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(Re)Construction of Iranian EFL Teachers' Professional Identity through Action Research and Teacher Support Groups

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Abstract

This research investigates how 185 Iranian EFL teachers re-shaped their professional identity by taking part in professional development (PD) models: Action research (AR) and Teacher Support Groups (TSGs). We invited the participants from public high schools and gathered the Quantitative data using the English Language Teacher Professional Identity Inventory that was conducted before and after the interventions. These data were analyzed employing an Independent Samples *t*-test and repeated-measure ANOVA. We collected the qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals, which were analyzed by thematic analysis. Quantitative results revealed notable improvements in professional identity for both groups; the AR group showed a greater increase in pedagogical and personal aspects. Qualitative findings revealed four underlying themes: reflective practice and professional growth, autonomy and agency in teaching, emotional support and community, and professional development and learning approaches. Results indicated that reflection and autonomy were greater for AR, while emotional support and shared learning played a pivotal role for the support group. In the end, an exhaustive view of identity development was offered through presenting how AR improved personal growth, while the support group enhanced emotional flexibility and mutual learning. This study highlighted the different effects of each PD model on teacher identity.

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Introduction

Recently, studies on teacher education have made valuable contributions to the psychological, cognitive, and social aspects of teachers and their professional participation. Teacher identity, as a socio-ecological aspect of teaching, has gained attention in research. The theoretical and empirical development in teacher identity studies has attracted considerable interest in this research area over the past two decades (Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Villegas et al., 2020).

Different factors, such as teachers' personal beliefs, values, experiences, and professional learning opportunities, play an important role in forming their professional identities (Philpott & Ilieva, 2024) by providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their classroom practices and collaborate with their colleagues (Segal, 2023). Since there is a strong relationship between teacher identity and classroom practice (Sang, 2023), teachers' PD can significantly influence the quality of education and students' achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Thus, scholarly attention is increasingly directed toward effective PD.

However, traditional PD models are often seen as failing to promote continuous professional development and meaningful change in teaching practices. Since they focus on short-term training, they commonly do not provide the continuous support or collaborative environment necessary for teachers to enhance their skills and develop a strong professional identity (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Research to date has demonstrated a consensus that the final result of a PD is to enhance students' learning (Kennedy, 2016), the achievement of which entails teacher change, which includes a change in beliefs, practices, and learning new knowledge (Sokel, 2019). Notwithstanding, there are such reasons as paucity of methodological rigor that yield unexpected results in terms of student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Thus, providing teachers with effective PD is of paramount importance. Among the core features of effective PD, collaboration and opportunities for feedback and reflection (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) are highlighted, which can be practiced in such models of PD as TSGs and AR, respectively.

Teacher PD can be approached through various models, including AR and TSGs. McNiff (2013) highlights the relationship between teachers' AR and their identity development, characterizing the former as "an enquiry of the self into the self" (p. 23). This process can help teachers learn more about themselves and enhance their PD. Teachers need to have a mindset of continuous learning in order to use AR (Burns, 2010). On the other hand, TSGs bring teachers together to talk about their shared goals, problems, and experiences. This process creates a collaborative environment that enhances peer learning (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Drawing upon recent studies in the field of teacher education, Luguetti et al. (2018) advocate for the involvement of teachers in communities of practice (CsOP) as a means to enhance their professional identities. They highlight the necessity of creating groups that allow for the exchange of experience and the exploration of pedagogical challenges.

Teachers' professional identity is an important factor in selecting their approach to teaching, learning, and PD (Zhao, 2022). Despite its importance, there remains a limited body of literature regarding the impact of different PD models (e.g. AR and TSGs) on shaping and the

development of teachers' professional identity. Examining the effects of AR and TSGs, this study seeks to bridge the existing gap. AR focuses on inquiry-based learning and reflective practices in teachers' classrooms, which result in constant self-evaluation and problem-solving (Burns, 2019). In contrast, TSGs create a collaborative environment and enable teachers to share their experiences, provide peer support, and collectively reflect on their teaching methods (Richards & Farrell, 2005). While both models aim to enhance PD, there exists a scarcity of empirical studies that investigate their different or overlapping effects on the (re)construction of teachers' professional identity**.**

1. Review of the Literature

1.1. Theoretical background

2.1.1. Teacher Professional Identity

Although teacher identity has been conceptualized differently across paradigms, it is generally considered a fluid concept that cannot be directly observed (Hanna et al., 2020). Another definition considers it as teachers' self-perception formed by professional activities, belonging, and learning experiences (Timostsuk & Ugaste, 2010). Although this highlights self-awareness, it overlooks the broader socio-cultural and institutional effects. Buchanan and Olsen (2018) further added that identity is an iterative process of meaning-making embedded in cultural, social, and historical contexts. Thus, moments of change necessitate a (re)construction of the socially-constructed identities, highlighting their social, multifaceted, and discontinuous features (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

Beijaard et al. (2004) suggested that changes in content knowledge, pedagogy, and practices are effective in teacher identity. By examining literature from 1998 to 2000, they found four features of professional identity: Identity is fluid and continuous; it is influenced by both individual and contextual factors; it is composed of different sub-identities that necessitate balance to prevent conflicts; it also encompasses agency, reflecting teachers' active engagement in PD aligned with personal goals.

1.1.2. Action research (AR)

Over the past twenty years, AR has gained prominence in English language teaching as a form of PD rooted in social constructivism, perceiving teachers as active participants and researchers within their social settings (Burns, 2019). Burns (2019) identifies two developmental phases: early development (late 1980s-2000), characterized by institutional efforts to enhance the theoretical and practical foundations of AR; and the more recent development (2000-present), characterized by broader organizational engagement, expanded empirical studies, and increased scholarly platforms

Among the various documented models of AR, this study adopts the widely regarded Kemmis and McTaggart's (1998) model, whose collaborative and flexible cycle (Burns, 2010) is suitable for classroom-based research where teachers function as change agents in dynamic educational contexts. There are four stages in the model: planning a problem-focused intervention, acting the intervention and data collection; observing through analyzing and integrating data; and reflecting on the entire process.

AR is deeply connected with teachers' professional identity, which makes them reflect on their teaching methods (Derakhshan & Nazari, 2022), and change (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Ax et al. (2008) emphasize the role of AR in enabling teachers to critically reflect on their own practices and contexts. They believe this reflective approach enables teachers to systematically analyze and enhance both their professional practice and the circumstances under which they work. According to Trent (2010), this perspective emphasizes the importance of reflection as a catalyst for teachers' PD. Moreover, transformation is recognized as an important factor in Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) analysis of the teacher research movement. They argue that by critically examining teaching methods and forming classrooms as "sites for inquiry", teacher research enables teachers to take on diverse roles, including decision-makers, consultants, curriculum developers, and leaders within their schools.

