

Gender and Teaching Age as Determinants of Teachers' Professional Identity: Insights from South Korea and Indonesia

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Abstract

The study examines teachers' professional identity by gender and teaching age using an explanatory survey with 196 participants from South Korea and Indonesia. Using a 25-item Likert scale, four dimensions were measured: job satisfaction, work commitment, motivation, and self-efficacy. Multivariate analyses showed no significant overall difference in professional identity between teachers from the two countries. However, South Korean teachers reported lower job satisfaction but higher self-efficacy compared to Indonesian peers. Gender did not influence professional identity overall, though male teachers in both countries tended to have higher job satisfaction than females. No interaction was found between country and gender. Teaching age did not generally affect professional identity, but an interaction effect with country was observed for self-efficacy: South Korean teachers showed a convex pattern across three teaching age categories, whereas Indonesian teachers showed a concave pattern, consistently lower than South Korean counterparts. These findings highlight cross-national differences in components of professional identity and suggest implications for theory and practice in teacher professional development, emphasizing the need to consider cultural and experiential factors in identity formation. This contributes to understanding how personal and contextual variables shape teachers' professional self-concept in varying educational settings.

Keywords: explanatory survey, gender, identity formation, professional identity, teaching age

Abstrak

Penelitian bertujuan menggambarkan kecenderungan identitas profesional guru berdasarkan gender dan lama mengajar. Metode survei eksplanatori digunakan dengan melibatkan partisipan 105 guru Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Samil, Korea Selatan dan 91 guru Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negeri 11 Bandung, Indonesia. Data diungkap dengan 25 item skala Likert lima poin yang mengungkapkan dimensi kepuasan kerja, komitmen kerja, motivasi, dan efikasi diri. Hasil Uji Multivariat menunjukkan identitas profesional guru Korea Selatan tidak berbeda signifikan dengan guru Indonesia. Namun, guru Korea Selatan memiliki kepuasan kerja lebih rendah tetapi efikasi diri lebih tinggi dibandingkan guru Indonesia. Gender tidak mempengaruhi identitas profesional. Namun, kepuasan kerja guru laki-laki di Korea Selatan dan Indonesia cenderung lebih tinggi dari guru perempuan. Tidak ada interaksi antara asal negara dengan gender. Secara keseluruhan, lama mengajar tidak mempengaruhi identitas profesional dan aspeknya. Namun, terdapat interaksi antara asal negara dan tiga kategori lama mengajar dalam efikasi diri, guru Korea Selatan membentuk kurva konveks, dan untuk semua kategori masa kerja, rata-ratanya lebih tinggi dari guru Indonesia, yang membentuk kurva konkaf. Implikasi studi ini terkait dengan fokus pada teori dan praktik pengembangan identitas profesional guru yang berbeda antara negara.

Kata kunci: gender, identitas profesiona, lama mengajar, survei eksplanatori, pembentukan identitas

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INTRODUCTION

Teacher identity is essential because the role of teachers in learning has changed from being just teachers to also facilitators, character developers, and mentors for students in facing increasingly complex global challenges (UNESCO, 2018). The increasingly complex and challenging educational environment, especially in the digital era, requires teachers with a strong identity (Shulman & Shulman, 2017; Asgarzadeh & Saif, 2018; Chen & Mensah, 2018). A strong teacher identity includes technological skills, the ability to adapt to change, the ability to collaborate with colleagues, and a positive attitude towards lifelong learning (Shulman & Shulman, 2017; Asgarzadeh & Saif, 2018). A strong identity is built through the development of professional programs that equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to address global challenges (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Teacher professional identity has become a separate field of research in recent decades (Beijaard et al., 2014). The study of teacher identity has two orientations: social psychology, which gives rise to social identity, and teacher education literature, which gives rise to professional identity (Penington, 2004). The study of teacher professional identity focuses on three aspects: the formation and development of teacher professional identity; its characteristics; and its history (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). The construction of teacher professional identity cannot be separated from the construction of teacher work content and structure, socio-political discourse, and teacher dynamics (Pardal et al., 2015). Identity formation includes the state, political decisions, public discussions, training programs, and media interventions (Lawn, 2001). Country-specific cultural and social values also influence teacher professional identity, so research on teacher professional identity needs to consider the cultural and social context, as the study's results show that teacher identity is not neutral with respect to race, culture, or language. Teaching actions cannot be neutral either (Menard-Warwick, 2008).

