was needed. Besides, while the Pearson test measures linear associations, Spearman's and Kendall's tests are used to investigate monotonic associations. Thus, Pearson product-moment correlation was used to analyze the results of the first research question. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the results of the second research question by investigating the prediction associations of EFL teachers' professional identity reflection according to the AOT's components.

Results

In the first step of analyzing the gathered data, ACP was calculated based on a valid and reliable framework (Wei, 2022) to check the content validities of the instruments. The ACP was based on different qualities, including the relevance of the items, the scientific rationale behind them, the necessity of the presence of each item, and their functions in comparison to other items. Table 1 shows the related results.

Table 1
The Calculated ACP for the Instruments

	MoTA	QPI
No. of items	12	11
Expert1	87%	89%
Expert2	82%	84%

|		
Expert3	91%	90%
Expert4	88%	92%
Total	87%	89%

Table 1 demonstrates that the total values of the ACP for both of the questionnaires are above the critical value of 80% (MoTa= 87%, QPI= 89%), confirming the established content validity of the instruments based on the targeted framework.

After checking the instruments' validity, their reliability was checked based on a pilot study conducted for 13 Iranian EFL instructors to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaires using Cronbach's alpha. Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2
Reliability of the Instruments

	MoTA	QPI
No. of items	12	11
Cronbach's alpha	.88	.93

As seen in Table 2, the internal consistency values for both questionnaires (MoTA= .88, QPI= .93) were estimated to be in the acceptable range ($\alpha > 85\%$); thus, the instruments were reliable. In the next step, the preliminary statistical assumptions of conducting correlation, including checking possible outliers, linearity, and normality assumption. For the purpose of checking the presence of possible outliers, the Q–Q (quantile-quantile) plots for the outcomes of both instruments were drawn. Figure 1 shows the related results.
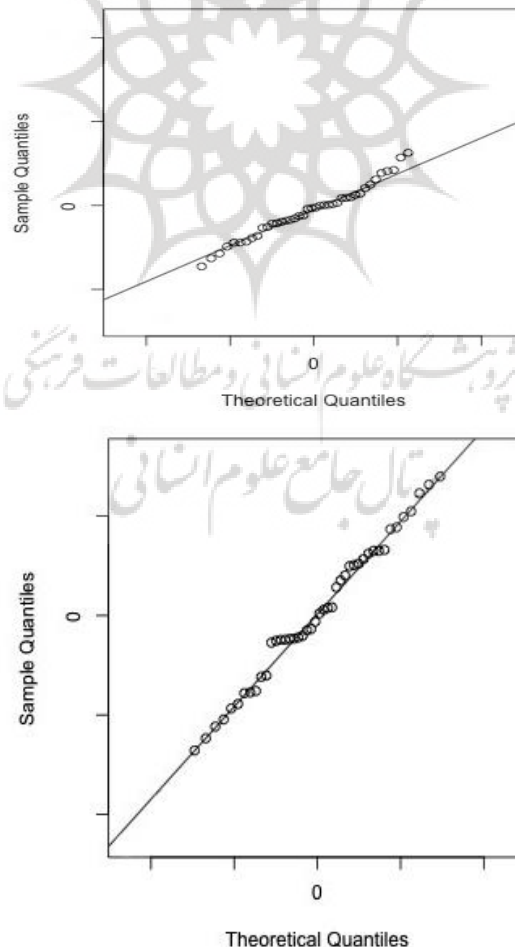
Figure 1. *Q-Q Plots of the Gathered Results for MoTa (Left) and QPI (Right)*

According to Figure 1, there were no critical outliers in the datasets gathered from both questionnaires. Thus, the first preliminary statistical assumption of conducting a correlation test was met. After that, the second prerequisite assumption, linearity, was checked by calculating Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) to check for possible multicollinearity in the data gathered by the instruments. Multicollinearity happens when there is a significant or high correlation among independent variables (Tsagris & Pandis, 2021). Table 3 illustrates the values of VIF.