1.1.3. Teacher Support Groups (TSGs)

Richards and Farrell (2005) define TSGs as a means of developing rich conversations and improving collegiality among teachers. TSGs provide an opportunity for teachers to share and disseminate knowledge, as well as engage in discussions that allow them to challenge, comprehend, clarify, and interpret ideas through peer interactions (Willet & Miller, 2004). Furthermore, according to Arefian et al. (2024), such groups increase teachers' confidence in addressing the problems related to teaching due to the high level of collaboration among teachers. The collaboration not only supports teachers in overcoming professional barriers but also develops their professional identity and sense of social belonging, which shows the value of peer engagement within support groups (Spicksley et al., 2021).

Teachers' professional identity is closely related to their participation in support groups and communities of practice (CsOP), which can be analyzed from the perspective of sociocultural and identity-construction theories. According to Nguyen and Loughland (2018), teachers' professional identity, as an ongoing process, is formed by the interplay of social engagement, professional experience, and institutional factors. Wenger's (1998) theory of CsOP attaches significance to the social nature of learning, which highlights the necessity of professional communities for identity formation. This concept is highly relevant within EFL contexts since EFL teachers' professional identities are constructed through continuous collegial interactions, reflective discussions, and collaboration (Arefian et al., 2024).

The Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) proposed the concept of learning and identity formation, which highlights the role of social mediation. In this context, teachers' professional identity is co-constructed utilizing shared knowledge and experience in the mediated learning environments provided by TSGs (Kamali & Javahery, 2024). Similarly, Reflective Practice Theory (Schön, 1983) highlights this view by suggesting that teachers refine their professional identity and align their instructional practices with professional norms through the process of collaborative reflection (Meihami, 2023).

Furthermore, Positioning Theory (Davies & Harre, 1999) focuses on how teachers' identities are formed by their positions within a collaborative context. Through their interactions with colleagues, teachers assume various roles, including those of mentors, novices, and peers, each of which impacts their self-concept and professional trajectory (Banegas, 2024). Research has indicated that support groups can both enhance teachers' confidence and pedagogical agency

and enable them to better overcome the complexities of school challenges (MoradKhani & Ebadijalal, 2024).

Considering different theoretical perspectives, this study explores the (re)construction of EFL teachers' professional identity through collaboration in order to emphasize the fluidity and co-construction of professional identity through shared experiences, reflective exchanges, and participation in TSGs.

1.2. Previous Research Findings

1.2.1. Action Research (AR) and Teacher Professional Identity

Several studies have investigated teachers' identity (re)construction within AR and CsOP and have focused on their key effects. Edwards (2020), for instance, used an ecological lens to review studies from 2006-2009 and categorized the advantages of AR at different levels: the macro level included inter-institutional collaboration; the meso level included enhanced teacher collaboration, curriculum development, and research-based communities; and the micro level (which is the focus of this study) included greater reflection, autonomy, and awareness of students' needs. Edwards recommends further research on the long-term effects of AR, a gap that is addressed in this study.

Examining the identity (re)construction of two Chinese language teachers during a year, Yuan and Burns (2017) identified four transformation trajectories: "from fisherman to fishing coach", "from craftsman to teacher researcher", "from lonely fighter to collaborator", and "from housekeeper to change agent". Although the participants of the study experienced significant changes, some challenges such as rigid curricula, limited research literacy, and hierarchical dynamics between teachers and researchers emerged. The researchers confirmed the transformative characteristic of AR, but also underscored the need to unpack its inherent power relations.

Nazari (2022) used Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) four-stage AR model to investigate identity (re)construction among four EFL teachers. At first participants were uncertain about selecting the suitable classroom problem, but the peer dialogue with their colleagues made them confident about themselves. Although the participants believed that striking a balance between teaching and research was difficult, reflection improved their satisfaction and sense of agency. The last stage helped them develop both their knowledge and a stronger research-oriented identity. This study focused on the emotional aspects of identity work and the importance of institutional support for sustained AR engagement.

Meihami and Werbińska (2022) examined the effects of AR on the development of affiliation, attachment, and autonomy in ESP teachers. Similar to Nazari's (2022) study, the participants were initially uncertain, but gradually started to see themselves as teacher-researchers and realized that research is a bridge between theory and practice. After participating in AR, they were also more autonomous in planning classroom-based projects. Although the study sheds light on identity (re)construction over a year, the long-term sustainability remains unclear. Nonetheless, it supports the idea that teacher identity is dynamic and constructed through reflective practices.

In summary, previous studies have indicated the important role of AR in forming teachers' identity by developing reflection, autonomy, and pedagogical development. It provides teachers with evidence-based practices due to its cyclical nature. Therefore, teachers had better meet students' needs and improve their agency. By participating in AR, teachers move toward research-informed practices. However, further research is necessary to understand the sustainability of teachers' participation in AR and its role in supporting long-term identity development within broader institutional frameworks.

1.2.2. Teacher Support Groups (TSGs) and Teacher Professional Identity

Considering teachers' professional identity as a dynamic process negotiated within Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998), several studies have delved into the role of collaboration in constructing teachers' identity. Mehdizadeh et al. (2023) conducted a longitudinal case study of Iranian EFL teachers' identity evolution within professional communities over an eight-year course. Utilizing CsOP, Possible Selves, and Positioning theories, they found three phases: first, following institutional norms (beliefs); next, questioning them critically (uncertainty), and finally, not accepting them (disbelief). Collaboration played an important role in (re)constructing the teacher's values and being autonomous against institutional expectations. They concluded that teacher identity is socially co-constructed, shaped by interaction, reflection, and changing affiliations.

Rushton et al. (2023) examined the identity development of pre-service high school teachers in England during the COVID-19 pandemic, using Reflexive Thematic Analysis of 45 longitudinal interviews. They discovered that identity is a multidimensional, evolving construct formed through collaboration across personal, professional, and social domains. The study emphasizes that identity is socially embedded and requires sustained support for teachers' development.

Meihami (2023) examined the effects of PLCs on the construction of imagined identities among 12 Iranian EFL student-teachers. He used narratives, interviews, and field notes and identified four emerging identities: collaborative teacher, reflective teacher, teacher-as-learner, and syllabus designer. The study indicated that PLCs were effective in identity development; however, it failed to address such tensions as dynamics, institutional limitations, as well as the gap between imagined and actual roles. Therefore, future research should address these limitations and assess the continuous institutional support for identity enactment.