Teachers' professional identity is not unique (Beijaard et al., 2004). As members of a profession, teachers share specific knowledge and professional skills and share a common identity. However, they will differ due to personal perspectives on the context and the professional beliefs they hold. Teachers may differ in their levels of motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, or efficacy, so that professional identity attributes cannot apply equally to all teachers. Different perceptions of professional identity indicators will affect the identity profile in actual reality (Burk & Stets, 2009). Teachers' professional identity depends on contextual factors, making it difficult to conduct comparative studies. However, the results of international studies with representative samples are useful for a country to learn about the development of professional identity in other countries (Erdem, 2020; Hanna et al., 2020).

Indonesia and South Korea are two countries with distinct histories and cultures. Although South Korea's Independence Day (August 15, 1945) and Indonesia's (August 17, 1945) are only two days apart, the quality of education in South Korea currently far surpasses that in Indonesia. Data shows that South Korea ranks 2nd among countries with the best education systems in the world, while Indonesia ranks 67th out of 203 countries (Worldtop20.org, 2023). South Korea is known for its highly competitive education system and high academic demands, which puts teachers under pressure that can affect their well-being and professional identity (Kim et al., 2017). In Indonesia, education tends to emphasize an inclusive approach and the development of student character (Riyanto & Syaifuddin, 2019). This reflects the differences in educational philosophy and the ultimate goal of education in both countries. Teachers' professional identity is the primary



foundation for developing the quality of education. Teachers' professional identity plays a significant role in the quality of teaching, professional development, and teachers' long-term careers (Agee, 2004; Korthagen, 2004; Rots et al., 2010).

Teachers with a strong professional identity have high self-confidence, commitment, and motivation in carrying out their duties. Cross-national studies have shown that teachers' professional identity is a key factor in teacher motivation, effectiveness, and retention (Hong, 2010). Teacher identity plays a significant role in the management of educational systems (Lawn, 2001) and is a core component of learning (Penington, 2004; Sachs, 2005) and has a greater impact on teachers than aspects of technology, such as curriculum, school design, or classroom organization (Lawn, 2001). Teachers' professional identity is influenced by various factors and is constructed historically, contextually, and socially (Hamilton, 2013; Liou, 2008). Gender identity is central to teacher identity (Gee, 2000). Initial investigations evaluating the relationship between professional identity dimensions and personal attributes, such as age, gender, and highest level of education, indicate that women report a stronger teacher professional identity than men (Tsukawaki et al., 2023). To date, little research has investigated the dynamics of teacher professional identity by gender (Friesen & Besley, 2013) or the effects of teaching age on professional identity (Canrinus et al., 2011).

The current state of research on teachers' professional identity, particularly in relation to gender and teaching age, reveals a complex and multifaceted landscape (Shen et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). Recent studies confirm that teacher identity is shaped by intersecting personal and professional dimensions, including gender and career stage (Wiltshire, 2024; Groenewald & Arnold, 2025; Suarez & McGrath, 2025; UNESCO, 2025). Studies have highlighted the importance of understanding teacher identity as a dynamic construct influenced by factors such as stress, informal learning contexts, and societal perceptions (Virta, 2022; Beijgaard et al., 2023; Lawrent, 2024; Mantei & Kervin, 2025; Wiltshire, 2025). In South Korea and Indonesia, as in other regions, teacher identity is shaped by both personal and professional experiences, with informal learning (Virta, 2022) and flexible learning spaces (Mantei & Kervin, 2025). playing a significant role in identity construction. Research from Southeast Asia shows that informal learning and reflective practice are central to identity formation among teachers (Lawrent, 2024; Wiltshire, 2024).

