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# The Role of Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation in Job Performance: Examining the Mediating Role of Teacher Professional Identity

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## Original Article

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## Abstract:

The question of whether psychological characteristics of teachers can predict their teaching performance has drawn considerable interest in educational psychology area. The present study aimed at examining the role of teacher self-efficacy and teacher self-regulation in teacher job performance, mediated by teacher professional identity in the Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) context. To this end the online scales of teacher self-efficacy, teacher self-regulation, teacher professional identity, and teacher job performance were employed in a quantitative correlational study to collect data from 152 EFL teachers purposively selected from different universities in West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, and Ardebil provinces, Iran. Results of the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) showed that teacher self-efficacy and teacher self-regulation did not directly predict teacher job performance but had a significant correlation with teacher professional identity. Furthermore, mediated by teacher professional identity, both teacher self-efficacy and teacher self-regulation could significantly predict teacher job performance. The results of this study could expand social psychological theories against fundamental attribution error. It was concluded that the effect of situational factors outperformed the psychological abilities of Iranian EFL teachers. Moreover, teacher professional identity, as a mediating variable, could significantly strengthen the role of teacher self-efficacy and teacher self-regulation on teacher job performance. Theoretically, the findings can challenge fundamental attribution error by demonstrating that situational factors can neutralize direct effects of psychological traits, suggesting that teacher effectiveness models must equally weight contextual and individual factors. Pedagogically, the findings necessitate institutional reforms to reduce systemic constraints alongside professional development programs that explicitly focus on professional identity formation as the mechanism through which psychological resources can lead to teaching effectiveness.

**Keywords:** teacher job performance, teacher professional identity, teacher self-efficacy, teacher self-regulation

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher cognition, as the unobservable aspect of teachers' professional lives, encompasses various interrelated psychological constructs (Borg, 2003). The increasing global demand for developing English language proficiency and also the dynamic nature of English as a

foreign language (EFL) education, emphasize the essential role of EFL teachers and the need to elevate their cognition by improving their personal and professional properties (Saleem et al., 2020). Among their psychological features, teachers' self-efficacy and self-regulation can effectively empower them to cope with diverse challenges in EFL classrooms to ultimately meet different needs

of EFL learners (Bandura, 1997), as teachers' internal characteristics are assumed to impact their perceptions of teaching profession (San Martín Vadillo, 1999). Such characteristics that can also predict teachers' professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004), can positively impact their job performance. Thus, understanding the relationship among such constructs can widen our knowledge about the predictors of an effective teaching performance in a supportive EFL educational context.

Teachers' job performance (TJP), as a multidimensional construct (Saleem et al., 2020), is broadly defined as their contribution to the achievement of pedagogical objectives (Raju & Ramesh, 2024) in the classroom or in other educational settings (Amin et al., 2013). Grounded on the model introduced by Campbell (1990), TJP is a primary indicator of teachers' progress in all educational fields, and includes lesson-planning, instruction, evaluation, extracurricular activities, classroom management, monitoring, leadership, and discipline (Saleem et al., 2020). Due to its comprehensive nature, TJP is influenced by various personal, contextual, and institutional factors, making it a critical focus for educational research and policy (Hanif & Pervez, 2004).

Particularly, TJP is important for EFL teachers who must keep up with new waves of EFL pedagogy to meet the diverse needs of learners. Transforming from teacher-centered classrooms to communicative ones, they can create more interactive and supportive EFL learning contexts to make more active and autonomous EFL learners. Therefore, the especial importance of TJP in EFL context can be attributed to the need to develop EFL learners as more competent members of global society (Kamyabi Gol & Royaei, 2013; Saleem et al., 2020). However, EFL teachers may struggle to perform efficiently due to factors like limited professional development or low level of self-efficacy and self-regulation (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, examining factors associated with the effectiveness of EFL teachers' job performance seems to be essential for EFL researchers.

One of the psychological features influential in teacher's psychological health and many other aspects of EFL teaching (e.g., Moslemi & Habibi, 2019; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001) is the concept of self-efficacy framed within Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. According to this theory, human behavior is formed by the interaction between internal values and external factors. Self-efficacy, the main concept of this theory, influences all important aspects of human cognitive processing, including mental, emotional and motivational ones, by determining how people think, feel, and perform to achieve desired goals. People with high self-efficacy are more likely to persevere in the face of obstacles or adversity and gain a higher rate of success, whereas people with low self-efficacy avoid challenging tasks and work less hard (Bandura, 1997).

In particular, teacher self-efficacy (TSE) is conceptualized as teachers' perceptions of their capacity to fulfill pedagogical tasks across cognitive, meta-cognitive, social and affective areas (Mossafaie et al., 2024). In the EFL teaching context,

TSE commonly refers to their confidence in their ability to design appropriate lesson plans, manage classrooms, and engage students in learning tasks (Soodmand Afshar & Moradifar, 2021; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). This confidence can lead to greater job satisfaction, lower stress, and fewer burnout symptoms that boost teachers' sense of resilience and motivation, eventually, leading to improved job performance (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Teacher self-regulation, another psychological feature within the social cognitive theoretical framework, involves the ability of teachers to control their thoughts and emotions through established behavioral standards to achieve their intended outcomes and prevent undesired manners (Monshi Toussi et al. 2011). TSR is different from teacher emotion regulation, as it is mainly about cognitive and behavioral aspects of teaching, such as planning and instruction, while teacher emotion regulation focuses on managing emotions to create a positive teaching and learning environment (Xiyun et al. 2022). Closely linked to self-efficacy (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), TSR can act as a remedy for job burnout, especially for EFL teachers who often operate in linguistically, culturally, and psychologically challenging environments, leading to higher attrition rates (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). According to Greenier et al. (2023), effective teaching is influenced by not only pedagogical and subject matter knowledge, but also teacher's self-regulation of thoughts and emotions. High levels of TSR can lead teachers to set clear goals, evaluate their progress, and modify their teaching strategies in order to maximize student engagement and accomplishment (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003). Moreover, self-regulated teachers are often engaged in continuous professional development through using self-reflection to identify their shortcomings and adapt their teaching approaches accordingly (Ozhiganova, 2018).