Generally, these studies focused on the role of TSGs and professional communities in forming or changing teachers' professional identities. The results indicated that identity development is a dynamic and socially situated process (re)constructed by interaction, reflection, and negotiation, which can be practiced through Collaborative Professional Communities (CPCs), Communities of Practice (CsOP), or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). However, there are some concerns about institutional limitations, internal power dynamics, and the long-term sustainability of identity change. Therefore, future research should examine how to make such groups permanent to improve long-term PD.

This study, as part of a larger project, investigates the effects of AR and TSGs on EFL teachers' professional identity (re)construction, which addresses a critical gap in the literature.

Teachers' professional identity is considered a cornerstone because it affects their teaching methodologies, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). The results of this study aim to elucidate the effects of collaborative and reflective PD models on EFL teachers' identity (re)construction, thereby increasing their students' achievements.

Although various studies have centered on professional identity in single PD programs, few have linked AR and TSGs within the EFL context to explore their combined effects on teachers' professional identity. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, we sought to integrate qualitative and quantitative data to present a detailed understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, to address this empirical gap, the present study investigated the Iranian EFL teachers' identity (re)construction by exploring the following research questions:

1) To what extent do AR and TSGs impact Iranian FL teachers' professional identity (re)construction?

2) How do Iranian EFL teachers perceive their professional identity (re)construction after engaging in AR and TSGs?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The participants included 185 Iranian EFL teachers from public secondary schools and were selected through convenience sampling. Participants of the quantitative phase included 86 males (46.5%) and 99 females (53.5%). There was a wide range of academic backgrounds among them: 77 participants (41.6%) held a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree, 81 (43.8%) a Master of Arts (M.A.), and 27 (14.6%) a Ph.D. in English language teaching (ELT), English Translation, or Literature. Their teaching experience ranged from novices (1-5 years; n=43, 23.2%) to experienced (6-15 years; n=94, 50.8%) and highly experienced teachers (16+ years; n=48, 25.9%). The participants' major also varied: 96 (51.9%) had studied ELT, 61 (33%) translation, and 28 (15.1%) literature. They were assigned to either AR (n = 94, 50.8%) or TSGs (n = 91, 49.2%). Participants of the qualitative phase included 30 teachers (15 from each group) who were selected through nested sampling to guarantee diversity in experience, academic backgrounds, and engagement with the two PD groups. Table 1 shows the participants' demographic information.

Table 1. *Demographic information of the participants*

variable	category	Frequency (n)	percentage
total participants		185	100
gender	male	86	46.5
	female	99	53.5
academic degree	B.A.	77	41.6
	M.A.	81	43.8
	Ph.D.	27	14.6
major	ELT	96	51.9
	English Translation	61	33
	English literature	28	15.1
Teaching experience	1-5 years (novice)	43	23.2
	6-15 years (experienced)	94	50.8
	+15 years (highly experienced)	48	25.9
PD groups	AR	94	50.8
	TSGs	91	49.2

2.2. Instruments

Two instruments were used to conduct the present study, which include semi-structured interviews and the English Language Teacher Professional Identity Inventory.

2.2.1. English Language Teacher Professional Identity Inventory

The English Language Teacher Professional Identity Inventory (Hashemi et al., 2021) was used to assess teacher professional identity at two different times: before beginning the PD programs (AR and TSGs) and after completing them. The 42-item Likert-scale questionnaire (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) includes four dimensions. The *individual dimension* addresses issues such as personality, patience, self-confidence, self-control, respectfulness, attitude toward teaching, and voice. The *pedagogical dimension* includes classroom management, error correction, engaging students, adapting materials, creating a stress-free atmosphere, and using realia. The *educational dimension* considers teachers' tendency toward studying professional journals, attending conferences, and sharing knowledge. Moreover, *the social and interpersonal dimensions* measures attitudes toward the social impact of language teaching and relationships with students and colleagues. Also, the reliability and validity of the instrument were confirmed through a pilot test, factor analysis, expert view, and Cronbach's alpha measure for internal consistency.

2.2.2. Semi-structured Interviews

Five rounds of interviews were conducted with 30 teachers who were selected based on nested sampling. The first four rounds were conducted during the AR and TSGs. The final round was conducted after their completion. Each round of interview served the purpose of teachers' professional identity to tap into the research questions.

The first round was conducted before the beginning of the study which explored teachers' motivation to take part in the study, their perception of their job as a teacher, their perception about AR and TSGs as PD activities, and their possible experience of these activities.

The second round was conducted after the first session of the TSGs and the plan stage of AR which explored how they felt about the meeting or the plan stage, their reasons for selecting the problem for AR and TSGs discussions, their feeling for engagement in these activities, and their views on the nature of these PD models.

The third round explored advantages and difficulties teachers faced during the previous stage, their perception towards having a dual role as teacher and researcher, and any possible change in teachers' perception towards the PD activities. This round was conducted after the Act stage of AR and the second meeting of the TSGs.

The fourth-round interview scrutinized how teachers felt about students' performance, and how they viewed their contribution to the results. Also, it aimed to achieve teachers' perceptions of the results of the action stage and the second meeting to obtain their perception of their role in outcomes achieved by the students. It was conducted after the Observe stage of AR and the third meeting of the TSGs.

The last-round interview, which was conducted after the completion of the study, explored how teachers felt about the whole process and their involvement in the process. Additionally,

they were asked to specify their overall understanding and perception of themselves as teachers and the two PD models.

2.3. Research Design

The current study enjoyed both qualitative and quantitative research data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It was conducted in two concurrent phases. The quantitative phase employed an experimental design to compare the effectiveness of two PD models: *AR and TSGS.* According to Arry et al. (2018), the design of this phase employed a between-subjects experimental design, as two groups of participants were used for two different treatment conditions. This phase constituted two experimental groups: an AR group and a TSG. The independent variables were AR and TSGs, and the dependent variable was teachers' professional identity. The qualitative phase of the study explored teachers' professional identity (re)construction.

Considering the research methodology proposed by Cresswell and Cresswell (2023), we adopted a convergent design, in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed simultaneously, and were then integrated to facilitate the interpretation of findings.

2.4. Procedure

This study was conducted in two phases: a quantitative phase and a qualitative phase. First and foremost, the teachers' informed consent to participate in the study for nine months was obtained. The qualitative phase aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the PD models on teacher professional identity. Then, the English Language Teacher Professional Identity Inventory was administered before the treatments. Participants were then randomly assigned to either AR or TSGs. Next, 30 participants (15 from each group) were interviewed to elaborate on their perceptions of the two PD models.

