



Delving into the Social and Emotional Dimensions of EFL Teachers: Collegiality, Identity, and Emo-Educational Divorce

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Abstract

Given the pivotal role that social and psychological factors play in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, the present study focused on exploring the relationship among collegiality, identity, and emo-educational divorce. However, the nature of this relationship, i.e., the direction and level of this connection have not been explored, yet. To address this need, a total of 227 Iranian English language teachers of universities, schools, and language institutes filled out collegiality scale along with identity, and emo-educational divorce questionnaires. Then, analyses indicated that emo-educational divorce was negatively correlated with teacher identity and teacher collegiality, whereas identity and collegiality were positively correlated; moreover, the subconstructs of emo-educational divorce showed different predictive behaviors with regard to teacher collegiality and teacher identity. Finally, the findings were discussed and implications were reviewed to pay close attention to the role of the combination of social and psychological elements in EFL teaching contexts.

Keywords: Collegiality, Identity, Emo-educational Divorce, EFL Teachers, Social and Psychological Factors

The emotional states and experiences of teachers play a critical role in teachers' sustainability and effectiveness by affecting teachers' collegiality bonds (Chen & Rong, 2023). Prior research in this domain (e.g., Dassa & Derose, 2017; Chen & Rong, 2023) indicates that negative emotional states in the classroom, e.g., emo-educational divorce in case of our study, make teachers unwilling to engage in peer collaboration needed for professional development and teacher effectiveness. In fact, emotions experienced by teachers do not simply reflect their reactions to different contextual stimuli, rather, they may be shaped by teachers' identity profiles (Goetze, 2023), and the practicum experiences may be shaped by their professional identities (Dassa & Derose, 2017).

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While teachers' pedagogical knowledge and the curriculum used in educational context play a major role, teachers' emotional investment (i.e. lack thereof) and their professional identity is essential to teachers' engagement, professional development, and even their well-being, mainly by influencing teachers' collaborative intentions ([Schutz & Lee, 2014](#); [van der Merwe & Klinck, 2025](#)). Importantly, it should be noted that the relationship between teachers' emotional experience, identity, and collegiality are not linear, rather they are interdependent in a mutual manner, suggesting that the chain of influence may be a two-way route ([Li, 2023](#)). According to [Li \(2023\)](#), although teachers' identity may influence their emotional states and collegiality, it is also possible to imagine the reverse of this pathway since identity is not static, but is dynamically negotiated and renegotiated through teachers' agency which is also contingent on the situational demands and contextual requirement ([Norton, 2013](#)).

As a case in point, [Norton \(2013\)](#) demonstrated that if teachers' "imagined communities" which reflects their professional identity do not align with realities of their teaching contexts, it may lead to emotional dissonance and disengagement, which in turn may negatively affect their collegiality bonds. For instance, [Shakhsi Dastgahian and Scull \(2022\)](#) found that L2 teachers in their study rejected the new components of the mandated curriculum like communicative teaching practices because they found them in clash with their traditional identity perceptions as effective teachers of grammar and literacy. In their view, this conflict between the identity and the mandated curriculum is the genesis of internal conflict that can ultimately lead to emotional and psychological disengagement. This is consistent with what Pishghadam et al. called "*emo-educational divorce*" (2022), conceptualized as "the loss of emotional investment in teaching or a particular course" (p. 29198).

According to [Pishghadam et al. \(2022\)](#), this feeling of emotional divorce in the teaching profession of teachers emerges when they face specific localized issues and challenges (e.g. the mandated curriculum that prescribes CLT-based approach). In fact, this emo-educational divorce stems from a kind of identity crisis experienced by teachers who feel a conflict between their professional identity and some contextual demands (e.g. a new mandated curriculum, dealing with some problems with students, or problems with technology), ultimately leading to disengagement from their students, peers, and teaching context. However, it should be noted that the concept of emo-educational divorce, in contrast to burn-out, suggests a more localized and reversible emotional experience, suggesting that emo-educational divorce is not the endpoint, but its consistent occurrence can lead to teacher burn-out (Pishghadam et al., 2022).

Although previous research indicated that aspects of teacher professional identity may affect collegiality (e.g., [Murray, 2020](#); [Kafi & Tabatabaee Farani, 2025](#); [Tran, 2022](#); [Ahmadi, 2022](#)) and how emotional states may influence collegiality (e.g., [Hashemi et al., 2024](#); [Chen, 2020](#); [Han et al., 2023](#)), they did not consider the potential mediating role of emo-educational divorce in this process. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap by highlighting the need to find the inter-relationship between social and emotional aspects of EFL classes. In fact, the

important question remains how and in what ways teachers' identity might be related to collegiality.

Given the extant literature on teacher identity focusing on identity crisis arising from the internal conflict teachers experience, we hypothesize that emo-educational divorce might be the mechanism through which aspects of language teacher identity can affect their collegial bonds ([Zhang & Xu, 2025](#)). Since educational outcome and the success of a language program is largely dependent on language teachers' professional development and their well-being ([Fan & Wang, 2022](#); [Cardoso-Pulido et al., 2022](#)), it is necessary to explore the factors or a network of interrelated factors that may influence teachers' professional development.

On the one hand, the state of emo-educational divorce can leave a corrosive impact on collegiality, which is considered as reciprocal process of professional experience and expertise for problem-solving purposes, and for creating a healthy professional community ([Grünberg & Armellini, 2004](#)). On the other hand, as was evidenced in prior research on teacher identity ([Dassa & Derose, 2017](#)), identity crisis or issues connected to teachers professional identity can lead to emotional disturbances, thus creating a vicious cycle: identity threats lead to emotional divorce, which fractures collegiality, leaving the teacher isolated and without the very social support needed to repair their identity and re-engage.