Finally, the role of TSE and TSR in TJP can be mediated by the nexus of teacher professional identity (TPI). According to the model introduced by Beijaard et al. (2000), TPI emerges from the interaction between personal (i.e., individual beliefs), relational (i.e., interactions with other community members), and contextual (i.e., the influence of social and cultural contexts) dimensions. It is influenced by teachers' experiences, beliefs, and interactions with students, colleagues, and the broader educational community (Eslamdoost et al., 2019). Furthermore, aligned with the social constructivist approach, TPI is formed through an ongoing process of self-reflection and self-interpretation (Mockler, 2011) in which teachers construct, negotiate, and modify their professional selves (Beech et al., 2016). It can also significantly affect teacher's job satisfaction, pedagogical strategies, and decision-making (Zhao & Gu, 2020). Thus, developing the professional identity of EFL teachers is increasingly recognized as an important educational component because a strong professional identity makes teachers integrate their personal values with teaching practices, fostering a sense of commitment to their career, and ultimately enhancing job performance (Coldwell, 2017).

Therefore, the present research aimed to investigate the role of TSE and TSR in TJP, mediated by TPI in the Iranian EFL context. Drawing on principles of the humanistic psychology in today's ever-developing educational context, it is important to enhance EFL teachers' effectiveness by relying on their internal capacities. By examining the correlations among such constructs in a conceptual model, the study attempted to identify potential elements leading to a more rewarding EFL teaching and learning context. Accordingly, the study attempted to address the following research questions:

- RQ1. Does EFL teachers' self-efficacy significantly predict their job performance?
- RQ2. Does EFL teachers' self-regulation significantly predict their job performance?
- RQ3. Does EFL teachers' self-efficacy significantly predict their professional identity?
- RQ4. Does EFL teachers' self-regulation significantly predict their professional identity?
- RQ5. Does EFL teachers' professional identity significantly predict their job performance?
- RQ6. Does EFL teachers' professional identity significantly mediate their self-efficacy and job performance?
- RQ7. Does EFL teachers' professional identity significantly mediate their self-regulation and job performance?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

Examining teachers' psychological health and its connection to their job performance is grounded in three complementary theoretical perspectives: social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), psychological impact theory (Latané, 1981), and professional identity theory (Beijaard et al., 2004).

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) posits that human functioning results from reciprocal interactions among personal factors, behaviors, and environmental influences. According to this theory, self-efficacy and self-regulation can determine sufficient motivation and behavior patterns (Bandura, 1997; LaMort, 2019) and can enhance individuals' capacity to control and adjust their thoughts and behaviors in pursuit of goals (Zimmerman, 2008).

Psychological impact theory (Latané, 1981) generally focuses on the effect of people's emotions, beliefs, and mental features on their various behaviors and decisions made in different personal, social, as well as professional contexts. Teachers' perceptions of their work environment and their emotional responses to professional demands can significantly affect their motivation, instructional quality, and overall job effectiveness (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Professional identity theory explains the way people develop their professional identity that forms a central component of their personal identity. The concept describes how individuals construct and reconstruct their sense of self within their professional roles (Beijaard et al., 2004). According to Beijaard et al. (2000), teacher professional identity emerges from the unified interaction between

personal, relational and contextual dimensions.

Collectively, these theoretical perspectives provide a coherent framework for examining the psychological and professional processes underlying EFL teachers' job performance.

### 2.2 Teacher Self-Efficacy and Teacher Job Performance

The role of TSE in different areas of teaching and learning has recently been the focus of attention in educational research. Previous research supported the effect of TSE in job satisfaction and teaching commitment (Demir, 2021; Mossafaie et al., 2024), job stress and burnout (Anton & Van Ryzin, 2024; Demir, 2021; Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019), students' academic achievements (Caprara et al., 2006; Zee et al., 2016), engagement (Burić & Macuka, 2018; Liu et al., 2024), and teacher psychological well-being (Arias-Pastor et al., 2024; Demir, 2021; Fathi et al., 2021; Mossafaie et al., 2024). Nonetheless, despite a substantial amount of research concerning TSE, the available literature regarding its connection to teacher job performance remains scarce (Klassen et al., 2011).

In a particularly relevant study, Soodmand Afshar and Moradifar (2021) found a positive correlation between TSE and TJP among Iranian EFL teachers. Compared to reflective teaching and professional development, TSE was found to be a stronger predictor of TJP. This finding was also supported by the qualitative data obtained from the interviews, which indicated that self-efficacy could enhance teachers' confidence and reduce their fear of teaching.

Additionally, a meta-analysis by Klassen and Tze (2014) of 31 studies and Hoang's (2018) systematic review of 27 studies confirmed teacher self-efficacy as a significant predictor of EFL teaching effectiveness in general. Similarly, in another meta-analysis examining 25 studies, Mossafaie et al. (2024) reported that EFL teachers' self-efficacy impacts factors like emotion regulation, professional development, pedagogical success, and psychological well-being.

Moreover, research by Brouwers and Tomic (2000), Caprara et al. (2006), and Choi and Lee (2017) demonstrated that TSE positively affected their instructional and classroom management strategies and keeping student interest, factors that ultimately can lead to improved job performance. In addition, Alibakhshi et al. (2021) reported that high level of TSE leads to promoted well-being, professional development, and effective teaching among EFL teachers. Similarly, Xiyun, et al. (2022) assessed self-efficacy and emotion regulation of Iranian EFL teachers on their psychological well-being. The structural equation modeling (SEM) revealed that both TSE and emotion regulation were significant predictors of teachers' psychological well-being, while TSE had a stronger correlation than emotion regulation. Furthermore, Caprara et al. (2006) examined the correlation between TSE by the teachers' sense of efficacy scale (TSES, Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), teaching effectiveness, and student achievement measures. They revealed that TSE corresponded closely with the teaching effectiveness measure, but much lower correspondence with the student achievement measure.