However, there is a notable research gap in exploring how gender and age specifically influence this identity formation (Virta, 2022; Wiltshire, 2024; Chen et al., 2025). Despite growing interest, few studies directly examine the intersection of gender and age in shaping teacher identity (Beijgaard et al., 2023; Groenewald & Arnold, 2025). While some studies have examined the broader aspects of teacher identity, such as the impact of stress on micro-identity and the role of informal learning contexts, they often overlook the nuanced effects of gender and age (Virta, 2022; Wiltshire, 2024). Stress and informal learning are well-documented influences, but demographic factors such as gender and age remain underexplored (Beijgaard et al., 2023; Lawrent, 2024; Wiltshire, 2025). Additionally, the literature suggests that teachers' perceptions of their professional value and societal respect significantly affect their motivation and job satisfaction. Yet, these perceptions can vary widely across different cultural and policy contexts, such as those in South Korea and Indonesia (Akiba et al., 2023). Teachers' sense of value and respect is deeply tied to cultural norms and policy environments, influencing motivation and retention (Lawrent, 2024; Suarez & McGrath, 2022; UNESCO, 2025).



The novelty of research in this area could lie in a focused investigation of how gender and age intersect with these broader identity factors, potentially revealing unique challenges and opportunities for teachers in these countries. Emerging scholarship calls for intersectional approaches to teacher identity, especially in culturally diverse settings (Beijaard et al., 2023; Groenewald & Arnold, 2025; UNESCO, 2025). Such research could also examine how these demographic factors shape teachers' responses to educational reforms and their professional development trajectories, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of teacher identity across diverse educational settings (Smith & Rushton, 2022). Studies suggest that demographic variables shape how teachers engage with reforms and professional growth opportunities (Lawrent, 2024; Suarez & McGrath, 2022). This approach would not only fill existing research gaps but also provide policymakers and educators with valuable insights to support teachers' professional growth and well-being in culturally specific contexts. A targeted, culturally sensitive approach to teacher identity research can inform more effective policy and support systems (Groenewald & Arnold, 2025; Lawrent, 2024; Wiltshire, 2025). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the influence of gender and teaching age on the identity of South Korean and Indonesian teachers and to describe the tendencies of teacher professional identity from both countries.

The concept of identity has been studied by many disciplines, such as philosophy (Noonan et al., 2007), sociology (Bernstein & Olsen, 2009), developmental psychology (Bosma & Kunnen, 2008), social psychology (Tajfel & Turner, 1997), and economics (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000). Researchers have reached a consensus that professional identity is a multidimensional concept. Professional identity is not simply who the teacher is in the mind (Kress, 2011). Teacher identity is difficult to articulate, easily misunderstood, and open to interpretation (Olsen, 2008). However, different conceptual frameworks of professional identity share some common elements: they are shaped by various personal and contextual factors that interact dynamically and reciprocally, continuously reshaping identity throughout one's life. Research on professional identity as a process of negotiation, open, interactive, and dynamic, and ongoing reflection on oneself as a teacher in a context where identity is reconstructed (Pillen et al., 2013).

Teachers actively shape and develop their professional identity because, in the poststructuralist view, an identity is not fixed or static, but is continuously constructed and modified (Norton & Toohey, 2011). This dynamic process is not without challenges and requires adapting to multiple perspectives, expectations, and sometimes conflicting roles (Beijaard et al., 2004). Professional identity is not a stable entity; it cannot be interpreted as a fixed or unique substance (Coldron & Smith, 1999). Professional identity is a complex and dynamic "balance" related to the diversity of roles that teachers feel they must "play," encompassing personality, what others expect, and what is allowed to influence them, which will determine teacher identity (Reynolds, 2007; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998).

The study of teacher professional identity is still relatively new in education (Clarke et al., 2012; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). The causal relationships between these constructs have been tested through various studies. For example, self-efficacy is a starting point for increasing job satisfaction, motivation, and professional commitment (Canrinus et al., 2011). This confirms the view that the formation of professional identity is a process of continuous negotiation and renegotiation, involving struggle rather than a smooth, direct development (Zhang & Kim, 2024). Teacher professional identity is the result of the interaction of job satisfaction, occupational commitment, self-efficacy, and



motivation, which can be seen as a construct of professional identity (Day, 2002). The four indicators are essential factors in teachers' personal lives and careers. The study of teacher professional identity should focus on examining a combination of indicators rather than examining them individually. With these considerations in mind, the four-dimensional construct outlined by Day (2002) serves as the primary reference in this study.