Drawing on some insights from several theoretical views involving [Norton's \(2013\)](#) "investment" and "imagined communities", [Li's \(2023\)](#) model of identity, agency, and positioning, and [Pishghadam et al.'s \(2022\)](#) empirical construct of emo-educational divorce, this study, therefore, aims at obtaining an integrative understanding of how a chain of factors including teacher identity, emo-educational divorce, and collegiality might be interrelated in a single framework. By empirically testing this model with a sample of Iranian language teachers, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how internal psychological states of language teachers involving identity and emotions can shape teachers' external social structures, namely collegiality. The findings of our study can have critical implications for different stakeholders including policymakers, school leaders, and teacher educators, who seek to develop effective interventions, capable of fostering resilient, collaborative, and emotionally healthy teaching communities.

Accordingly, the following research questions were proposed:

1. Are there significant relationships between Iranian EFL teachers' collegiality, identity, and emo-educational divorce?
2. Can EFL teachers' identity and dimensions of emo-educational divorce predict collegiality?
3. Which of the dimensions of emo-educational divorce has a mediating role in the relationship between teachers' collegiality and teachers' identity?

Literature Review

Collegiality in academic contexts

Collegiality is considered as a significant element in creating and developing teacher professionalism, shaping a teaching environment in which teachers feel supported, valued, and connected ([Shah & Abualrob, 2012](#)). In EFL contexts, higher levels of teacher collegiality can be reminiscent of higher levels of teacher's professional participation and getting engaged in the process of problem-solving and exchange of knowledge ([Zonoubi et al., 2017](#)).

Being defined as the process of assimilation through which both personal and congenial visions are encouraged, "collegiality is viewed as attending to the work of others, engaging in intellectual reciprocity, providing timely feedback to colleagues, being open to peer review of teaching and sharing new ideas and teaching materials with colleagues" ([Grünberg & Armellini, 2004, p. 598](#)). The positive atmosphere of collegiality in any workplace enables individuals to find common ground and reach better decisions ([Edwards, 2003](#)).

Therefore, it can be inferred that collegiality is a process not a product and once it is achieved, one can witness a sense of mutual respect, trust and self-evaluation. As [Singh and Manser \(2002\)](#) illustrate, collegiality can be considered as the concept which helps teachers and school managers to share responsibilities through the development of a common purpose. What comes crucial within the concept of collegiality is the sense of involvement that needs to be maintained among teachers to stay committed ([Covey, 1992](#)).

In cases where systematic changes and effective functioning of educational settings are required, an esteemed collegial environment is deemed essential because it clarifies the extent to which teachers are committed to what they do and it, therefore, affects the academic performance of the learners as well. In general, the sense of collegial relations among teachers and faculty members might be a sign of interaction among them causing mutual respect ([Diran & Alshdooh, 2017](#)).

More specifically, collegiality among EFL teachers has been widely studied and proved to play a key role in different aspects, such as, accelerating professional growth, creating collaborative teaching practice environments, and developing teacher identity. For instance, studies have demonstrated that collegial teaching/learning communities can empower teachers to bolster their confidence and self-efficacy ([Shah, 2012](#); [Wang, 2015](#)); also, teachers' collegiality was studied as a mediator between instructional leadership and teachers' self-efficacy ([Chen & Rong, 2023](#)), peer monitoring ([Bell & Thomson, 2016](#); [Nguyen, 2023](#)), and teacher resilience ([Zhu & Li, 2023](#)).

An increasing number of studies among Iranian EFL teachers suggest that collegiality enhances novice teachers' self-efficacy ([Zonoubi et al., 2017](#)), promotes collaborative activities ([Shakhsi Dastgahian & Scull, 2022](#); [Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2022](#)), is linked to teacher professional identity and teacher success ([Kafi & Tabatabaee Farani, 2025](#)), and to distributed leadership in Iranian EFL schools ([Aghaee Motlagh et al., 2024](#)). Moreover, [Askari and](#)

[Tabatabaee-Yazdi \(2023\)](#) developed and validated the EFL Teachers' Collegiality Scale, confirming it as a reliable construct in Iranian EFL context.

It should be noted, however, that development of constructive collegiality is contingent on healthy emotional states experienced by teachers ([Lofgren & Karlsson, 2016](#)). An extensive body of research (e.g., [Chen & Rong, 2023](#); [Chen et al., 2022](#); [Schutz & Lee, 2014](#)) suggests that a secure and stable emotional state, mainly arising from teacher's identity is a prerequisite for cultivating collegiality among teachers. In the case of identity tensions experienced as a result of for example, mismatches between the current understanding of a teachers' identity (who I am as a language teacher), and new contextual demands like a new curriculum, teachers might feel some ongoing negative emotions that lead to emotional dissonance or disconnection, or what [Pishghadam et al. \(2022\)](#) call "emo-educational divorce", finally leading to withdrawal from any collaboration with colleagues in work place. This study, therefore, is an attempt to explore this uncharted domain by examining how a potential emotional divorce caused as an identity crisis might lead to lower levels of collegiality.

By and large, these studies shed light on collegiality as a significant aspect of Iranian EFL professionalism, yet its interaction with teachers' emotional experiences, such as emo-educational divorce, has remained largely unexplored.