Afterwards, two social media groups (e.g., Telegram) were created to provide the participants with instructions on AR, including its content, purpose, and theoretical stages by Kemmis and McTaggart (1998): plan (identify problems and potential strategies), action (implement strategies), observation (note outcomes), and reflection (evaluate results). Teachers selected problems related to learners' English learning, shared their interventions, and received feedback from their peers. For TSGs, 10 topic-based groups were formed, each with eight teachers (ideal size: five to eight; Kirk & Walter, 1981). During the nine months, four sessions were held in each group to discuss the selected issues.

After completing the PD project, teachers were given the English Language Teacher Professional Identity Inventory for the second time.

The qualitative phase was conducted simultaneously with the quantitative phase. Thirty participants (15 from each group) were selected randomly to attend interviews after each AR stage or TSGs session. Moreover, they wrote a reflective journal after each stage of the AR.

2.5. Data Analysis

We collected the required data and then carried out data analysis using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The quantitative data obtained from the experimental designs were

analyzed through inferential statistics. To answer the first research question, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The independent variables for the quantitative part of the study include adoption of AR and adoption of TSGs, while the dependent variables include teacher professional identity (re)construction. The qualitative data for the second question were analyzed using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to the thematic analysis as a method to identify, analyze, and report themes within data.

3. Results

The purpose of this study was to explore how Iranian EFL teachers (re)construct their professional identity after engaging in two different PD interventions: AR and TSGs. The study aimed to compare the effects of these interventions on teachers' professional identity through both quantitative and qualitative measures. The first research question focused on quantifying changes in professional identity using pre- and post-test scores from the English Language Teacher Professional Identity Inventory. To address this, an Independent Samples *t*-test and repeated measure ANOVA were conducted to assess the significance of changes within and between the AR and TSGs. The second research question examined how teachers in each group perceived their professional identity post-intervention, aiming to shed light on why the observed quantitative results were obtained. The findings from both phases of the study are presented next.

3.1. Findings for RQ1

The descriptive statistics for teacher identity profiles before and after the experiments are shown in Table 2. The mean teacher identity score for the AR group was 131.55 (SD = 15.46, N = 94), before the experiments, and the mean score for the TSGs was 127.87 (SD = 18.30, N = 91). After the experiments, the mean teacher identity score for the AR group increased to 138.95 (SD = 21.35), but the TSGs had a smaller increase, with a mean score of 131.31 (SD = 17.53). The total mean teacher identity score for both groups before the experiment was 129.74 (SD = 16.97), which rose to 135.19 (SD = 19.89) after the experiment. These descriptive results show that both groups experienced identity development, but at different levels. The AR group indicated a more significant increase compared to the TSGs.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Identity Profile before and After the Interventions*

	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Teacher Identity Profile before the Interventions	AR	131.55	15.45	94
	TSGS	127.87	18.30	91
	Total	129.74	16.96	185
Teacher Identity Profile After the Interventions	AR	138.95	21.35	94
	TSGS	131.31	17.52	91
	Total	135.19	19.88	185

An independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare the teacher identity profiles of the AR group and the TSGs, before the experiments (Table 3). Levene's test for equality of

variances was significant (F=9.041, p=.003), indicating that the assumption of equal variances was violated. Therefore, the results for the unequal variances are reported. The *t-test* results showed no significant difference in teacher identity scores between the AR group (M = 131.55, SD = 15.46) and the TSGs (M = 127.87, SD = 18.30), t (175.99) = 1.477, p = .141. The mean difference between the groups was 3.69, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -1.24 to 8.61. These results indicate that there were no significant pre-existing differences in teacher identity profiles between the two groups before the interventions.

Table 3. *Independent Samples t-test for Teacher Identity Profile before the Interventions*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Teacher Identity Profile before the Interventions	Equal variances assumed	9.041	.003	1.481	183	.140	3.685	2.487	-1.223	8.593
	Equal variances not assumed			1.477	175.993	.141	3.685	2.494	-1.237	8.607

Before the analysis of variance, Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices was conducted to assess the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices for the teacher identity profiles across the two groups (AR and TSGs) over time. The test was non-significant, Box's M = 7.699, F = (3, 6238234.751) = 2.536, p = .055, indicating that the covariance matrices of the dependent variables are not significantly different across the groups. This suggests that the assumption of homogeneity of covariance is not violated. Therefore, the assumption that covariance matrices are equal is met, and the repeated measures ANOVA can be interpreted appropriately.

A multivariate test using Wilks' Lambda was conducted to assess the effect of time and the interaction between time and group (AR and TSGs) on teacher identity scores. The effect of time was statistically significant, with a Wilks' Lambda of .953, F (1, 183) = 8.958, p = .003, partial η^2 = .047, which showed a significant change in teacher identity scores over time for both groups. However, the interaction between time and group was not statistically significant, as indicated by Wilks' Lambda. = 994, F (1, 183) = 1.193, p=.276, partial η^2 = .006, which confirms that the change in teacher identity scores over time did not significantly differ between the AR and the TSGs.

Table 4. *Multivariate Tests for Teacher Identity Scores*

Effect	Wilks' Lambda	F	df Hypothesis	df Error	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	0.953	8.958	1.000	183.000	0.003	0.047
Time * Group	0.994	1.193	1.000	183.000	0.276	0.006

A test of between-subjects effects was conducted to examine the influence of group (AR vs. TSGs) on teacher identity scores. The results proved the significant main effect of group, F (1,

183) = 8.099, p = .005, partial η^2 = .042, which shows that the model of PD intervention had a significant effect on teacher identity development. The AR group had greater improvements in teacher identity scores compared to the TSGs. The intercept was also significant, F (1, 183) = 17,719.284, p < .001, indicating a significant overall level of teacher identity across both groups. The error term was 366.051, based on 183 degrees of freedom.

Table 5. *Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Group on Teacher Identity Scores*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	6486162.484	1	6486162.484	17719.284	.000	.990
Group	2964.700	1	2964.700	8.099	.005	.042
Error	66987.343	183	366.051			

In summary, the quantitative analysis of the first research question showed that both AR and TSGs experienced significant changes in their professional identity scores over time. As it is evident in descriptive statistics, the AR group had a greater post-intervention mean. Therefore, the AR group exhibited a more significant increase in identity scores compared to the TSGs. An Independent Samples *t-test* confirmed that there was no significant pre-existing difference in identity scores between the two groups before the experiments. The multivariate analysis using Wilks' Lambda showed a significant main effect for time, which proves a significant rise in professional identity scores for both groups over time. However, the interaction between time and group was not significant, which indicates the rate of change over time was similar across groups. Finally, a test of between-subjects effects showed a significant main effect of group, with the AR group showing greater overall improvement in teacher identity scores compared to the TSGs. This means that the AR experiment had a stronger effect on teachers' identity development.