METHOD

This study used a survey method, a cross-sectional design, and a group-comparison design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research participants were 105 (Male=68; Female=37) from Samil Technical High School, South Korea, and 91 (Male=39; Female=51) teachers from State Vocational High School 11 Bandung, Indonesia, who were recruited using convenience sampling. The professional identity of teachers was revealed with 25 Likert Scale model statements with 5 points (strongly disagree-strongly agree) utilizing the construct of professional identity of teachers based on Day's (2002), which includes job satisfaction, work commitment, motivation, and self-efficacy. The validity test for each statement was conducted by correlating the score for the statement being tested with each participant's total score.

The correlation technique used was Spearman's Rho. The results of the item validity test showed that out of 25 items tested, all showed a significant item validity coefficient at $p=0.001$. The validity coefficient ranged from 0.054 (item number 16) to 0.732 (item number 20). Meanwhile, the reliability coefficient was calculated using the split-half method, yielding 0.94. To test the effects of country of origin, gender, and teaching age or length of service on teacher professional identity and its aspects, a MANOVA with Roy's Largest Root was used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study's results, presented as follows, showed descriptive statistics on professional identity and its aspects among teachers in South Korea and Indonesia, by gender and teaching age, in Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Professional Identity.

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Professional Identity

Country	Aspects	Gender	Teaching Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Korea Selatan	Motivation	Male	Less than 5 years	36.00	4.427	6
			5-15	37.83	3.171	24
			More than 15 years	37.89	3.985	38
			Total	37.71	3.738	68
		Female	Less than 5 years	37.77	3.244	13
			5-15	39.64	4.081	11
			More than 15 years	38.77	2.920	13
			Total	38.68	3.400	37
		Total	Less than 5 years	37.21	3.630	19
			5-15	38.40	3.525	35
			More than 15 years	38.12	3.734	51
			Total	38.05	3.636	105



Country	Aspects	Gender	Teaching Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
	Commitment	Male	Less than 5 years	19.17	1.329	6
			5-15	21.04	2.216	24
			More than 15 years	20.76	2.551	38
			Total	20.72	2.381	68
		Female	Less than 5 years	20.46	2.470	13
			5-15	22.09	1.221	11
			More than 15 years	21.77	1.589	13
			Total	21.41	1.950	37
		Total	Less than 5 years	20.05	2.223	19
			5-15	21.37	2.001	35
			More than 15 years	21.02	2.371	51
			Total	20.96	2.253	105
	Job Satisfaction	Male	Less than 5 years	16.00	2.366	6
			5-15	14.63	2.163	24
			More than 15 years	15.32	2.372	38
			Total	15.13	2.304	68
		Female	Less than 5 years	14.23	2.088	13
			5-15	14.00	2.191	11
			More than 15 years	15.00	1.291	13
			Total	14.43	1.879	37
		Total	Less than 5 years	14.79	2.275	19
			5-15	14.43	2.160	35
			More than 15 years	15.24	2.141	51
			Total	14.89	2.181	105
	Self-Efficacy	Male	Less than 5 years	27.50	3.782	6
			5-15	29.25	3.247	24
			More than 15 years	29.11	3.517	38
			Total	29.01	3.427	68
		Female	Less than 5 years	27.77	3.767	13
			5-15	32.09	3.590	11
			More than 15 years	29.38	3.477	13
			Total	29.62	3.932	37
		Total	Less than 5 years	27.68	3.667	19
			5-15	30.14	3.566	35
			More than 15 years	29.18	3.474	51
			Total	29.23	3.606	105
	Professional Identity	Male	Less than 5 years	98.67	10.443	6
			5-15	102.75	9.028	24
			More than 15 years	103.08	11.202	38
			Total	102.57	10.341	68
		Female	Less than 5 years	100.23	9.774	13
			5-15	107.82	9.558	11
			More than 15 years	104.92	7.751	13
			Total	104.14	9.334	37