Teacher Identity

Studying teacher identity as emerged as a key factor through which teacher collegiality and professionalism can be negotiated as "knowledge of the self is a crucial element in the way teachers construct the nature of their work" ([Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994](#); as cited in [Day et al., 2006](#)). Early conceptualization of identity viewed the "self/identity" as a unified, singular and stable notion that was little under the influence of the social context ([Cooley, 1902](#)), while more research in sociology and social psychology has reconceptualized identity as emerging, dynamic, and socially situated ([Mead, 1934](#)). It can also be created and re-created through social experiences and the particular part each person plays in the society, because individuals tend to create a 'generalized other' through this reflexive process. To explain more, [Bourdieu \(1986\)](#) believed that identity is not fixed and it is the by-product of social interactions which might be shaped and re-shaped in different contexts.

Others (e.g., [Goffman, 1959](#)) went further, discussing the fact that the ability to adapt the 'self' to communicate more effectively in various social processes is an essential element. Therefore, variations in teachers' work, their personal lives and even their effectiveness in different structures require an understanding of teachers' selves/identities ([Day et al., 2006](#)). Thus, a positive sense of identity is crucial in maintaining higher levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, commitment and the basic positive instinct for teaching (Day, 2004). Employing [Bourdieu's \(1986\)](#) ideas, the EFL teachers' identity formation might be regarded under the influence of social relations and cultural variety they experience in their teaching context. In a similar vein, famous scholars such as [Norton \(2013\)](#) and [Barkhuizen \(2017\)](#) proposed

complementary ideas about the EFL teachers' identity. On the one hand, [Norton \(2013\)](#) pictured the EFL teacher identity formation as the result of negotiating their role in the educational context; on the other hand, [Barkhuizen \(2017\)](#) considered this process as connected with the EFL teachers' construction and reconstruction of the professional identity through engaging with their own past, present, and future positions as EFL teachers. [Toohey \(2018\)](#) accentuated [Norton's \(2013\)](#) ideas (fluidity of identity) by investigating the co-construction process of teachers' and learners' identities through classroom interactions. More specifically, linking teachers' social position to their identity, [Pennycook \(2017\)](#) maintained that teachers are not neutral practitioners within the classroom.

Some move further to argue that teachers' personal lives and their personal identities would not matter greatly once the individual teacher steps into the classroom and starts delivering the teaching material ([Helsby, 1999](#)). This is while others strongly claim for the fact that teachers' inability to fully satisfy their consciences leaves them under feelings of guilt, inadequacy and pressure ([Nias, 1989](#)) and this is exactly where the difference lies between the teachers who 'care' to nurture and those who only 'control' to deliver the curriculum.

Collectively, these scholars have indicated that EFL teacher identity is not a fixed feature that cannot be changed but various factors such as social positions and ongoing interaction can help shape it, thereby moving the EFL field beyond mere technical concepts of teaching toward understanding teachers conceptualized as dynamic professionals.

Emo-educational Divorce

The critical role of emotion and emotional wellbeing in affecting teachers' personal and professional lives specifically foreign language teachers have been acknowledged by several scholars (e.g., [Azari Noughabi et al., 2023](#); [Dewaele, 2019](#); [Macintyre et al., 2019](#)). A vast body of research suggests that teachers' emotional state, teachers' identity, and collegiality are interdependent, showing that emotional state can influence both collegiality and teacher identity in a mutual way (e.g., [Azari Noughabi et al., 2023](#); [Chen & Rong, 2023](#); [Chen et al., 2022](#); [Murray, 2020](#); [Schutz & Lee, 2014](#)). Other studies (e.g., Wang et al., 2024; [Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020](#)) consider emotional factors such as burnout and demotivation central to EFL teachers' professional identity and collegial relations among them, highlighting that emotional well-being in language education is not only an individual aspect, but also a communal one.

The burgeoning interest in the role of emotions in teacher education connects with the concept of emotional labor, founded by [Hochschild \(1983\)](#), that describes how workers' emotions are expected to be managed in a professional setting in order to meet the expectations of the work place; the idea was first applied to service professions, then extended to the field of education, where teachers need to exhibit enthusiasm, patience, and empathy, sometimes in contrast with what they feel genuinely. Later, [Benesch \(2017\)](#) applied emotional labor theory within the field of language teaching and EFL/ESL classes, highlighting the regulation of emotions to meet the professional and institutional expectations. Following the same line of

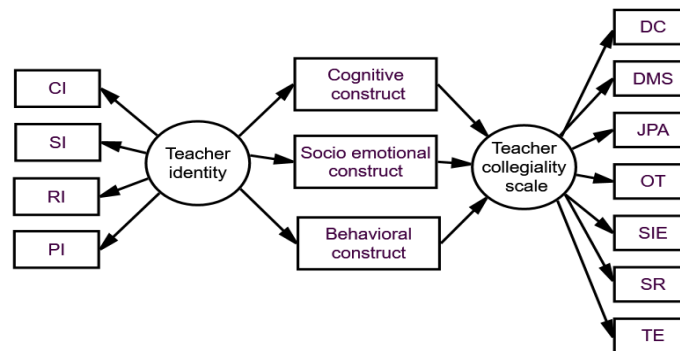
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study, Prior (2015) cast light upon the interrelation between teachers' identities, emotions, and classroom practices, which are shaped through narratives of emotional experiences within EFL/ESL contexts. This theoretical grounding in emotional labor helps examining new constructs such as emo-educational divorce ([Pishghadam et al., 2022](#)), which is the emotional distance or detachment teachers may feel temporarily in relation to specific students, colleagues, or the courses they deliver. Subsequently, taking the concept of emotional divorce into account and focusing on the significance of emotions in the realm of education (e.g., [Chen, 2018](#)), [Pishghadam et al. \(2022\)](#) introduced the concept of emo-educational divorce. The tie refers to the marriage of emotional and educational factors while there exists divorce conditions (disconnection) between them. The teacher might experience a high level of motivation for teaching; however, due to a series of factors such as lack of interest for teaching a specific content, problems in communicating with his/her colleagues and students, working in a specific condition, or lack of necessary materials and equipment in the workplace, s/he may temporarily lose this motivation for teaching; in a nutshell, the teacher might be physically present in the classroom while s/he is emotionally absent, a condition that is reminiscent of emotional divorce ([Pishghadam, 2022](#); [Pishghadam et al., 2022](#)). Emo-educational divorce consists of cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral factors as its main components ([Pishghadam et al., 2022](#)). The cognitive subconstruct targets a teacher who is not attentive about the students in a class and does not take care of their opinions and feedback; the socio-emotional subconstruct refers to lack of teacher's positive relations with students which consequently leads to lack of rapport with the students; in the behavioral subconstruct, teacher's actions demonstrate emotional detachment from a class or a course, i.e., the teacher does not use innovative methods and materials, and s/he may limit the whole opportunities that the students have in asking questions and contributing to the course.