Table 3
VIF for the MoTA and QPI Datasets

	MoTA	QPI
VIF	1.91	2.06

According to Table 3, the VIF values for the MoTA (VIF= 1.91) and QPI (VIF= 2.06) datasets were in the acceptable range (VIF<3); thus, the assumption of the linearity was met for the datasets gathered from the questionnaires (Thulin, 2021). The z-values of skewness and kurtosis were calculated to check the normality assumption as the last preliminary statistical assumption. Besides, as an alternative strategy, the normality tests such as Shapiro-Wilk (SW) and Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) tests were run. Table 4 indicates the related results.

Table 4
Skewness, Kurtosis, and Normality Tests of MoTA and QPI Datasets

	MoTA	QPI
Skewness z-value (SKZ)	1.37	0.86
Kurtosis z-value (KUZ)	0.04	1.11
SW	.213*	.124*
KS	.301*	.223*

Note. * Refers to P values.

According to Table 4, the skewness and kurtosis values for the MoTa dataset (SKZ= 1.37, KUZ= 0.04) and QPI dataset (SKZ= 0.86, KUZ= 1.11) were in the acceptable range of -2 to +2. In addition, the results of the normality tests for the MoTa dataset (SW= .213, KS=.301) and QPI dataset (SW= .124, KS= .223). According to Thuulin's (2021) framework, the datasets did not deviate from the normality assumption (Thulin, 2021). After checking all the preliminary statistical assumptions and according to the outcomes of the preliminary statistical assumptions, the parametric test of Pearson product-moment correlation was used. Table 5 shows the related results.

Table 5
Pearson Correlation for EFL Teachers' PIR and Their Achievement Orientations

		MoTA
QPI	Pearson correlation	.902
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

As seen in Table 5, the Pearson correlation coefficient and its critical value (r= .902, p=.000) indicates a robust direct association (r>0.9) between the two variables. Thus, it can be concluded

that there is a strong association between Iranian EFL teachers' professional identity reflection and their achievement orientation in E-teaching. In the next step, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the power of the AOT components in predicting the levels of Iranian EFL teachers' professional identity reflection in E-teaching. First, to check the subsequent matrix model of the regression analysis, Table 4 illustrates the model summary.

Table 6
Matrix Model Summary for EFL Teachers' PIR and Their Achievement Orientations

Model	R	R square	Adjusted square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin-Watson (DW)
1	.922	.850	.814	.449	2.12

As Table 6 indicates, the subsequent model that included components of achievement orientation explained about 85% of the variance in the PIR scores of the Iranian EFL teachers. Besides, as a rule of thumb, the value of the Durbin-Watson test (DW= 2.12, 1.5<DW<2.5) shows that there is no autocorrelation in the residuals of regression analysis (Montgomery et al., 2021). In the final step, to check the power of the components of achievement orientation in predicting the levels of Iranian EFL teachers' PIR in E-teaching, coefficients of the achievement orientation were calculated for its components. Table 7 presents the related results.

Table 7
Coefficients for the Model of EFL Teachers' PIR and Their Achievement Orientations

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	88.63	1.36		14.835	.000
PAP	.693	.611	.126	2.900	.007
PAV	.443	.414	.217	3.995	.000
MAP	.699	.327	.243	7.228	.003
MAV	.391	.487	.119	4.223	.111

The multiple regression analysis was used to check if the components of achievement orientation significantly predicted Iranian EFL teachers' PIR in E-teaching. According to Table 7, while three components of the achievement orientation, including PAP (β= .693, p= .007), PAV (β= 443, p=.000), MAP (β= .669, p= .003), significantly predicted the Iranian EFL teachers' PIR in E-teaching, MAV (β= .391, p= .111) failed to predict Iranian EFL teachers' PIR in E-teaching in a significant way. Furthermore, the MAP (β= .669, p= .003) proved to be the most powerful indicator of Iranian EFL teachers' PIR in E-teaching.