Country	Aspects	Gender	Teaching Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Indonesia	Motivation	Total	Less than 5 years	99.74	9.723	19
			5-15	104.34	9.365	35
			More than 15 years	103.55	10.389	51
			Total	103.12	9.980	105
		Male	Less than 5 years	38.83	3.614	12
			5-15	37.29	4.221	21
			More than 15 years	39.17	3.869	6
			Total	38.05	3.980	39
		Female	Less than 5 years	36.44	3.899	18
			5-15	36.04	6.064	28
			More than 15 years	38.67	1.506	6
			Total	36.48	5.043	52
		Total	Less than 5 years	37.40	3.909	30
			5-15	36.57	5.339	49
			More than 15 years	38.92	2.811	12
			Total	37.15	4.659	91
	Commitment	Male	Less than 5 years	20.75	2.958	12
			5-15	20.29	3.085	21
			More than 15 years	19.67	3.077	6
			Total	20.33	2.985	39
		Female	Less than 5 years	20.56	2.036	18
			5-15	21.75	10.717	28
			More than 15 years	21.17	2.229	6
			Total	21.27	7.936	52
		Total	Less than 5 years	20.63	2.399	30
			5-15	21.12	8.313	49
			More than 15 years	20.42	2.678	12
			Total	20.87	6.299	91
	Job Satisfaction	Male	Less than 5 years	16.58	1.832	12
			5-15	16.33	2.671	21
			More than 15 years	17.17	2.639	6
			Total	16.54	2.393	39
		Female	Less than 5 years	15.89	2.720	18
			5-15	15.07	2.478	28
			More than 15 years	15.67	2.338	6
			Total	15.42	2.531	52
		Total	Less than 5 years	16.17	2.394	30
			5-15	15.61	2.613	49
			More than 15 years	16.42	2.503	12
			Total	15.90	2.521	91
	Self-Efficacy	Male	Less than 5 years	27.58	3.204	12
			5-15	25.90	4.560	21
			More than 15 years	28.17	4.070	6
			Total	26.77	4.126	39



Country	Aspects	Gender	Teaching Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Professional Identity		Female	Less than 5 years	25.83	3.569	18
			5-15	26.57	4.985	28
			More than 15 years	26.83	1.472	6
			Total	26.35	4.214	52
		Total	Less than 5 years	26.53	3.481	30
			5-15	26.29	4.770	49
			More than 15 years	27.50	3.000	12
			Total	26.53	4.159	91
		Male	Less than 5 years	103.75	9.137	12
			5-15	99.81	12.616	21
			More than 15 years	104.17	12.656	6
			Total	101.69	11.544	39
		Female	Less than 5 years	98.72	10.087	18
			5-15	99.43	18.810	28
			More than 15 years	102.33	5.750	6
			Total	99.52	15.021	52
	Total	Less than 5 years	100.73	9.878	30	
		5-15	99.59	16.290	49	
		More than 15 years	103.25	9.421	12	
		Total	100.45	13.612	91	

The professional identity of South Korean teachers had an average of 103.55 (out of a maximum ideal score of 125) and a standard deviation of 10.398. Male teachers had an average professional identity score of 102.57 and a standard deviation of 10.34, while female teachers had an average of 104.14 and a standard deviation of 9.334. The professional identity of Indonesian teachers had an average of 100.45 and a standard deviation of 13.612. Male teachers had an average professional identity score of 101.69 and a standard deviation of 11.544, while female teachers had an average of 99.52 and a standard deviation of 15.021. Using the MANOVA test, the following information was shown in Table 2: tests of Between-Subjects Effects.