When there is a tension between what they perceive as an effective language teacher and the realities of the classroom, they might feel this divorce which is situation-specific and transitory in contrast to burnout which shows a stable emotional state, teachers might resort to different emotional strategies to overcome such temporary emotional divorces, which is referred to as Emotional Laboring ([Benesch, 2017](#)). Here, there is a potential risk of falling pray to burnout, in sense that in the case of emotional divorce, teachers use the surface acting of emotional laboring to hide those instances of divorce or emotional dissonance, which ultimately would result in behavioral symptoms like unwillingness to have constructive collaboration with colleagues. Therefore, it is important for overall teacher wellbeing and for developing a fruitful professional environment to understand and recognize the risk of such emotional divorces among teachers before they translate into complete burnout or breakdown in functioning. In other words, we propose that conceptualizing and targeting these transitory instances of emotional dissonance (e.g. divorce) is a practical and pro-active way to deal with teacher's withdrawal and lack of collegiality before it is too late. As such, we aim to fill this gap by

examining how identity crisis can affect collegiality through the mediation of emo-educational divorces (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
The Hypothesized Model



Method

Participants and setting

The participants consisted of 239 English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers from Mashhad, Iran. After data screening, 12 cases were identified as multivariate outliers and removed from further analysis, resulting in a final sample of 227 participants. The sample included 85 university instructors (37.4%), 171 English language institute teachers (75.3%), and 61 school teachers (26.9); apparently, some of the participants were active in not just one, but in two or all teaching contexts. The participants constituted 149 female (65.7%) teachers and 78 male (34.3%) teachers whose average age was reported as 31.85 years ($SD= 8.694$) from various fields of English Language Teaching, Translation, and Literature. The teacher participants possessed an educational status of B.A. ($n= 82, 36.1\%$), M.A. ($n=92, 40.5\%$), and Ph.D. ($n=53, 23.3\%$). Moreover, their teaching experiences fell into several categories: 1–5 years ($n = 79, 34.8\%$), 5–10 ($n = 49, 21.6\%$), 10–15 ($n = 50, 22\%$), 15–20 ($n = 25, 11\%$), and more 20 years ($n = 24, 10.6\%$).

Instrumentation

To collect data for investigating the probable effect of teacher identity on collegiality through the mediation of emo-educational divorce, the following questionnaires were applied:

Aspects of Identity Questionnaire (AIQ-IV)

Aspects of Identity Questionnaire (AIQ-IV) designed and validated by Cheek and Briggs (2013) was employed in the study to examine various aspects of EFL teachers' identity. The questionnaire consisted of 45 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not important to my sense of who I am) to 5 (extremely important to my sense of who I am). The instrument probed four general aspects of identity including PI (Personal Identity Orientation), RI (Relational Identity Orientation), SI (Social Identity Orientation) and CI (Collective Identity Orientation). Each of these orientations embraced 7 to 10 items. Based on the collected data,

the reliability index for the whole questionnaire or the composite reliability was calculated as .94 while the reliability index for the aspects ranged from .77 to .89.

Teacher Collegiality Scale (TCS)

From among the available instruments for assessing teacher collegiality, the one designed and validated by Shah (2011) was adopted. The instrument was developed on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). It included seven factors: demonstrating mutual support and trust (DMS, 6 items), observing one another teaching (OT, 3 items), joint planning and assessment (JPA, 6 items), sharing ideas and expertise (SIE, 6 items), teaching each other (TE, 4 items), developing curriculum together (DC, 4 items), and sharing resources (SR, 3 items). The composite reliability calculated for the whole scale, regarding the data collected for this study, was equal to 0.94 while the reliability index for the factors ranged from .72 to .77.

Emo-educational Divorce Questionnaire

To measure EFL teachers' level of emo-educational divorce, a previously validated and reliable questionnaire, designed by [Pishghadam et al. \(2022\)](#), was applied. It contained 12 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). The questionnaire includes three main subcategories of Cognitive (Q1-Q4), socio-emotional (Q5- Q8), and behavioral (Q9-Q12) constructs. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha of the questionnaire was calculated as .85 as an indicator of composite reliability for the Emo-educational Divorce Questionnaire; in addition, the reliability index for the subcategories ranged from .70 to .73.

All detail related to the reliability values calculated for all subscales of questionnaires which were employed in this study were comprehensively reported in results section (Table 2).

Data Collection

To find the answer to research questions, three valid and reliable questionnaires were opted as the means of data collection. They were transformed into online version using Google Forms and the data was collected through various social network platforms such as Telegram or WhatsApp. The data collection lasted for five months demonstrating the meticulousness exerted in the process. The instruments were sent to various groups of EFL teachers within the social network platforms. The groups possessed a minimum number of 1000 members out of whom a total of 239 EFL teachers responded back and finally, the responses of 227 of them were used in the analysis.