Discussion
This study was a novel attempt to examine the possible association between the reflection levels of the Iranian EFL instructors' professional identity and their use of achievement orientation strategies. In addition, researchers examined which achievement orientation strategy among Performance Approach (PAP), Performance Avoidance (PAV), Mastery Approach (MAP), and Mastery Avoidance (MAV) had the most power in predicting the reflection levels of the Iranian EFL instructors' professional identity. The results revealed a strong direct relationship between the reflection levels of the Iranian EFL instructors' professional identity and their use of achievement orientation strategies. Moreover, PAP, PAV, and MAP strategies significantly predicted the reflection levels of the Iranian EFL instructors' professional identity. While MAV

was a predictor of the Iranian EFL instructors' levels of professional identity, it was not significant. Furthermore, the mastery-approach strategy had the most powerful prediction power among the other AOSs.

Regarding the first research question that targeted the investigation of the possible significant relationship between Iranian EFL instructors' professional identity reflection and their achievement orientation in E-teaching, it was found that there was a positive relationship between the reflection levels of the Iranian EFL instructors' professional identity and their use of achievement orientation strategies. The results of this study are in agreement with that of Kalali Sani et al. (2021), in which there was a significant positive relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' professional identity and their goal orientation but in face-to-face EFL classes. Besides, the outcomes are in line with that of Fanaee and Davaribina (2021), in that Iranian EFL teachers considered their levels of professional identity as a constituent of their achievements in online teaching amid the Coronavirus pandemic. In contradiction, the outcomes of this study are in contrast with that of Abednia (2012), in which Iranian EFL teachers' professional identity was not correlated with their educational achievement behaviors. Besides, he observed three significant shifts in the professional identity of Iranian EFL teachers, including first, they preferred to be autonomous and use self-reflection strategies to enhance their proficiency in different types of teaching, whether in face-to-face or virtual classes. The second shift addressed the Iranian EFL teachers' tendency to critically analyze their peers' performance and enhance their own performance in instruction instead of just copycatting their victory path. The last shift shed light on how the Iranian EFL teachers became more conservative in practicing the areas in which they had little or no knowledge instead of being risk-accepting. It can be interpreted that the three major shifts in the professional identity of Iranian EFL teachers, which were determined about one decade ago, had found their ways to make Iranian EFL teachers' professional identities correlated with their achievement orientation or achievement behavior in the present time. Furthermore, the results are in disagreement with that of Hsieh (2015), in which there was no significant association between the orientation of American EFL teachers in achieving their goals in classroom practices and their professional learning as an indicator of their professional identity.

The second research question examined if the strategies in achievement orientation can predict Iranian EFL instructors' professional identity reflection in E-teaching or not. The results indicated that three AOSs, namely PAP, PAV, and MAP strategies, significantly predicted the reflection levels of the Iranian EFL instructors' professional identity. While MAV or master-avoidance strategy was a predictor of the Iranian EFL instructors' levels of professional identity, it was not a significant one. Furthermore, it was revealed that the MAP or mastery-approach strategy had the most power in predicting the PIR of Iranian EFL instructors compared to other AOSs. The results are in line with that of Keskin and Zaimoglu (2021), in which two AOSs, including PAP and PAV, significantly predicted Turkish EFL teachers' professional identity in the in-person context of instruction. Besides, the results are in line with that of Cheng (2021), in which the mastery approach strategy significantly determined the levels of Chinese EFL teachers' professional identity. On the contrary, the results are in disagreement with that of Qaleshahzari et al. (2020), in which the performance approach strategy followed by the mastery-approach strategy was the most robust predictor variable in determining the Iranian EFL teachers' levels of professional identity in face-to-face courses. It can be elucidated that recently the EFL

instructors, specifically in the Iranian context, started to use various AOSs to show their levels of professional identity both in face-to-face and virtual contexts. Moreover, while in the face-to-face context of instruction, performance-based strategies, including PAP and PAV, were frequently used, since the COVID-19 pandemic, and by the emergence of imposed distance education, mastery-based strategies such as MAP and MAV were in the center of EFL instructors' attention.