Table 2.
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

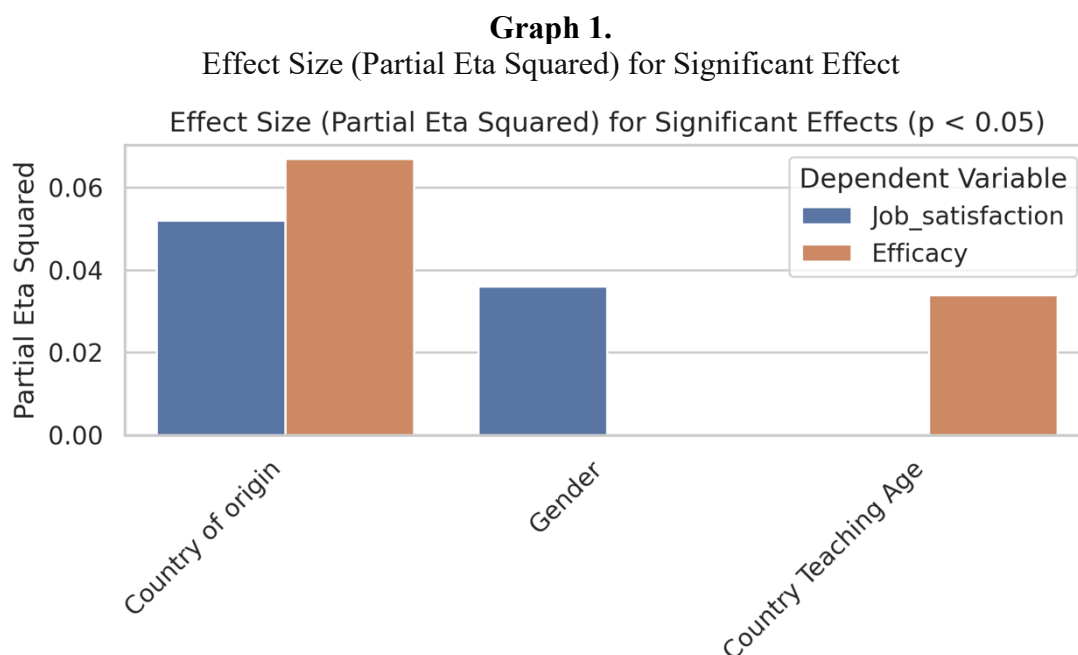
Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Country of origin	Motivation	.122	.727	.001
	Commitment	.055	.814	.000
	Job satisfaction	10.129	.002	.052
	Efficacy	13.166	.000	.067
	Professional identity	.582	.447	.003
Gender	Motivation	.005	.942	.000
	Commitment	1.660	.199	.009
	Job satisfaction	6.777	.010	.036
	Efficacy	.062	.804	.000
	Professional identity	.010	.919	.000



Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Teaching Age	Motivation	1.104	.334	.012
	Commitment	.690	.503	.007
	Job_satisfaction	1.847	.161	.020
	Efficacy	1.622	.200	.017
	Professional_identity	.784	.458	.008
Country Gender	Motivation	2.108	.124	.022
	Commitment	.015	.903	.000
	Job_satisfaction	.099	.753	.001
	Efficacy	2.199	.140	.012
	Professional_identity	1.677	.197	.009
Country Teaching Age	Motivation	2.108	.124	.022
	Commitment	.398	.673	.004
	Job_satisfaction	.045	.956	.000
	Efficacy	3.249	.041	.034
	Professional_identity	1.425	.243	.015
Gander Teaching Age	Motivation	.070	.932	.001
	Commitment	.087	.917	.001
	Job_satisfaction	.064	.938	.001
	Efficacy	1.852	.160	.020
	Professional_identity	.408	.665	.004
Country Gender Teaching Age	Motivation	.279	.757	.003
	Commitment	.162	.850	.002
	Job_satisfaction	.669	.513	.007
	Efficacy	.016	.984	.000
	Professional_identity	.037	.964	.000

The results of the Tests of between-subjects effects indicate that the Professional Identity of South Korean Teachers is not different from that of Indonesian Teachers. Significant differences are observed in job satisfaction ($F=10.129$; $p=0.002$) and self-efficacy ($F=13.166$; $p=0.000$). The job satisfaction of South Korean teachers (average 14.89) is significantly lower than that of Indonesian teachers (average 15.90). Meanwhile, the average teacher self-efficacy in South Korea (29.23) is considerably higher than that in Indonesia (26.52). Gender does not affect professional identity.





However, in terms of Job Satisfaction, the average scores of male teachers in South Korea and Indonesia tend to be higher than those of female teachers. There is no interaction between the country of origin and gender. Overall, the teaching age does not affect professional identity and its aspects. However, there is an interaction between country of origin and teaching age on self-efficacy. The self-efficacy of South Korean teachers with working experience of <5 years, 5-15 years, and >15 years forms a convex curve. For all categories, the teaching age is higher than that of Indonesian teachers, who form a concave curve.