Data Analysis

The analysis was carried out using the SPSS software version 27 and SmartPLS software. Utilizing descriptive statistics techniques, the demographic information of the respondents was analyzed. Additionally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a multivariate statistical analysis technique, was used to analyze the structural relationships between the variables.

Results

Examining the variables

Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation for Emo-educational Divorce Questionnaire, Aspects of Identity Questionnaire, and Teacher Collegiality Scale are reported in Table 1. In addition, the normality of data was confirmed through the analysis of Skewness and Kurtosis. As depicted in Table 1, the values of Kurtosis and Skewness fell between -2 and 2 which support the normality of data (Hair et al., 2022). Multivariate outliers were inspected using Mahalanobis distance (D^2). 12 cases (out of 239 participants) were removed because their D^2 values were less than the acceptable range, below: $p < .001$.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Value for Emo-Educational Divorce, Teacher Identity and Teacher Collegiality Scales

Questionnaire Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Kurtosis	Skewness	Reliability value	Number of items	Reliability value after correction
Emo-educational Divorce	1.917	0.616	1.915	1.151	0.854	12	-
Cognitive construct	2.070	0.800	1.027	0.880	0.702	4	-
Socio-emotional construct	1.932	0.691	2.174	1.124	0.735	4	-
Behavioral construct	1.750	0.680	2.147	1.331	0.682	4	0.724
Teacher Identity	3.487	0.577	0.573	-0.022	0.945	45	-
PI (Personal Identity orientation)	3.979	0.654	1.263	-0.906	0.878	10	-
RI (Relational Identity orientation)	3.741	0.681	0.606	-0.470	0.890	10	-
SI (Social Identity orientation)	3.448	0.745	-0.406	-0.016	0.833	7	-
CI (Collective Identity orientation)	2.918	0.748	-0.194	0.097	0.771	8	-
Teacher Collegiality Scale	4.240	0.989	0.049	-0.451	0.941	32	-
DMS (Demonstrating Mutual Support and trust)	4.653	1.086	0.721	-0.627	0.763	6	-
OT (Observing one another Teaching)	3.780	1.042	0.129	-0.066	0.196	3	0.722
JPA (Joint Planning and assessment)	4.142	1.122	-0.294	-0.315	0.764	6	-
SIE (Sharing Idea and Expertise)	4.386	1.082	0.672	-0.704	0.739	6	-
TE (Teaching Each other)	4.319	1.267	-0.168	-0.421	0.767	4	-
DC (Developing Curriculum together)	3.837	1.170	-0.559	-0.174	0.616	4	0.756
SR (Sharing Resources)	4.209	1.432	-0.622	-0.312	0.774	3	-

Then, the Cronbach alpha (α) values for assessing the reliability of the questionnaire items are also reported in Table 1. Accordingly, for all variables except the behavioral subconstruct of emo-educational divorce, and the OT and the DC subscales in Teacher Collegiality Scale, the Cronbach alpha values are greater than 0.7, indicating acceptable reliability of the questions on each questionnaire. In case of the behavioral subconstruct of Emo-Educational Divorce

Questionnaire, by reviewing the items and deleting item number 10, the value increased to .72 which was an acceptable one. Regarding the Teacher Collegiality Scale, for OT subscale, the Cronbach alpha value was lower than expected, and after reviewing the questions and deleting item 13, it increased to .72. Moreover, the DC subscale revealed a low reliability value which improved to .75 after reviewing the items related to this subscale and deleting item number 27. Cronbach alpha values after correction are reported in the last column of Table 1.

Assessment of Model Fit

The primary goal of the following analyses was to assess the appropriateness of the measurement model. To test the research hypotheses, the structural model was fitted, and the relationships were examined. The present measurement model is applied to investigate the correlation between factors, and therefore, it is dedicated to substructures whose variables have not been observed. Hence, in this section, the measurement model is reported only for teacher collegiality and teacher identity which are the latent variables. Simply put, for emo-educational divorce dimensions, which is the observed variable, the measurement model is not fitted. To evaluate the model, the factor loadings of each construct's items were initially checked, followed by an examination of the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) indices. Table 2 reports the factor loadings and significance levels for each dimension of Teacher Collegiality Scale and Teacher Identity Questionnaire as latent variables in the proposed model.

As per the results of the analysis, at a 5% error level, all factor loadings are significant and greater than 0.5 ($P < 0.05$). Consequently, none of the variables were removed from the model. For the final evaluation of the constructs, goodness-of-fit indices were provided. After fitting the measurement model, the validity and reliability indices of the constructs and the appropriateness of the model were examined. The CR index for composite reliability and the AVE index for convergent validity are represented in Table 2. The results illustrate the CR values for all constructs reported to be above 0.7, indicating that the constructs have adequate composite reliability. Plus, AVE is greater than 0.4, and composite reliability is greater than AVE. Thereupon, the questionnaires show appropriate levels of convergent validity and composite reliability.

Table 2

Factor Loadings and Significance Statistics of Research Questionnaires along with Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Indices

Variable	dimension	Factor Loadings	T Statistics	P Values
Teacher collegiality scale	SIE	0.879	49.389	<0.001
	SR	0.866	46.938	<0.001
	TE	0.900	61.305	<0.001
	DC	0.871	58.186	<0.001

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Variable	dimension	Factor Loadings	T Statistics	P Values
	DMS	0.813	29.607	<0.001
	JPA	0.892	57.816	<0.001
	OT	0.832	34.977	<0.001
Teacher identity	PI	0.802	13.913	<0.001
	RI	0.868	20.950	<0.001
	SI	0.795	15.050	<0.001
	CI	0.793	13.312	<0.001
Variable		CR		AVE
Teacher collegiality scale		0.954		0.748
Teacher identity		0.888		0.665

Structural model

For further examination of the model, the model fit indices were pictured in Figure 2.