### 2.3 Teacher's Self-Efficacy and Professional Identity

Research on the role of TSE in TPI in Iranian (Moslemi & Habibi, 2019; Safari et al., 2020; Soodmand Afshar & Hashemi Yar, 2019; Zonoubi et al., 2017), Chinese (Liao et al., 2024; Sun & Yin, 2025; Wati et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2021), and Indian (Muhammed Amanulla & Aruna, 2014) contexts, has consistently identified the significant role of TSE in enhancing TPI. For instance, in the Iranian EFL context, Safari et al. (2020) discovered that TSE is a more reliable indicator of professional development than reflective thinking and job satisfaction. Since there are not many studies exploring the connection between TSE and TPI in the EFL context, it is important to do more research to enhance the existing literature.

### 2.4 Teacher Self-Regulation and Teacher Job Performance

TSR in educational research has been reported as an important construct linked to teaching stress and burnout (Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019; Bakker & de Vries, 2021), job satisfaction (Brackett et al., 2010), self-efficacy (e.g., Deng et al., 2022; Fathi et al., 2021), teacher resilience (e.g., Xie, 2021), professional well-being (Greenier et al., 2021; Teng & Zhang, 2022), immunity (e.g., Namaziandost et al., 2024), language achievement (Teng & Zhang, 2022), and second language grit (Kazemkhah Hasankiadeh & Azari Noughabi, 2023).

Particularly, regarding the relationship between TSR and TJP, Kamyabi Gol and Royaei (2013) confirmed a significant positive correlation among Iranian EFL teachers. Moreover, a significant association between TSR and teaching effectiveness was found by Monshi Toussi et al. (2011). Specifically, they introduced intrinsic interest, mastery-goal orientation, and emotional control as the strongest components of self-regulation. On the other hand, Zarei and Hatami (2012) demonstrated that there was no association between TSR and the vocabulary and reading teaching. As there are few studies looking at the correlation between TSR and TJP, further research is needed to obtain more consistent results.

### 2.5 Teacher Self-Regulation and Professional Identity

Regarding the relationship between TSR and TPI, one

related study by Namaziandost et al. (2024) found that teacher emotion regulation and teacher immunity are strong predictors of TPI, teacher autonomy, and teacher work motivation among Iranian EFL teachers. While the effect of TPI on TSR strategies has been reported (e.g., Chen et al., 2020; Derakhshan et al., 2020), there is a noticeable lack of research specifically examining the role of TSR in TPI, highlighting an area for further exploration.

### 2.6 Teachers' Professional Identity and Job Performance

Considering the importance of TPI in educational research, Delima (2015), Derakhshan et al. (2020), Richter et al. (2021), and Sudario (2024) found significant positive correlations between TPI and TJP. They reported that TPI could positively correlate with teaching effectiveness in the classroom. Furthermore, Hong (2010) and Mockler (2011) claimed that TPI affects their decision to stay or leave the teaching profession. Chen et al. (2020), Lin et al. (2022), and Xing (2022) also claim that it plays a crucial role in reducing job burnout.

Nevertheless, some other studies questioned the direct impact of professional development on teaching effectiveness. Novozhenina and López Pinzón (2018) and Lu et al. (2022) aimed to improve the teaching practice of EFL teachers by utilizing a professional development program and showed that even though the program initiated little changes in the performance and reflection of teachers, it still left space for more improvement and training. The findings revealed that teachers may have enhanced their teaching knowledge from professional development programs but did not use what they learned to enhance teaching practices. These findings show the complex link between TPI and TJP, and suggest that professional development programs help, but other factors may also be needed to boost teaching effectiveness.

### 2.7 The Present Study

Recognizing the importance of teachers' psychological health in their teaching effectiveness and considering self-efficacy and self-regulation as two essential factors involved in individuals' psychological well-being, the present study aimed to examine the role of TSE and TSR in TJP among

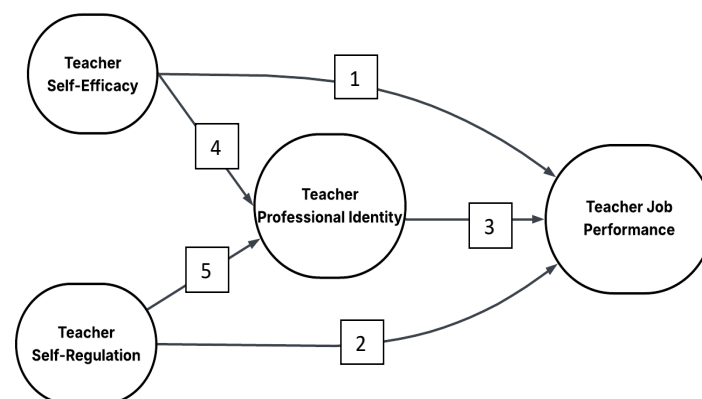


Figure 1. The Initial Hypothetical Model

Iranian EFL teachers. Furthermore, acknowledging TPI as an influential teacher characteristic, assessment of its mediating role seemed to be insightful.

As the literature review indicates, this study is, to our knowledge, the first one examining the relationships between the mentioned constructs within a single model. Figure 1 shows the initial model of the hypotheses. The proposed first five paths were mainly developed according to findings of Soodmand Afshar and Moradifar (2021, path 1), Moslemi and Habibi (2019, path 2), Kamyabi Gol and Royaei (2013, path 3), Namaziandost et al. (2024, path 4), and Delima (2015, path 5), respectively. The sixth and seventh hypotheses were mainly based on social cognitive theory, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and Beijjaard et al.'s (2004) claims about the importance of TPI.