3.2. Findings for RQ2

We used thematic analysis to explore how Iranian EFL teachers from both the AR and TSGs (re)constructed their professional identities after the experiment. The focus of the qualitative part was on understanding the differing views between the two groups. Four main themes emerged, which highlight the effects of the interventions on (re)constructing teachers' identities differently. The AR developed deeper reflection and autonomy, while the support group emphasized community and shared learning. The following sections provide a full comparison of the manifestation of each theme in both groups.

Theme 1: Reflective Practice and Professional Growth. Since teachers in AR were engaged in a structured cycle of reflection, action, and revision, a notable theme that emerged from the data was reflective practice and PD. AR participants described that identifying problems, testing experiments, and reflecting on the results helped them become more self-aware and develop professionally. One teacher mentioned, "*Through AR, I began to see my classroom as a laboratory for experimentation. Everything I did required reflection, and that made a lot of real changes in my teaching*" (T3, Interview). This cyclical process enabled teachers to actively assess and improve their pedagogical strategies, which made them more agentive and confident. T5 added, *"The AR project made me more conscious of my choices in the classroom.*

I became more critical of my methods and more encouraged to try new strategies to improve student learning" (T5, Interview). These excerpts show that increased self-reflection is effective in pedagogical identity because teachers believed they were active problem-solvers who directly influence student achievement.

In contrast, participants in the TSGs appreciated the opportunity to discuss challenges and share ideas with peers, but lacked the structured reflection. For example, one teacher stated, *"The support group gave us a space to talk about our experiences, but it wasn't as focused on taking action or testing new ideas. We were sharing with each other and supporting each other"* (T16, Interview). This informal exchange of ideas helped teachers develop a sense of self-awareness, but because there was no systematic reflection, there were fewer practical changes in their teaching methods. T27 reflected, *"We learned a lot from each other, but I didn't really change much in my teaching. The discussions were supportive but I didn't see any real changes in my teaching"* (T27, Interview). As a result, while the support group fostered peer connection, it did not significantly (re)construct their professional identities or teaching practices.

Comparing the two groups, we found that the AR participants viewed themselves as more active problem solvers. Due to the AR process, the teachers could critically assess their teaching. As a result, they experienced tangible improvements and a stronger sense of professional empowerment. As one teacher succinctly put it, *"AR gave me the tools to be proactive, not reactive"* (T4, Interview), which means that they felt more ready to deal with the problems they faced in their teaching and made effective changes, rather than merely reacting to them as they arose. In contrast, the support group participants believed they were passive in receiving peer feedback and had fewer opportunities to apply the feedback practically. This difference in engagement with reflective practice shows that the two groups had different degrees of identity (re)construction: AR participants were more dynamic in their professional roles, whereas their support group counterparts were stable and developed community-oriented identity.

*Theme 2: Autonomy and Agency in Teaching***.** The second significant theme was autonomy and agency in teaching, particularly among the AR participants. These teachers believed that research and classroom reflections helped them develop more control over their teaching and decision-making. One participant explained, "AR really helped me feel that I myself controlled the class. I was no longer just following a set curriculum or responding to problems as they arose; I myself was making decisions based on my students' needs" (T2, Interview). Similarly, T10 stated, "I thought I had ownership over my teaching because I was planning, acting, and reflecting. I wasn't just reacting to things; I was the reason of the changes" (T20, Interview). The AR framework thus enhanced professional agency, which in turn, reinforced their pedagogical identity as autonomous and reflective teachers.

In a different vein, participants in the TSGs expressed less autonomy in teaching. Although the group offered shared ideas and collective support, it limited personal agency. For instance, T18 noted, *"I found the support group helpful for talking about the challenges we face, but I didn't feel like I was making big changes in my classroom. We were getting emotional support and advice from others"* (T18, Interview). T25 added, *"We learned from each other, but I*

didn't feel like I had as much control over the changes I was making. It was more about what group thought we should do" (T25, Interview). This shows that collaboration improved, but autonomy was weaker.

Comparing the two groups, it becomes clear that AR participants placed higher emphasis on agency and decision-making. The AR process helped them take the ownership of their classroom practices, which (re)constructed their professional identity as active, autonomous teachers. T12 noted, "*I realized that I have the power to make real changes in my classroom, and that made me feel more confident as a teacher"* (T12, Interview). On the other hand, support group participants emphasized the importance of collective support rather than autonomy, as the group discussions provided emotional and professional support, although they did not necessarily develop a sense of agency. This difference shows AR encouraged proactive, self-directed PD, while TSGs developed collaboration with less individual empowerment.

*Theme 3: Emotional Support and Community***.** The participants' difference in managing the emotional aspects of the professional identity was shown in Emotional Support and Community theme. AR participants found support through problem-solving and the successful implementation of changes. Many AR participants did not rely on external emotional support but built confidence and emotional strength by overcoming professional problems. T5 explained, "*It wasn't just about talking with others; it was the sense of being successful that I felt after trying out a new strategy and seeing it work in the classroom"* (T5, Interview). Similarly, T7 stated, *"The emotional part for me came from knowing I could handle things on my own. That increased my confidence"* (T7, Interview). Thus, for AR participants, emotional resilience was related to professional mastery and independence.

Conversely, the TSGs participants believed that emotional support and community played an important role in their professional well-being. The collaborative nature of the group provided the opportunity to share problems and receive both emotional and professional supports from their peers. T20 reflected, "*The support group was necessary for me emotionally. We could talk about our struggles without fear, and that helped me feel less isolated in the classroom*" (T20, Interview). T22 added, "*Knowing that others are going through the same problems makes the burden feel lighter. The group was a source of strength for me"* (T22, Interview). For these teachers, the support group provided an emotional bond, which helped them manage stress and maintain their professional identity.

Comparing the two groups, we found out that AR participants derived emotional satisfaction mainly from professional mastery and problem-solving, with a focus on individual development and achievement. As T9 put it, "*There's something empowering about knowing you can handle challenges by yourself, and that made me feel stronger emotionally"* (T9, Interview). On the other hand, support group participants believed that community and shared emotional strength were important in their professional identity reconstruction. The support groups were a space where teachers could provide emotional support to their colleagues. This contrast shows how the AR group felt emotionally stronger after their success, while the support group relied on community-based emotional support to control the emotional problems of teaching.