The study found that the professional identity of South Korean teachers was not significantly different from that of Indonesian teachers. Still, in the job satisfaction dimension, South Korean teachers had substantially lower levels than Indonesian teachers, and the average self-efficacy score for South Korean teachers was significantly higher than that for Indonesian teachers. The average job satisfaction dimension of male teachers from both countries tended to be higher than that of female teachers. Gender and teaching age did not affect professional identity, but there was an interaction between country of origin and teaching age on the self-efficacy dimension. The self-efficacy of South Korean teachers who had worked for <5 years, 5-15 years, and >15 years formed a convex curve, whereas Indonesian teachers formed a concave curve.

The differences in the tendencies and trajectories of teachers' professional identity dimensions across both countries further emphasize that professional identity is a complex negotiation between personal and professional dimensions (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). The differences in teachers' professional identity tendencies in South Korea and Indonesia are inevitable because factors such as context, culture, and personal and professional experiences, especially classroom experiences, influence teachers' professional identity. These factors shape how teachers configure their identities, constructing the image of the profession and the roles they play (Sachs, 2001; Desimone, 2009; Karousiou et al., 2019; Cordingley et al., 2019; Kaya & Dikilitaş, 2019; Rodrigues & Mogarro, 2019).

Teachers' professional identity develops through the influence of various factors such as personal identity, emotions, self-image, education and training, environment,



socio-political context, pre-service orientation period to work period, and work and life experiences (Karaolis & Philippou, 2019; Prabjandee, 2019; Yuan & Hsieh, 2010). The variation in professional identity tendencies on the dimensions of teacher satisfaction and self-efficacy from both countries reflects identity as an intersubjective, ongoing, self-interpreting, and context-bound process (Gee, 2000). Individual professional identity is primarily influenced by the socio-cultural environment in which professional identification develops (Gnatyshina et al., 2018). Teachers' professional identity is neither fixed nor enforceable but is negotiated through experience and the meanings it holds. Teaching age influences professional identity (Dobrow & Higgins, 2005; Huberman, 1989), but the context of 'teaching age' is not merely a matter of the accumulation of an arithmetic series of years of work, because what is more decisive is the individual's attitude towards tenure, influencing the perception of professional identity (Yim & Hwang, 2019). Teaching age not only shows how long someone has worked but also includes the experiences, learning, and roles they have played during that period. Teachers' cognitive and affective responses to experience can influence their identity construction (Dang, 2013).

There are differences in the tendency of job satisfaction dimensions by gender, both among teachers in Indonesia and in South Korea. This finding confirms that gender factors play an essential role in shaping teachers' professional identity, both directly and indirectly. Gender identity is understood as a structural component of social identity that builds professional identity. Gender identity is not only correlated with gender role behavior but also with one's professional image (Gnatyshina et al., 2018). Gender personality traits influence the development of socio-cultural and professional identity (Gnatyshina et al., 2018). Relationships with colleagues and collaboration shape women's professional identity, and compliance is often more prominent among women (Živković et al., 2018). Factors that influence a person's professional tendencies and identity are rooted in early life experiences from childhood to adulthood (Tal & Rheingold, 2021). These experiences have a major psychological influence, and gender identity also influences the decision to pursue a lifelong career.

Another factor that influences the formation of professional identity is the internalization of significant figures in a person's life (Simon, 2024). Partially, there are differences in the tendency of self-efficacy dimensions in South Korean and Indonesian teachers based on teaching age. The total amount of teachers' experiences may affect professional identity (Canrinus et al., 2011). The word 'may' is a special note in explaining the identity trajectory of teachers in South Korea and Indonesia, which shows different patterns. The linearity of the relationship between professional identity and total experience has been confirmed in longitudinal research on 136 alumni of the MBA program, which shows an increase in professional identity with length of service (Dobrow & Higgins, 2005). In a more specific period, it shows that teachers with 6-10 years of service have the highest professional identity, while those with more than 16 years of service have the lowest. Teachers with less than 5 years of service have lower professional identity than those with 6-10 years of service, and there is a significant difference in total professional identity between teachers with 6-10 years of service and those with 11-15 years of service (Qi, 2019).

Teacher commitment and self-efficacy are essential components of professional identity and significantly influence teacher performance and student attitudes (Day et al., 2005; Galman, 2009). Teacher self-efficacy is believed to be stable (Bandura, 1982) but can also change through learning experiences (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).