### 3. METHOD

#### 3.1 Participants

The participants of the present study were 152 EFL teachers (63 males & 89 females) aged 28-55 who completed the questionnaires out of 178 sent emails. They were teaching general English, English Teaching, English Literature, and English Translation courses at the Islamic Azad Universities of East and West Azerbaijan provinces in Iran. All of them were Ph.D. holders or Ph.D. candidates, teaching at B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. levels. Purposive sampling was employed to select the participants according to their job and areas of teaching. This approach could ensure the homogeneity in participants' advanced academic qualifications and their extensive teaching experience in higher education, which were essential criteria for addressing the research objectives. Although purposive sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader EFL teaching populations, it was regarded appropriate for obtaining contextually relevant data from highly qualified professionals whose expertise aligned with the focus of this study.

It should be noted that gender, age, cultural background, and years of experience were taken as control variables to disregard their effect on the primary variables of the study. To follow ethical considerations, participation in this study was voluntary and participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, which encouraged more honest responses.

#### 3.2 Instruments

##### 3.2.1 Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

The short scale of Teacher Self Efficacy Scale (TSES), prepared and validated by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2001) was used in the present study to measure the self-efficacy of the participants. This scale includes 12 items assessing three factors: *efficacy of instructional strategies* (EIS, items 5, 9, 10, 12), *efficacy of classroom management* (ECM, items 1, 6, 7, 8), and *efficacy of students' engagement* (ESE, items 2, 3, 4, 11).

The questionnaire was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "nothing" to 5 "a great deal". Its construct

validity had previously been supported by Ward (2024) and Arrastia (2015) who demonstrated the acceptable factorial structure and construct validity indices for this instrument. In the current study, first, the content validity of the TSES was evaluated and confirmed by a panel of experts including three psychology professors. Moreover, Then, the overall internal consistency reliability for the TSES was piloted as Cronbach's alpha coefficient of  $\alpha = .91$ . In addition, the individual values for the three sub-scales included  $\alpha = 0.85$  for the EIS,  $\alpha = 0.87$  for the ECM, and  $\alpha = 0.82$  for the ESE, indicating high internal reliability.

##### 3.2.2 Teacher Self-Regulatory Scale

The Teacher Self-Regulation Scale (TSRS) that was designed and validated by Capa Aydin et al. (2009), was utilized to measure TSR. Developed based on the self-regulation theory of Zimmerman (2008), this scale consists of 41 questions scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree." The first item was considered as a filler item that was omitted from the analysis. The total score of 40 items represented an overall indicator of TSR for each participant.

According to Capa Aydin et al.'s (2009) TSRS, TSR consists of nine factors: *goal setting* (GS, items 1, 6, 10, 18, 21, 23) that acts as the determiner of objectives to direct actions while teaching; *intrinsic interest* (IIn, items 45, 46, 47, 48, 49) which is about willingness in teaching; *performance goal orientation* (PGO, items 32, 35, 36, 37, 39) which is related to the goals to operate better than other instructors and to integrate others point of views in one's knowledge; *mastery goal orientation* (MGO, items 33, 34, 38, 40) utilized to develop teaching capabilities based on personal principles; *self-instruction* (SI, items 2, 8, 14, 19) which is used to monitor one's own teaching practice and making instructional enhancements; *emotional control* (EC, items 5, 7, 12, 24, 26) which is about controlling emotions and mood; *self-evaluation* (SE, items 11, 15, 22, 25) which is used to evaluate current teaching practices and comparing it with the previous experiences and the predetermined objectives; *self-reaction* (SR, items 3, 4, 9, 17) which is related to affective reactions after teaching performances; and *help-seeking* (HS, items 13, 16, 20) which is about getting help from others to resolve instructional problems. Construct validity of this questionnaire had been supported by previous psychometric studies, including Sáez-Delgado et al. (2023) and Moafian and Ostovar (2012), who confirmed the construct validity and reliability of this instrument through factor analytic procedures. In this study, the content validity of the TSRS was confirmed through expert judgment by three psychology professors who evaluated the items for the theoretical alignment and content representativeness. Subsequently, pilot study confirmed the TSRS's internal consistency reliability reporting overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient as  $\alpha = 0.87$ , and the individual values for GS ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ), IIn ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ), OGO ( $\alpha = 0.78$ ), MGO ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ), SI ( $\alpha = 0.77$ ), EC ( $\alpha = 0.74$ ), SE ( $\alpha = 0.72$ ), SR ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ), and HS ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ).

##### 3.2.3 Teacher Professional Identity Scale

Teacher Professional Identity Scale (TPIS), designed

and validated by Kao and Lin (2015), includes 22 items rated on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree” to measure teacher identity by six factors: *self-expectation* (SE, items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) which means commitment to and evaluation of their job; *teachers’ duties* (TD, items 6, 7, 8) which is related to responsibilities toward students, curriculum content, and society; *external influential factors* (EIF, items 9, 10, 11,12) which refers to perceptions of social interactions and school policy; *Pedagogy* (PE, items 13, 14, 15) which is related to students’ behavioral education and relationships with students; *instructional skill and knowledge* (SK, items 16, 17, 18, 19) which is about subject knowledge and approaches for delivering curriculum; and *Teachers’ citizenship behavior* (CB, items 20, 21, 22) which refers to devotion of additional efforts in their work and profession. Namaziandost et al. (2024) and Derakhshan et al. (2020) had already supported the construct validity and reliability of this scale. Additionally, content validity was confirmed through expert review by three psychology experts. Furthermore, the pilot study revealed an acceptable internal consistency reliability for the TPIS as overall Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.78$ , and also acceptable values for SE ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ), TD ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ), EIF ( $\alpha = 0.72$ ), PE ( $\alpha = 0.75$ ), SK ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ), and CB ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ) individually.