Theme 4: Professional Development and Learning Orientation. The final theme, Professional Development and Learning Orientation, includes differing views toward learning between the AR and TSGs. Participants in the AR group generally took a proactive and dynamic approach, viewing PD as a continuous, iterative process closely tied to personal and professional development. The majority of AR participants believed that learning is both acquiring new knowledge, experimenting with methods, and improving teaching through reflection. As T11 described, "*AR changed my mind about learning. It's not something that stops once you learn the basics; it's something you keep building on by trying new things and learning from your own classroom"* (T11, Interview). This developed a sense of lifelong learning and innovation, with many viewings PD as a self-driven process. T8 noted, "*Through AR I realized that I'm responsible for my improvement. I have to be curious, try new strategies"* (T8, Interview). Because of this self-directed learning orientation, they (re)constructed their professional identity as innovators in the field of teaching.

In contrast, teachers in the TSGs focused on discussing theoretical ideas and problems and learn from others' experiences. Their PD was based on collaboration and rooted in sharing knowledge with their peers rather than experimenting everything individually. T19 stated, "T*he support group was great for learning from what others had experienced. It wasn't so much about reinventing the wheel, but more about learning from others' experience*" (T19, Interview). This shared learning experience created a sense of professional community, but it did not lead to the kind of self-driven innovation that was seen in the AR group. As T27 explained, "*The group was a great source of ideas, but it didn't push me to try out new things. It was taking what worked for others and apply it"* (T27, Interview). For the support group, PD focused on shared knowledge rather than individual discovery.

Comparing the two groups, we found that AR participants viewed themselves as active learners and innovators who continually evolved their teaching through experimentation and reflection, but their support group counterparts emphasized collaborative model of learning and valued sharing ideas while relying on group discussions than on personal initiative for innovation. This difference shows how the AR group developed a forward-thinking, self-directed learning orientation, while the support group fostered a more community-centered approach to PD.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings: The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings shows how AR and TSGs experienced different trajectories of identity development. The AR group's post-test scores were significantly higher, particularly in the pedagogical and personal dimensions. This resonates with the themes of autonomy and reflective practice from the interviews. The AR group participants indicated greater control over their teaching, which was facilitated by systematic cycles of reflection, planning, and action. This empowerment is confirmed by quantitative gains, with narratives highlighting their change into proactive problem-solvers. The increase in personal identity scores suggests a deeper investment in PD.

In a different vein, the TSGs showed smaller quantitative improvements, consistent with the community-based identity development seen in the qualitative data. TSG participants valued emotional and professional support from their peers; however, this did not result in the same

level of personal and pedagogical change as AR. Lower post-test scores in the pedagogical dimension reflected this gap: while teachers appreciated the shared learning environment, it rarely translated into instructional change. TSGs participants' changes were less evident in the quantitative results because emotional support and a sense of belonging were central to their identity development.

Overall, a holistic view of identity development in both groups can be achieved since the two sets of findings complement each other. The AR group's professional identity development was driven by a combination of autonomy, reflective practice, and professional mastery, all of which contributed to a significant change in both personal and pedagogical dimensions of their professional identity. The TSGs, on the other hand, experienced changes influenced by emotional factors, wherein the sense of community and shared learning played a critical role in (re)structuring their professional identity. This approach was effective for emotional strength but did not result in the same level of instructional and personal change that was seen in the AR group. Thus, the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings highlights the different mechanisms by which each PD model influenced teachers' professional identity. It also highlights how personal development and community support work together to (re)construct professional identities.

4. Discussion

This study investigated how Iranian EFL teachers (re)constructed their professional identity after participating in two different PD models: AR and TSGs. The results showed that both interventions contributed to the development of teachers' professional identity, but in different ways. The quantitative result showed that the AR group experienced a significantly greater change in professional identity scores compared to the TSGs. The qualitative findings showed that AR participants had a stronger sense of agency, autonomy, and reflective practice, while the support group participants gained more emotional support, collegial interaction, and a sense of professional belonging. These differences could suggest that AR facilitated a more serious change in teachers' professional identity, while the TSGs improved social cohesion and shared professional narratives. The integration of these findings proves that systematic inquiry and collaboration are needed to influence teachers' identity.

The specific sociocultural and institutional conditions of Iranian EFL teachers' education must not be neglected in interpreting the findings. State schools in Iran follow a centralized curriculum, exam-oriented assessment system, and hierarchical administrative structure that restricts teachers' pedagogical autonomy (Gheitasi & Aliakbari, 2022), which results in a tension between imposed methodologies and their professional beliefs. Therefore, AR and TSGs are seen not only as PD models but also as professional empowerment opportunities. The observed identity (re)construction could reflect teachers' reaction to the limitations they face in their professional context and their search for agency.

The first research question examined the degree to which AR and TSGs quantitatively influenced Iranian EFL teachers' professional identity development. The findings showed that both experiments resulted in a statistically significant increase in professional identity scores. However, the AR group showed a considerable increase in comparison to the TSGs. This aligns with previous research that emphasizes the role of AR in enhancing identity development by

systematic reflection and professional autonomy (Dikilitaş & Yayli, 2018; Donyaie & Soodmand Afshar, 2019; Nazari, 2022; Meihami & Werbinska, 2022; Soodmand Afshar & Donyaie, 2024). Testing experiments in their classrooms and improving their teaching methods, the AR group possibly increased their professional identity through an iterative cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection. These findings are consistent with Wenger's (1998) theory of CsOP, which states that professional identity is constructed and reconstructed through active participation in meaningful professional activities. AR participants not only engage with their practice but also negotiate their identities as problem-solvers and change agents in their teaching contexts because they see themselves as teacher-researchers.

The second research question examined teachers' perceptions of the (re)construction of their professional identity after participating in AR and TSGs. The qualitative results showed that AR participants emphasized the systematic nature of AR in developing a proactive and agentic position toward teaching. Several participants stopped seeing themselves as implementers of fixed rules and started seeing themselves as critical thinkers who were actively searching for methods to teach better. Wenger's (1998) notion of legitimate peripheral participation explains this shift. While some AR participants initially viewed research as separate from teaching, repeated cycles of inquiry gradually moved them toward central roles within their professional community, thereby contributing to shared knowledge and enhancing their identity development.