Concerning the pedagogical guidelines, the researchers believe that there should be some pre-service and in-service training courses to make EFL teachers aware of the variables that constitute the reflection of their professional identity in E-teaching. The outcomes highlighted the importance of the MAP or the strategy, which states the individual attempts of teachers to gain knowledge about a particular aspect of E-teaching that they are less proficient as the most potent predictor of the PIR among Iranian EFL instructors; there are specific situations for Iranian EFL instructors to compete in a fair way which not only enhances their weak points in E-teaching but also provide new opportunities to learn new associated topics. It can be interpreted that Iranian EFL teachers do not prefer to cooperate with their peers to gain experience and knowledge about a topic or find answers to their questions, but they prefer to rely on their potential and try their best to find solutions for their E-teaching-related issues. While training courses should make EFL teachers familiar with these strategies to better represent their professional identity in E-teaching, according to their most favored strategy, they should be taught how to utilize different individual learning strategies such as reflective practices.

Conclusion

The professional identity reflection has undergone critical changes over decades, in various contexts and among different types of EFL teachers. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, not only a new academic era has started, but also the context of instruction has gone through significant changes by shifting from face-to-face to virtual or electronic instructional context. Moreover, even the type of EFL teachers has been changed as in the pre-pandemic era experienced and mostly digital immigrant EFL teachers ruled the classes. However, during the outbreak, digital natives and mostly novice or amateur EFL teachers started to take instruction positions of EFL E-learning courses. All of these sudden, shocking changes influenced how EFL teachers reflected their professional identities, especially in the E-teaching context. Considering these points, this was conducted to find answers to the emerged questions regarding the professional identity of Iranian EFL instructors and the most probable ways to reflect it based on the theory of achievement orientation. The outcomes of this study provided certain critical highlights. The first one was the significant association between the PIR of Iranian EFL instructors in E-teaching and their use of AOSs, which shed light on the new robust direct association between these variables. The second one was the significant prediction power of the AOSs in determining the PIR levels among Iranian EFL instructors. The last one addressed the importance of mastery-approach strategy as the most powerful predictor of the Iranian EFL instructors' levels of professional identity. It can be concluded that there was a significant shift from the performance-approach strategy as the most frequently-used one in face-to-face teaching to the mastery-approach strategy as the most favored one in E-teaching. Besides, it can be interpreted that in the E-teaching context, Iranian EFL teachers favored enhancing their mastery over a subject instead of showing off their skills to their peers and students according to spectacular academic performances. Different intervening variables may play significant roles in

guiding the shape of this shift in the future that needs further investigations, especially in the possible post-COVID-19 era.

The COVID-19 pandemic critically influenced the process of conducting this study and its data collection procedure. There were different and mostly pandemic-exposed limitations. First, due to the sixth peak of COVID-19 infected cases in Iran, it is possible that the Iranian EFL teachers' responses to the questionnaires' items were affected by their significant psychological stress. Second, because of the problematic situation in accessing the Iranian EFL instructors amid the pandemic, researchers used convenience sampling that might influence the generalizability of the results. Third, the researchers used an online platform for the researchers to be filled out by the participants in a safe virtual environment during the outbreak. As the age range of the participants was high to avoid sampling bias, it was possible that different Iranian EFL teachers, especially digital immigrant ones, would have faced some sort of problem filling out the questionnaires. It is recommended that in the post-COVID-19 era, future studies consider comparing Iranian EFL instructors' professional identity in face-to-face and electronic courses and investigate their AOSs according to their biological variables such as age and gender and based on different related frameworks both up-to-date such as their digital divide status and the classical ones like burnout levels. In terms of implications, the outcomes of this study may benefit EFL teachers, EFL teacher trainers, and educational psychologists in training EFL teachers who are aware of their professional identities, the beneficial ways to reflect them, and how to enhance their professional identity by orienting their achievement strategies or behaviors.

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