### 3.2.4 Teacher Job Performance Scale

In the present study Teacher Job Performance Scale (TJPS), designed by Amin et al. (2013), was employed to evaluate TJP. It contains 25 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “Never” to 5 “Always”. TJPS assesses teachers’ job performance through four factors: *teaching skills* (TS, items 1-7); *management skills* (MS, items 8-12); *discipline and regularity* (D&R, items 13-18); and *interpersonal relations* (IR, items 19-25).

The construct validity and reliability of this questionnaire was supported by Raju and Ramesh (2024) and Mugizi and Amwine (2020). In this study, content validity of TJPF was further established through expert consultation with three professionals in educational psychology. Then, overall Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for TJPF was piloted as  $\alpha = 0.89$ , and the individual factors as  $\alpha = 0.81$  for TS,  $\alpha = 0.89$  for MS,  $\alpha = 0.92$  for D&R, and  $\alpha = 0.79$  for IR to confirm its internal consistency reliability.

### 3.3 Design and Procedures

This correlational and cross-sectional quantitative survey included TSE and TSR as predictors, TPI as a mediating variable, and TJP as an outcome variable.

After confirming the validity and reliability of the four questionnaires in the pilot study on similar and small sample size (10 EFL teachers), data collection began in February 2025. In order to recruit participants, email addresses or WhatsApp numbers of EFL teachers from the Islamic Azad Universities in East Azerbaijan, West Azerbaijan, and Ardebil provinces were obtained from the responsible administrative offices. Each potential participant was individually sent a consent letter via email or WhatsApp to invite them to take part in this research project and to fill out the attached questionnaires. To

ensure ethical considerations, the participants were clearly informed about the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, the anonymity of data collection, and the research purpose and objectives.

Out of 178 sent emails, 152 participants sent back the filled-out questionnaires. After eliminating the invalid or suspiciously answered questionnaires, the raw data was entered into and the software SPSS-20 and Smart-PLS-3 for analysis.

### 3.4 Data analysis

In this study, the data collected by means of questionnaires was quantitatively analyzed to generate descriptive statistics using SPSS 20 software, followed by the correlation analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) through Smart-PLS-3 package. Among two types of SEM, that is Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), PLS-SEM was more appropriate to be utilized in this study because of not requiring large sample-size and data normality, and more importantly, its prediction-oriented approach which corresponds with the exploratory nature of this study (Hair et al., 2017, 2019).

Thus, a higher-order PLS-SEM was utilized to test the hypothetical model by employing the measurement model and the structural model. The purpose of the measurement model was to confirm the factor structure by measuring the relationships between the higher-order latent variables (i.e., TSE, TSR, TPI, & TJP) and the lower-order latent variables (e.g., EIS, ECM, etc. ), as well as between lower-order latent variables and their observed indicators, and verify the reliability and validity of the measurements through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). This process included examining the indicator loadings, assessing the composite reliability, examining the convergent validity of each construct by the average variance extracted (AVE), and evaluating the discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). Once the construct measures in the measurement model were confirmed, the higher-order structural model was applied to evaluate the model’s predictive power to test the hypothetical relationships between the latent variables. In a higher-order model, the association between a higher-order latent variables (i.e., TSE, TSR, TPI, & TJP) were assessed (Henseler et al., 2012) since the relationships between lower-order latent variables were beyond the concerns of this research.

Next, in order to test the mediating role of TPI, the significance of the indirect paths between TSE and TJP, and between TSR and TJP were tested by bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. The mediation of the bootstrapped indirect path with a p value of less than 0.05 was considered to be significant. Then, the goodness-of-fit (GOF) was used to assess the predictive power of the measurement model. GOF values ranging between 0 and 1 (values of 0.10, 0.25 and 0.36 are small, medium, & large, respectively) indicate the global validation of the path model (Henseler et al., 2012). Finally, Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to further support the relationships between the constructs.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of higher-order latent variables, that is, TSE, TSR, TPI, and TJP. Since the investigation of the lower-order latent variables was beyond the concern of this study, the overall measures for each higher-order construct were provided. This approach allowed us to focus on the broader aspects of the model rather than focusing on the more specific lower-order variables.

### 4.2 Measurement Model Evaluation Results

The results of CFA and measurement model evaluation demonstrated that all indicators obtained a factor loading value of more than 0.7, and the t-values are greater than 1.96 (Figure 2). Furthermore, the composite reliability and convergent validity (AVE) values were supported: composite reliability exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 for all constructs (TSE = 0.90, TSR = 0.92, TPI = 0.90, TJP = 0.93), and AVE values were acceptable (TSE = 0.62, TSR = 0.61, TPI = 0.60, TJP = 0.61).

In order to ensure that each of the higher-order latent variables, within the measurement model, are distinct from the others, the discriminate validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 2).

According to the Table 2, all of the diagonal values ( $\sqrt{AVE}$ )

are high than the inter-construct correlations in the same row and column, indicating that each construct shares more variance with its indicators than any other construct, confirming discriminate validity. Thus, CFA resulted in an acceptable outcome for the measurement model evaluation.

### 4.3 Structural Model Evaluation Results

To address the first research question, the structural model evaluated the higher-order latent variables' mutual relationships (Table 3).

According to the Table 3, p-values of the paths between TSE and TJP ( $\beta = 0.15 < 0.3$ ,  $t = 1.67$ ) and TSR and TJP ( $\beta = 0.12 < 0.3$ ,  $t = 1.45 < 1.96$ ) were not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, TSE and TPI ( $\beta = 0.48 > 0.3$ ,  $t = 6.21 > 1.96$ ), TSR and TPI ( $\beta = 0.41 > 0.3$ ,  $t = 5.35 > 1.96$ ), and TPI and TJP ( $\beta = 0.54 > 0.3$ ,  $t = 6.92 > 1.96$ ) revealed significant relationships ( $p < 0.05$ ). Figure 2 depicts the overall measurement and structural.