To unfold, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) index is defined as the difference between the observed correlations and the model's implied correlation matrix (Yamin, 2022). Therefore, it allows for the assessment of the average magnitude of discrepancies between observed and expected correlations as an absolute fit criterion. A value less than 0.1 is considered a good fit. In this model, the SRMR index was calculated to be 0.057, which is less than 0.1. As a result, this index confirmed the fitted model. The normed fit index (NFI) is also acceptable for values above 0.9 and indicates model fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). In this model, the NFI index was 0.894, which is an acceptable value. Overall, the structural model was confirmed, and the related hypotheses were subsequently examined. The model coefficients and their significance levels are reported in Table 3.

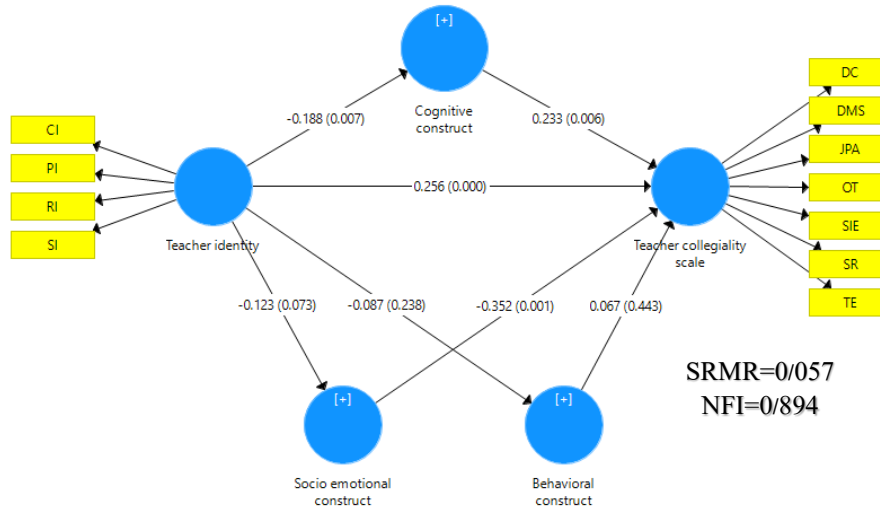
Table 3

Coefficients and Significance Level for the Structural Model

Path	Coefficients(β)	T Statistics	P Values
Behavioral construct -> Teacher collegiality	0.067	0.768	0.443
Cognitive construct -> Teacher collegiality	0.233	2.778	0.006
Socio-emotional construct -> Teacher collegiality	-0.352	3.349	0.001
Teacher identity -> Behavioral construct	-0.087	1.182	0.238
Teacher identity -> Cognitive construct	-0.188	2.699	0.007
Teacher identity -> Socio-emotional construct	-0.123	1.799	0.073
Teacher identity -> Teacher collegiality	0.256	3.748	<0.001

Figure 2

Coefficients (Significance Level) of the Structural Model for Teacher Collegiality Scale



In response to the first research question probing the existence of a significant relationship between EFL teachers’ collegiality, identity, and emo-educational divorce, the correlation coefficients and significance levels are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Correlation (Significance Level) of the Main Research Variables for the Structured Model

Questionnaire	Emo-educational divorce	teacher identity	teacher collegiality
Emo-educational divorce	1		
teacher identity	-0.208(0.002)	1	
teacher collegiality	-0.135(0.043)	0.272(<0.001)	1

Significance level for the correlation coefficients is less than 0.05, indicating that there is a meaningful relationship between the research variables. Based on Table 4 and the correlation between variables, the correlation coefficient between teachers’ identity and emo-educational divorce is -0.208, indicating an inverse relationship between them, i.e., an increase in teachers’ identity is related to a decrease in emo-educational divorce. The correlation coefficient between teachers’ collegiality and emo-educational divorce is -0.135, indicating an inverse relationship between them which means an increase in teachers’ collegiality corresponds to a decrease in emo-educational divorce. The correlation coefficient between teachers’ collegiality and teachers’ identity is 0.272, indicating a direct relationship between them; in other words, when teacher collegiality increases, teacher identity increases, too. In sum, there are significant relationships between EFL teachers’ collegiality, identity, and emo-educational divorce.

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The second research question, which investigates the possibility of predicting collegiality through EFL teacher's identity and dimensions of emo-educational divorce, can be responded based on Table 3 along with the results of the structural model.

Teacher identity directly and significantly predicts teacher collegiality ($p < 0.05$, $\beta = 0.233$). Therefore, the correlation between teacher identity and teacher collegiality is significant, and with an increase in teacher identity, teacher collegiality increases, too. Cognitive subconstruct of emo-educational divorce, directly and significantly, predicts teacher collegiality ($p < 0.05$, $\beta = 0.256$). In other words, with an increase in cognitive subconstruct, teacher collegiality increases. Socio-emotional subconstruct of emo-educational divorce, also, significantly and inversely, predicts teacher collegiality ($p < 0.05$, $\beta = -0.352$). To put it another way, an increase in socio-emotional subconstruct is related to a decrease in teacher collegiality. The relation between behavioral subconstruct of emo-educational divorce and teacher collegiality is not found to be significant ($p > 0.05$). In a nutshell, teacher identity, cognitive, and socio-emotional subconstructs of emo-educational divorce predict teacher collegiality, but behavioral subconstruct cannot predict it.