We could also attribute the transformative effect of AR to the local professional culture of Iranian teachers. Doing research has traditionally been limited to faculty members rather than school teachers. However, AR has enabled teachers to be producers of knowledge by doing research rather than implementers of external policies or research readers (Donyaie & Soodmand Afshar, 2019). Teachers' change toward conducting research and their willingness to overcome resistance to change have developed a sense of autonomy, which was the result of the reflective and agentic features developed through AR.

In contrast, the participants in TSGs described identity (re)construction in a social sense. Engagement occurred through peer discussions, problem-solving, and emotional validation, which resulted in reinforcing a sense of belonging to a collaborative professional community. This aligns with previous studies, which emphasize social interaction in identity formation (Mehdizadeh et al., 2023; Rushton et al., 2023; Soodmand Afshar & Donyaie, 2024). Since identity is co-constructed within professional communities (Wenger, 1998), support groups provided an opportunity to share experiences and strategies that reinforced professional norms; however, without systematic reflection, they often provoked less pedagogical change.

A key point emerging from the qualitative analysis is the difference between identity reinforcement and (re)construction. Support groups helped teachers strengthen their existing identities by offering them a sense of validation and mutual support, but they did not encourage teachers to reconsider their teaching methods. This aligns with Wenger's (1998) view that participation in CsOP does not result in deep identity change; sometimes it strengthens existing identities. In contrast, AR participants used inquiry-based learning, which challenged their assumptions, encouraged experimentation, and reshaped their self-concepts. As a result, they experienced significant identity (re)construction. This bigger change corresponds with

Schön's (1983) Reflective Practice Theory, which emphasized the importance of systematic reflection in PD. Engaging in systematic cycles of inquiry, AR participants developed professional narratives that established them as autonomous decision-makers rather than passive implementers of policy.

Broader cultural orientations within Iranian teacher communities are evident from different impacts of AR and TSGs. The success of TSGs in developing shared identity can be attributed to the collectivist professional culture of TSGs, which focuses on harmony, emotional support, and collegiality. However, such groups may prevent critical discussions or pedagogical experimentations, both of which are necessary for identity change. In contrast, teachers in AR are encouraged to question established norms. This approach can be countercultural in hierarchical school contexts, but it develops stronger identity (re)construction.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings further highlights these differences. The statistical results showed that both experiments improved identity, but the AR group had higher post-test scores, especially in teaching and personal aspects. The qualitative data explains this divergence: AR supported agency, autonomy, and reflection, while TSGs developed social connection and emotional resilience. This distinction is crucial for understanding the mechanisms by which different PD models impact teacher identity. While collaboration and social support are crucial for keeping professional well-being (Spicksley et al., 2021), identity change requires active engagement with inquiry and reflection, which is fully experienced in AR.

These findings enhance the growing body of research on teacher identity development by emphasizing the complementary but different roles of systematic inquiry and collaborative learning in PD. While previous research has studied AR and TSGs separately (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Meihami, 2023; Mehdizadeh et al., 2023), there is a scarcity of direct comparisons considering their effect on identity (re)construction within an EFL context. This study provides empirical evidence regarding the different impacts of PD models. The findings show that AR can promote crucial pedagogical changes, while TSGs enhance emotional resilience. These results indicate that to facilitate comprehensive teacher identity development, effective PD should integrate both systematic reflection and collaborative engagement, rather than depending on one aspect.

Another important point is the role of organizational context in sustaining teachers' identity (re)construction. The qualitative results showed that both groups faced challenges in enacting identity changes into long-term professional change, particularly due to organizational limitations, inflexible curricula, and hierarchical school structures. This is in line with Wenger's (1998) view that identity formation is always situated in larger social and organizational contexts. Although AR and TSGs had a transformative effect at first, many participants believed that organizational forces limited their ability to sustain change. Some participants said that organizational barriers hindered their ability to implement changes after the experiment. For example, they explained that curriculum mandates required them to follow standardized lesson plans, or the pressure of nationally standardized final exams forced them to prioritize teaching to the test over reflective or innovative practices. In the same vein, while the TSGs provided emotional and professional profiles, they did not challenge structural

limitations in the same way that AR did. TSGs provided strong emotional and collegial support, but participants found that organizational isolation made it difficult to maintain these communities after the project.

Finally, the broader Iranian policy context must be considered in investigating the sustainability of identity change. PD initiatives in Iran are often isolated from organizational reward systems and long-term mentoring structures (Hadi et al., 2025). Whether teachers are able to sustain new professional identities is highly influenced by school leaders' support for reflective inquiry practices. In the absence of such systematic alignment, the identity change initiated by AR and TSGs may decline once structured support is removed. Future research should focus on finding out how organizational structures can better support sustained identity change to ensure that PD is not a temporary effort but is an ongoing, integrated practice.

Conclusion, implications, and limitations of the study

This study investigated how Iranian EFL teachers (re)constructed their professional identity after engaging in two PD models: AR and TSGs. Analyzing the quantitative findings, we found that both experiments led to a significant increase in professional identity scores, with the AR group revealing a significantly deeper development, particularly in the pedagogical and personal dimensions. Moreover, the qualitative analysis revealed that AR facilitated a bigger change by enhancing teacher autonomy, reflective practice, and professional agency, whereas the support group primarily improved emotional resilience and peer support, thereby reinforcing teachers' sense of belonging to a community of professionals. These findings align with Wenger's (1998) CsOP framework, demonstrating that identity construction is developed through active participation and social interactions in professional learning communities. Nevertheless, the inequality of identity changes between the two groups highlights that, whereas collective dialogue provides support, inquiry-based practices (i.e., AR) are more effective in pedagogical change. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data suggests that AR leads to identity transformation, whereas support groups reinforce existing professional narratives.

The study results have implications for teacher education, PD programs, and institutional policies regarding professional identity development. Since AR has impacted the (re)construction of professional identity by increasing teacher autonomy, reflective practice, and innovative pedagogy, PD programs should incorporate inquiry-based learning to enhance teachers' agency. The iterative process of planning, action, observation, and reflection in the AR group allowed teachers to critically examine their teaching and search for solutions to pedagogical problems that were neglected in the traditional PD workshops. Therefore, teacher training programs should move from passive knowledge transfer to inquiry-based and context-sensitive methods that make teachers responsible for their PD. Meanwhile, the TSGs' experiment developed professional identity through social belonging, collegial support, and emotional resilience.