### 4.4 Assessing the Mediating Role of Professional Identity

To address the second research question and to test the indirect relationship between TSE and TJP, as well as between TSR and TJP by the mediating role of the TPI, a bootstrapping procedure was applied (Table 4).

As shown in Table 4, both mediation paths—TSE  $\rightarrow$  TPI  $\rightarrow$  TJP and TSR  $\rightarrow$  TPI  $\rightarrow$  TJP—were found to be significant, with p-values less than 0.001. Furthermore,

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Higher-Order Latent Variables

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Items	N
TSE	1.65	4.90	3.75	0.70	-0.50	0.30	24	152
TSR	1.50	5.00	3.60	0.80	0.25	0.40	41	152
TPI	1.80	4.95	3.85	0.68	-0.40	0.50	22	152
TJP	1.70	4.85	3.70	0.65	0.15	0.35	14	152

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Analysis for Discriminant Validity Assessment

Constructs	TSE	TSR	TPI	TJP
TSE	0.79			
TSR	0.58	0.78		
TPI	0.63	0.60	0.77	
TJP	0.56	0.53	0.65	0.78

Table 3. Structural Higher-Order Model Results

Paths	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	T-Statistics	P-Value
TSE $\rightarrow$ TJP	0.15	1.67	0.096
TSR $\rightarrow$ TJP	0.12	1.45	0.148
TSE $\rightarrow$ TPI	0.48	6.21	0.000
TSR $\rightarrow$ TPI	0.41	5.38	0.003
TPI $\rightarrow$ TJP	0.54	6.92	0.005

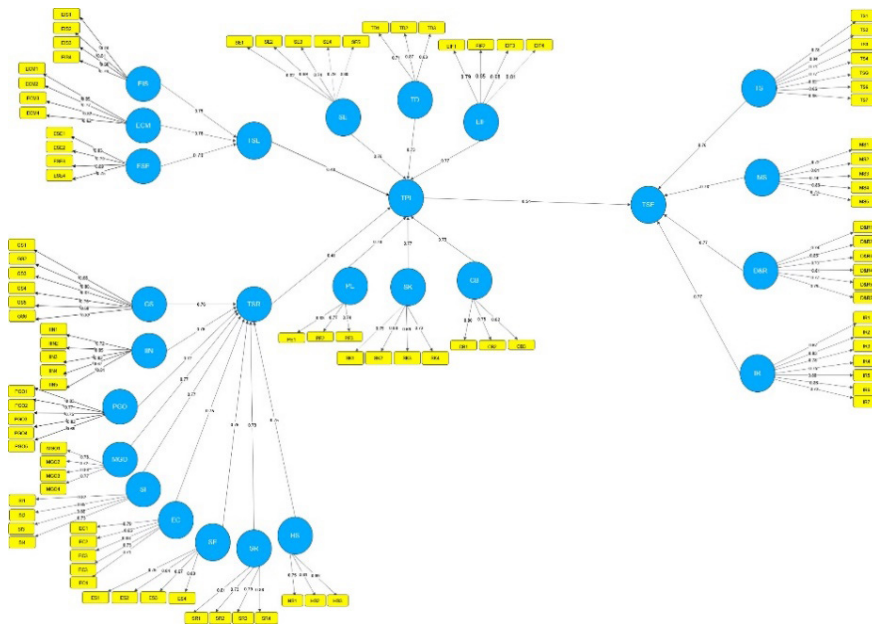


Figure 2. The Measurement and Structural Model Containing Factor Loadings and Path Coefficients

Table 4. Results for Checking the Mediating Role of TPI

Path	Indirect Effect ( $\beta$ )	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value
TSE $\rightarrow$ TPI $\rightarrow$ TJP	0.26	0.05	4.80	<0.001
TSR $\rightarrow$ TPI $\rightarrow$ TJP	0.22	0.05	4.22	<0.001

Table 5. Goodness-of-fit Index for the Model

Construct	AVE (Communality)	R Square	R Square Adjusted
TSE	0.623	--	--
TSR	0.612	--	--
TPI	0.600	0.587	0.582
TJP	0.610	0.764	0.761
AVE $\times$ R <sup>2</sup>	0.543		
GOF = $\sqrt{(AVE \times R^2)}$	0.737		

Table 6. Spearman Correlation Analysis Between the Constructs

Variable	TSE	TSR	TPI	TJP
TSE	1.00	0.50 <sup>a</sup>	0.48 <sup>a</sup>	0.15
		p = 0.002	p = 0.003	p = 0.096
TSR	0.50 <sup>a</sup>	1.00	0.41 <sup>a</sup>	0.12
	p = 0.002		p = 0.005	p = 0.148
TPI	0.48 <sup>a</sup>	0.41 <sup>a</sup>	1.00	0.54 <sup>a</sup>
	p = 0.003	p = 0.005		p = 0.005
TJP	0.15	0.12	0.54 <sup>a</sup>	1.00
	p = 0.096	p = 0.148	p = 0.005	

Note:  $\rho$  (Spearman's rho) values are shown. <sup>a</sup> indicates correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 represents the GOF index for the model. According to Table 5, the GOF index of 0.737 implied a high predictive power of the model. Moreover, the values of R<sup>2</sup> show that the model accounts for 58.7% of the variance in TPI and 76.4% of the variance in TJP. Thus, it exhibits a strong predictive power. Finally, the Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to further check the relationships between the constructs (Table 6).

As shown in Table 6, the Spearman correlation analysis supported the revealed relationships between the constructs.