The third question looks for the dimensions of emo-educational divorce that play a mediating role in the relationship between teacher collegiality and teacher identity. To this end, after examining the relations, the mediating roles of the subscales of emo-educational divorce were investigated. The bootstrap method was employed to examine the mediating role. In this method, if the significance level is less than 0.05, the indirect mediating role is accepted to be effective. Based on this index, the significance or non-significance of the indirect path is presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Bootstrapping Method and Sobel Test for the Indirect Effect of the Structural Model

Path	Coefficients(β)	indirect effect		Sobel Test	
		T Statistics	P Values	Statistics	P Values
Teacher identity -> Behavioral construct -> Teacher collegiality	-0.006	0.498	0.619	-0.644	0.519
Teacher identity -> Cognitive construct -> Teacher collegiality	-0.044	1.861	0.063	-1.833	0.067
Teacher identity -> Socio-emotional construct -> Teacher collegiality	0.043	1.578	0.115	1.598	0.109

As per the results obtained, the significance levels for indirect mediations and Sobel Test are greater than 0.05. Hence, there is no significant relationship between teacher identity and teacher collegiality considering the mediating role of the dimensions of emo-educational divorce. It means the significant relationship which could be witnessed between teacher identity and teacher collegiality would not be observed if emo-educational divorce was added to the equation as a mediating variable.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the interdependent connection between identity and collegiality among Iranian language teachers, and how this relationship might be mediated through different aspects of emo-educational divorce. The results of our study indicated that emo-educational divorce was negatively related to both teacher identity and collegiality, while teacher identity and collegiality were positively related. Furthermore, the cognitive dimension of emo-educational divorce and teacher identity could positively predict collegiality, whereas the socio-emotional dimension remained a negative predictor. The behavioral component did not show any significant relationship with collegiality. Notably, emo-educational divorce did not mediate the relationship between teacher identity and collegiality, suggesting that the negative impact of emo-educational divorce on collegiality is independent of identity. In other words, both identity and emo-educational divorce act in parallel to affect collegiality. The results of this study, considering the simultaneous effect of identity, emo-educational divorce, and collegiality, can shed light on the intricate and interdependent nature of teacher professional development, emotional states of teachers, and their collaboration with their colleagues.

The primary finding of the study is that teacher identity is the cornerstone of collegiality, meaning that for teachers to establish and keep constructive collaboration, they need to have an integrated view of identity, where their core ideas and conception about their identity are consistent with the realities of their teaching context. In such harmonious identity context, teachers are very likely to engage in collegial work. As [Aghaee Motlagh et al. \(2024\)](#) demonstrate, teacher agency as one fundamental aspect of teacher professional development is not a fixed and stable trait but is fundamentally shaped by and expressed through a teacher's professional identity. In other words, a strong and reliable perception of who I am as a teacher enables teachers to have agency, which is pre-condition for constructive collaboration. The facet of results is also supported by [Dassa and Derose \(2017\)](#), who found that when L2 teachers experience a harmonious connection between their idealized self and the realities of their teaching conditions, they tend to be more engaged and collaborative. Given the findings of their study, [Dassa and Derose \(2017\)](#) emphasize that L2 teachers' learning experiences, and practicum experiences during pre-service and in-service programs should be conceptualized as an opportunity for shaping a secure and stable identity, which act as the basis of collegiality. Interestingly, due to the mutual and interdependent nature of this connection ([Aghaee Motlagh et al., 2024](#)), this collegiality can loop back on identity formation, reinforcing each other in a vicious or constructive cycle ([Pishghadam, 2022](#)). As such, collegiality can be viewed as a form of social positioning, in need of a secure identity and agentic capacity to sustain. Likewise, [Shakhsi Dastgahian & Scull \(2022\)](#) found that teachers whose professional identity is validated in the classroom are more likely to engage in what [Grünberg and Armellini \(2004\)](#) call "intellectual reciprocity" and "sharing of new ideas", the two main components of teacher collegiality. Taken together, this facet of our results that identity is positively and directly

related to collegiality emphasizes the fact that a validated and secure professional self is the bedrock upon which collegiality is built.

However, this positive and direct relationship between teacher identity and collegiality may be disrupted by emotional dissonance or what [Pishghadam et al. \(2022\)](#) called emo-educational divorce. The results of current study lend support to the construct of emo-educational divorce since both collegiality and identity are participating teachers in this study were negatively related to this emotional detachment, thus making it an important psychological and social process in L2 teachers' professional life. More specifically, the negative relation between emo-educational divorce and identity and collegiality can be understood by drawing on triune brain model, which identifies three components of emo-educational divorce, involving cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral dimensions. That is, when a teacher faces an identity threat stemming from a mandated reform ([Shakhsi Dastgahian & Scull, 2022](#)) or technological pressure such as adapting his/her instruction to the new AI driven era ([van der Merwe & Klinck, 2025](#)), they tend to experience cognitive dissonance, meaning that the new contextual realities pose a challenge to teacher identity which may ultimately result in socio-emotional detachment such as anxiety and stress, thus diminishing collegiality among teachers. Lack of collegiality is the outcome of withdrawal and feeling isolated and alienated arising from constant emotional laboring ([Schutz & Lee, 2014](#)) that teachers may experience due to constant engagement with surface acting. That is, teachers may play the role of an engaged teachers despite the fact he/she may genuinely feel emotional dissonance. Obviously, this constant emotional laboring involved here can create a corrosive process that prevent collegial bonds ([Schutz & Lee, 2014](#)). On the other hand, the cognitive dissonance positively was related to collegiality. That is, when a teacher is disconnected from a class or a task (e.g., "I am not thinking about these students' success"), s/he may refer to his/her colleagues to receive help, support, or advice, or human connection. This is consistent with [Chen et al.'s \(2022\)](#) observation that student-teachers who experienced anxiety did not show the same reactions; while some teachers chose to withdraw from their teaching context and colleagues, some teachers tried to seek help from their colleagues, depending on how they appraised their professional identity in a given context. More specifically, while some teachers viewed their cognitive disengagement as a personal failure, their counterparts who considered such cognitive dissonance as a situational challenge tended to reach out for help and feedback from their colleagues to overcome that challenge.