The findings highlight the need for systematic teacher learning communities because teaching is isolated in the challenging school contexts. Support groups lacked a systematic basis which is necessary for overall pedagogical change. Their effect could be enhanced by integrating reflective components, such as peer observation, to facilitate evidence-based

discussions that lead to improvements in teaching methods. Furthermore, the findings show that identity (re)construction is not an isolated process but occurs within institutional frameworks that can either facilitate or limit PD. Several participants believed that AR enabled them to critically evaluate their pedagogy; however, institutional barriers such as rigid curricula, standardized assessment policies, and limited autonomy in decision-making restricted their ability to fully implement changes. Therefore, educational policy makers and school administrators must recognize that teachers need to practice professional agency because PD alone is not enough. Institutions should provide opportunities for teachers to research, encourage collaboration between teachers and researchers, and provide ongoing mentorship to sustain the identity changes initiated through PD programs.

In practical terms, although there are centralized curricula and national high-stakes exams in the state schools of Iran, Iranian EFL teachers can still use inquiry-based and collaborative practices within existing constraints. They can form small-scale school-based inquiry circles on a monthly basis to reflect on exam-related challenges, share classroom innovations, and document their classroom outcomes as short reflective reports. Moreover, regional PD offices could develop online professional communities (e.g., *Shad* application) in which teachers can share successful AR projects and peer feedback, creating a sustainable culture of reflection and shared practice. Policymakers can further support such initiatives by linking participation in AR or TSG-based inquiry activities to teacher evaluation or promotion systems.

While the study provides insights into identity (re)construction, the findings have to be seen in light of some limitations. First, institutional restrictions (e.g., curricular inflexibility and restricted decision-making power) limited teachers' ability to take actions to bring about changes inspired by AR. Future research should therefore study how school leadership and policy structures influence the sustainability of identity (re)construction. Second, our focus on Iranian public high schools limits the generalizability of our findings to alternative educational settings. Exploring AR and TSGs in different educational systems could provide a broader picture of professional identity (re)construction. Third, although the qualitative findings provided comprehensive insights, future studies could focus on classroom observations or student learning outcomes to evaluate whether identity (re)construction results in pedagogical improvements. Finally, while this study examined AR and support groups separately, future research could study hybrid PD models that integrate structured inquiry with collaborative reflection to increase both agency and community-based support. Addressing these areas will help us use PD initiatives for sustained teacher identity development.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: English Language Teacher Professional Identity Inventory

Dear colleague,

This inventory is part of a study aiming at expanding our knowledge of English language teacher professional identity. The statements below reflect perceptions of your identity as an English teacher. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement. This is not a test. So, there is no right or wrong choice. Please provide your answers thoughtfully and sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of this investigation. The results and findings will be used for research purposes only! Thank you very much for your help.

	As an English language teacher,	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I employ all my resources to create a stress-free environment for my students.					
2	I am known to have a comforting voice.					
3	I am known to have a reassuring personality.					
4	I encourage my students to foster a sense of achievement in them.					
5	I try to engage my students in the teaching procedure.					
6	I am willing to share my teaching experiences with my colleagues.					
7	I am willing to share my learning experiences with my students.					
8	I am willing to share my knowledge with students.					
9	I am willing to help the students who come to me for help even if they are not my own students.					
10	I respect my colleagues' opinions.					
11	I respect my manager's decisions.					
12	I abide by the rules of my workplace.					
13	I can pinpoint the appropriate material for my students from among the materials available.					
14	I can modify parts of the material I am teaching on the basis of my students' needs.					
15	I can develop supplementary EFL materials to help my students learn better.					
16	I use appropriate realia (pictures, video or audio files, etc.) in my classes to facilitate learning.					
17	I do not lose my temper when I have to explain a point several times.					
18	I am patient when my students are not listening to me.					
19	I am patient when my students make unreasonable requests, such as being absent more than what is allowed.					
20	I do not panic when I face a classroom problem.					
21	I can choose the appropriate error correction technique on the basis of the skill (e.g., Reading) or sub-skill (e.g., Pronunciation) I am teaching.					

22	I can choose the appropriate error correction technique on the basis of my students' learning type (such as auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc.).					
23	I can correct my students' errors without making them feel uncomfortable.					
24	I can establish a friendly relationship with my students.					
25	I can establish a friendly relationship with my colleagues					
26	I can establish a friendly relationship with the supervisors and managers at my workplace.					
27	I try to add some excitement to my tone of voice by varying the pitch, the intonation pattern, and the volume.					
28	I enunciate my words to make sure I am understood by everyone.					
29	I can adapt my language use to my students' level of language proficiency.					
30	I like to study practice-oriented, international EFL journals (e.g.,, ELT Journal).					
31	I attend ELT-related conferences and seminars.					
32	I believe I need to have high proficiency in the English language.					
33	I believe I need to know about the culture of the language I am teaching.					
34	I am happy to be a teacher.					
35	I believe in what I am doing.					
36	I believe my job as a teacher can positively change lives.					
37	I believe I am contributing to the education of mankind.					
38	I find it necessary to know about what is going on in the society in which I live					
39	I keep updating my knowledge about the first language culture.					
40	I am patient when weaker students are trying to catch up with the class.					
41	I remind myself that every student is not expected to learn as quickly as others.					
42	I appreciate my students' slightest improvements.					

Respondents' background

Name:

Age:

Gender:

University degree:

Major:

Years of experience:

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Round 1: before the project

- Please tell me about the problems you usually face in your classes.
- Please explain what motivated you to participate in the program.
- What problems do you think influence your emotions?
- What is your perception of your job? How do you define yourself as an English teacher?
- What actions do you take to resolve the problems you face in the class?

Round 2: after the plan stage of action research and 1st meeting of Teacher Support Group

- Please tell me why you selected the problem you want to address. What was the motivation?
- Did you experience any emotional burdens or tensions when you decided to be part of this program?
- How did you feel about the first meeting?
- How do you see yourself as a teacher now?

Round 3: after act stage of AR and 2nd meeting of TSG

- Please tell me about your emotions in implementing the solutions you were given.
- Please tell me about the emotions you experienced since the last meeting
- How did you feel when you faced institutional or cultural problems? How did you manage them?
- What do you think of yourself as a teacher who does research (for AR group)/ What do you think of yourself as a teacher who collaborates and shares with colleagues (for TSG)

Round 4: after observation stage of AR and 3rd meeting of TSG:

- You have seen your students' results. How do you feel about them? What emotions did you experience?
- How do you see your role in the obtained results? Elaborate.
- What do you think of your job? Elaborate.

Round 5: after reflection stage of AR and the last meeting of TSG:

- You have completed the process now. How do you feel about the whole process?
- How do you see your role as a teacher? How did you manage your emotions when negative experiences happened? What were the source of these negative experiences?
- What is your understanding about being a teacher? Elaborate.