### 5. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the predictive power of EFL teachers' psychological characteristics, that is TSE and TSR, on their job performance, mediated by the role of TPI. Results of the structural model were used to test the hypotheses. Accordingly, the first and second research hypotheses were rejected since TSE and TSR were not significant predictors of TJP. However, the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh research hypotheses were confirmed supporting the significant prediction power of TSE and TSR on TPI, the significant role of TPI on TJP, and the significant mediating role of TPI in the relationship between TSE and TJP, as well as between TSR and TJP (Figure 2). These results are further discussed as follows.

#### 5.1 Teacher Self-Efficacy → Teacher Job Performance

The results of SEM revealed that TSE did not predict TJP. This finding, rejecting the first research hypothesis, can be justified by the belief that while TSE is an effective factor on many education-related issues like teacher satisfaction (e.g., Mossafaie et al., 2024), students' achievement (e.g., Arias-Pastor et al., 2024), and teacher's psychological well-being (e.g., Demir, 2021), its direct predictive role in TJP, particularly in the Iranian EFL context, seems to be overshadowed by some environmental factors. For example, in the Iranian EFL university system, due to the rigid curricula imposed by the policymakers, large classroom sizes, and summative assessment-oriented educational system (Rahimi & Nabilou, 2011), EFL teachers are not usually able to provide learners with adequate exposure to authentic and communicative materials. These structural constraints might also impair their autonomy and confidence to design innovative plans, thereby potentially affecting their job performance. Hence, even teachers

with high levels of self-efficacy cannot overcome these contextual destructive factors. Thus, it can be suggested that self-efficacy of teachers is a context-dependent factor rather than being a definite determinant predictor in Iranian EFL context. Furthermore, it is assumed that the link between TSE and TJP might be mediated by other environmental support or professional attributes, as Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) asserted.

Overall, this result conflicted with what Soodmand Afshar and Moradifar (2021) found about the direct positive link between TSE and TJP in Iranian EFL context, as well as what others (e.g., Hoang, 2018; Klassen & Tze, 2014; Mossafaie et al., 2024; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) reported about the predictive power of TSE on teaching effectiveness, in general. However, this finding appears to support Kennedy's (2010) warning about the fundamental attribution error in social psychology and the common tendency to highlight teachers' personal and psychological characteristics and underestimate the situational factors. Due to the paucity of research on the relationship between TSE and TJP, as Klassen et al. (2011) noted, a detailed comparison with previous findings cannot be possible.

#### 5.2 Teacher Self-Regulation → Teacher Job Performance

Regarding the role of TSR in TJP, the results of SEM revealed a non-significant relationship in the Iranian EFL context, thereby the second research hypothesis was rejected. This finding can be explained referring to some interrelated contextual issues. In fact, while TJP has been reported as an effective factor for features like teacher resilience (e.g., Xie, 2021), professional well-being (e.g., Teng & Zhang, 2022), and job satisfaction (Brackett et al., 2010), its effect seems to be weakened by some demotivating factors such as persistent psychological, pedagogical, and cultural pressures. For example, the education system at Iranian universities is not only associated with a heavy workload within a prescribed curriculum, but also lacks adequate institutional, financial, and social support. Thus, when overwhelmed by such emotional and professional demands, which are out of their control, EFL teachers may not be able to apply their self-regulatory strategies efficiently. Subsequently, even teachers with high degrees of self-regulation can potentially be negatively

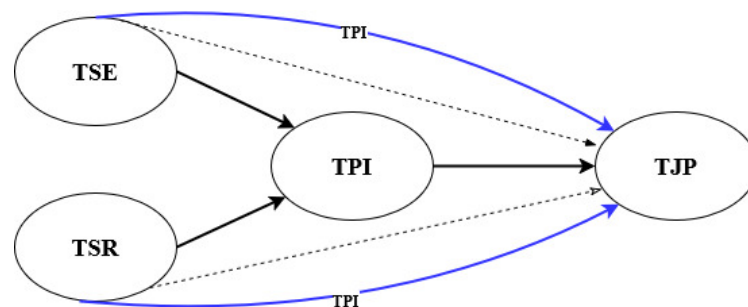


Figure 2. Final Higher-Order Model Depicting Relationships Among the Teacher's Psychological Variables and Job Performance

Note: —→ Significant Direct Relationship, .....\* Non-significant Direct Relationship, —→ Significant Mediated Relationship

affected in terms of their psychological well-being and job performance. Therefore, the study can extend the theoretical understanding of the role of TSR in teaching, by asserting that its effect on the job performance of teachers is not straightforward.

This result is partially consistent with Zarei and Hatami's (2012) study that did not find a relationship between TSR and TJP in teaching vocabulary and reading skills in Iranian EFL context. Moreover, supporting Kennedy's (2010) reports, the result revealed that teaching performance and subsequent outcomes appears to be influenced not only by within-teacher factors, but also by the specific challenges of the teaching context. However, the result is in contrast with what Kamyabi Gol and Royaei (2013) reported about a significant correlation between TSR and TJP in the Iranian non-university EFL context. Thus, it can be suggested that TSR, like TSE, might be highly context-dependent, and that the Iranian university system may play a psychologically and professionally demanding role.

### 5.3 Teacher Self-Efficacy → Teacher Professional Identity

Confirming the third research hypothesis, results showed a significant link between TSE and TPI in Iranian EFL context. It seems that TSE, although not directly leading to TJP, may create a sense of professional identity for EFL teachers. Since both TSE and TPI are psychological constructs, they appear to be closely related to each other (Zhang et al., 2021), that is, teachers of high self-efficacy who believe in their abilities and pedagogical functions may perceive themselves as sufficiently competent to develop high levels of professional identity. In other words, TSE can potentially enhance a sense of belonging or commitment to teaching profession.