Contrary to our expectation that emo-educational divorce act as a mediator between aspects of teacher identity and collegiality, the results of our study indicated that emo-educational divorce did not play this mediation role, suggesting that the link between identity and collegiality is direct and robust in a sense that a strong professional identity can foster collegiality. However, it should be noted that when language teachers feel emo-educational divorce, the odds are higher for such teachers to experience more serious detachment and withdrawal from their teaching context and colleagues. This claim is supported by [Norton's \(2013\)](#) concept of "investment", that account for the fact that L2 teachers who feel emotionally

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detached and divorced in a given context or with a particular group of students or tasks, they would invest less enthusiastically, ultimately leading to disengagement from social and emotional interactions with their students as well as their colleagues. As [Schutz & Lee \(2014\)](#) note, this emotional dissonance can lead teachers to feel their “selves are being split up,” making authentic collaboration nearly impossible.

Taken together, the results of this study suggest that there is a complex and interdependent network of connections between the variables of the study. A strong and stable identity can affect teachers’ appraisal of challenging issues the teachers may face. These appraisals which vary from one teacher to another depending on their identity and identity positioning can shape what kinds of emotions teachers may experience. These emotions, in turn, translate into different pedagogical and professional behaviors such as withdrawal from or engagement with colleagues, the essence of teacher collegiality. So, depending on distinct appraisals and emotions that teachers may go through, they might get involved in a virtuous or vicious cycle, triggered by an identity crisis like the use of AI in his/her teaching (vicious), or a supportive principal that encourages different from professional development (virtuous).

Conclusion

The emotional well-being of language teachers is a primary driving force for teacher sustainability, effectiveness, and engagement. This study highlights the significance of understanding the interdependent connection between teacher professional identity, their emotional engagement in their teaching context (or lack thereof, conceptualized as emo-educational divorce), and their willingness to have constructive collaboration for professional development purposes. Given this, the current study aimed to construct and empirically test a comprehensive model to investigate the relationships between teacher identity, emo-educational divorce, and collegiality among Iranian EFL teachers. Specifically, we aimed to explore whether emo-educational divorce acts as a mediating mechanism through which different dimensions of teacher identity could impact collegial bonds, or whether these variables work in tandem. The results indicated that teacher identity and collegiality are positively related, suggesting that teachers with a more secure and integrated professional identity are more willing to engage in collegial collaboration. As expected, emo-educational divorce was negatively related to both identity and collegiality, confirming its maladaptive function in the teachers’ professional ecosystem. Notably, and contrary to what we initially hypothesized, emo-educational divorce did not mediate the relationship between language teachers’ identity and collegiality. Instead, identity and emo-educational divorce independent from each other affected collegiality. More detailed analysis of the triune dimensions of emo-educational divorce indicated a complicated picture in which the socio-emotional aspect of emo-educational divorce such as anxiety and stress was a significant negative predictor of collegiality, whereas the cognitive dimension like mental disengagement surprisingly was positively related to collegiality, suggesting that cognitive detachment may sometimes make language teachers seek

collegial support. Ultimately, the behavioral dimension involving withdrawal and lack of innovation did not show any significant relationship.

These findings provide some insights into the complex psychological profiles of language teachers by showing that a teacher's sense of self or their perception of who they are as language teachers is a key factor affecting their engagement and collaboration with their colleagues. This indicates that even though emo-educational divorce is harmful, it does not act as a mediator between who a teacher is and how they form collegial bonds with their colleagues. This implies that intervention programs aiming at building a professional identity can directly impact language teachers' willingness to collaborate with their colleagues, despite their possible emotional dissonance. The surprising positive link with cognitive dissonance further shows that when language teachers feel overwhelmed from a cognitive perspective, they might seek their colleagues' support, thus turning a potential risk factor into an opportunity for constructive collaboration. Given this line of argument, several practical implications can be recommended: First, pre-service and in-service programs should include identity development programs on their agenda. For instance, a few tasks with the aim of helping language teachers to negotiate and re-negotiate their professional self in light of contextual realities should be prioritized in the curriculum. Likewise, school principals and educational authorities are recommended not to pay lip service to language teachers' collaboration. They should particularly create an authentic culture of collegiality by encouraging them to openly and non-judgmentally share their ideas and, to conduct peer observation in a non-evaluative, supportive manner. Finally, policy makers should pay due attention to creating a strong foundation for language teachers' professional identity. Despite its insightful findings, this study has limitations. First, its cross-sectional design cannot guarantee and establish causality. As mentioned earlier, the chain of identity, emo-educational divorce, and collegiality can reflect mutual and unpredicted network of connection, suggesting that what we might consider as the outcome variable like collegiality may loop back on identity and teachers' emotional experience. As such, future researchers can utilize more in-depth qualitative research to better explore the intricate relationship between these factors. Second, this study was carried out exclusively with Iranian language teachers, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Future research can help with generalizability issue by examining this chain of relationships among university TEFL students, and in another cultural context. In conclusion, to preserve the vitality and dynamic nature of language teaching pedagogy, due attention must be paid to teachers' professional development by strengthening their identity, their emotional well-being, and their collaborative spirit which can play a supportive role in strengthening teacher identity and emotional well-being.

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