Research shows that after about 15 years of teaching, teachers' professional identity tends to decline. This is due to various challenges teachers have faced over time, such as increased workload, a lack of institutional support, and inconsistent changes in education policies. A study in South Korea found that teachers with >16 years of experience had the lowest level of professional identity among groups, especially in the dimensions of commitment and self-efficacy (Qi, 2019). In the Netherlands, teachers need 15 years to build a stable career. However, at this stage, challenges such as emotional exhaustion and stagnation arise, eroding confidence in the role they are playing (Canrinus et al., 2011). In Indonesia, teachers with 11-15 years of experience experience a decline in leadership skills due to administrative burdens and lack of institutional support (Musayaro et al., 2022). These findings confirm that the 15-year phase, known as mid-career, is a critical point in the cycle of teachers' professional identity.

The total amount of experience can enrich competence, understanding of educational policies, and the ability to manage classes. However, the amount of experience can also bring challenges, such as burnout, if not accompanied by sufficient support. One of the main factors explaining the decline in professional identity at a critical point (15 years of work experience) is burnout, which senior teachers across various educational contexts often experience. Burnout and emotional exhaustion are key factors in the decline of senior teacher identity. High workloads, including teaching preparation, student assessment, administrative tasks, and demands to continue to innovate, can lead to professional exhaustion or burnout (Maslach, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). In South Korea, teachers with >15 years of experience reported burnout due to the pressure of dual roles (as educators and administrators) and minimal psychological support from the institution (Shim et al., 2024).

Research in Australia also shows that mid-career teachers (8–23 years) are vulnerable to a loss of motivation due to an imbalance between effort and recognition, leading to a decline in their identity as educators (Cawte, 2020). A study in the UK found that teachers with >10 years of experience lost commitment due to negative feedback from school leaders and lack of autonomy in pedagogical decision-making (Watkins, 2017). In Spain, educational reforms that did not involve teachers led to an identity crisis, in which senior teachers felt alienated from the institution's changing vision (Bolívar Botía, 2014). Meanwhile, in South Korea, the high turnover rate of foreign teachers (21%) triggered by authoritarian school management, discrimination, and a poor working climate accelerated the decline in identity (Dos Santos, 2020).

Teachers' experience of more than 15 years is a critical point in the development of professional identity, especially in the dimension of teachers' self-efficacy in Indonesia. This is not in line with the view that professional identity develops through a relatively linear process, from a diffuse (vague/unclear) professional identity to a stable, crystallized one. This development process is linear, but in practice, individuals can experience dynamics moving back and forth between stages based on life experiences and professional challenges (Weiss & Fisherman, 2012). A logical explanation of this critical point of professional identity can also refer to the estimation of the stages of identity development proposed by Weiss & Fisherman (2012) who stated that 16-20 years of experience enters the evaluation and doubt stage which is marked by doubts about the effectiveness of practice, emotional exhaustion and doubts about the meaning of the profession to the risk of leaving the profession. The difference in the pattern of tendencies in the self-efficacy dimension between South Korean and Indonesian teachers aligns with the view that professional identity is ongoing and dynamic (Beijaard et al., 2004). We



cannot view professional identity attributes in the same way across teachers (Canrinus et al., 2011). However, we will develop towards coherence (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), and teachers tend to form their professional identities in local and unique ways (Servage, 2009).

CONCLUSION

These findings reinforce the view that the development of teachers' professional identities is a dynamic, continuous, and dialectical process between personal and professional spaces. The differences in the identity configurations of South Korean and Indonesian teachers confirm that personal preferences remain influential even in standardized professions. The contrasting patterns between the two countries suggest that professional development must be culturally responsive and aligned with local value systems. The results of this study imply the importance of reflective practices and ongoing support mechanisms that foster teacher autonomy. The insignificance of gender and teaching experience in Indonesia suggests the need for a more in-depth investigation of the mediating factors. The differences in the priority dimensions of self-efficacy in South Korea versus motivation in Indonesia underscore the importance of differentiated policy strategies. Collectively, these studies call for a more context-specific approach to designing initiatives to develop teachers' professional identity.

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