This result is in line with the previous literature conducted in Iranian EFL context (Safari et al., 2020; Soodmand Afshar & Hashemi Yar, 2019), China (Liao et al., 2024; Sun & Yin, 2025; Wati et al., 2024), and India (Muhammed Amanulla & Aruna, 2014), supporting a direct link between TSE and TPI. Further, finding no contradictory research findings can enhance the credibility of this link.

### 5.4 Teacher Self-Regulation → Teacher Professional Identity

Confirming the fourth research hypothesis, the results indicated a significant relationship between TSR and TPI in Iranian EFL context. Accordingly, although TSR did not directly lead to TJP, it correlated with TPI. This result can be justified by pointing to the psychologically interrelated nature of the two constructs (Chen et al., 2020). Thus, as self-regulation helps teachers control their thoughts and emotions, this quality might make them feel valuable enough to perceive themselves as part of the teaching profession community.

This result can partly support the findings of Namaziandost et al. (2024) who reported that teacher emotion regulation can predict TPI. Moreover, the effect of TPI on TSR strategies was reported by Chen et al.

(2020) and Derakhshan et al. (2020), emphasizing the link between these two constructs. However, since to our knowledge the role of TSR in TPI has not been previously examined, no previous research was found supporting or rejecting this result.

### 5.5 Teacher Professional Identity → Teacher Job Performance

Supporting the fifth research hypothesis, the results of SEM found a significant role of TPI in TJP in Iranian EFL context. Thus, teachers who perceive themselves as valued and competent members of the teaching profession may develop a sense of identity in their profession. This emerging professional identity is likely to make them adopt higher standards for themselves, potentially enhancing their enthusiasm and perseverance, all of which can result in their job performance enhancement.

This result appears to correspond to the claims of Delima (2015), Derakhshan et al. (2020), Richter et al. (2021), and Sudario (2024), who identified significant correlations between TPI and TJP. However, this finding partly contrasts with the findings of Novozhenina and López Pinzón (2018) and Lu et al. (2017) who found no clear impact of professional development on pedagogical practices.

### 5.6 Teacher Self-Efficacy → Teacher Professional Identity → Teacher Job Performance

Confirming the sixth research hypothesis, the mediating role of TPI in the relationship between TSE and TJP was supported in the Iranian EFL context. Although TSE did not directly lead to TJP, with the mediation of TPI it could significantly correlate with TJP. That is, the indirect path suggests that TSE can strengthen TPI, and thereby through this enhancement, can potentially lead to better TJP.

It can be suggested that simply having high self-efficacy and believing in oneself may not be enough for teachers to improve job performance, because in the Iranian EFL context, external constraints might prevent the internal feature of TSE from being practically manifested into TJP. Rather, this sense of confidence can develop and reinforce their professional identity, through which they might feel competent and motivated enough to upgrade their job performance. Thus, TPI can potentially be considered as a bridge that integrates TSE with TJP.

Thus, this result appears to be in line with socio-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) according to which self-efficacy can affect behavior through cognitive and affective processes. Accordingly, this study can introduce TPI as a cognitive-affective mechanism that transfers the effect of TSE to TJP.

Since the mediating role of TPI in the relationship between TSE and TJP has not been explored previously, this appears to be the first study reporting this path in the Iranian EFL context with its particular environmental and institutional constraints.

### 5.7 Teacher Self-Regulation → Teacher Professional Identity → Teacher Job Performance

Regarding the mediating role of TPI in the relationship

between TSR and TPI, confirming the seventh research hypothesis, the result revealed significant value in the Iranian EFL context. Although TSR did not show a direct significant relationship with TJP, the study suggests that the path of TSR and TJP can be channeled through TPI, which may strengthen this relationship.

According to the identity-based motivation model (Oyserman & Destin, 2010), a person can use self-regulatory behaviors efficiently only when these behaviors are congruent with his/her self-conceived identity. Thus, in line with this result, possessing even high self-regulation alone may not equip teachers to overcome various challenges prevalent in Iranian EFL teachers. However, when teachers' self-regulatory strategies integrate with TPI, it may become more purposeful and ultimately can influence their job performance.

## 6. CONCLUSION, PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The current study examined the way TSE and TSR correlated with TJP, mediated by TPI in the Iranian EFL context. The results of the PLS-SEM revealed that TSE and TSR psychological constructs do not individually have a significant relationship with TJP. However, when mediated by TPI, both of them can significantly correlate with TJP. Thus, the novelty of this research lies in the conclusion that TPI can act as a catalyst that enables teachers to reinforce their self-efficacy and self-regulation behaviors. Furthermore, in accordance with Kennedy (2010), we can also suggest that while the relationship between teachers' psychological characteristics and teaching effectiveness can provide valuable pedagogical insights, we should not underestimate the situational factors that might outperform the internal capacities, especially in EFL contexts.

Practically, the results might inspire the educational policymakers at the university level to emphasize the importance of TPI development in the EFL context. Since identity is a dynamic concept which is constructed rather than being fixed (Beijaard et al., 2004), the implementation of reflective or collaborative TPI development programs or workshops among Iranian EFL teachers seems to be crucial. In addition, by becoming aware of their self-efficacy and self-regulation, EFL teachers can consciously use these traits to set higher goals, handle tough challenges, develop their professional identity, and improve their pedagogical effectiveness.

For further research, it is suggested to investigate the underlying mechanisms of this mediation by qualitative analysis of the teachers' narratives and experiences. Longitudinal studies can also measure the effect of TPI development over time on the relationship between TSE, TSR and TJP. In addition, while purposive sampling restricts generalizability of the results within the specific educational context, comparative studies can be carried out in different cultural and educational contexts to increase the generalizability of these findings.

### Authors' contributions

All authors have contributed equally to prepare the paper.

### Availability of data and materials

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

### Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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