Chinese English teachers' professional identity and commitment and their associations with their professional success

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ABSTRACT: The success of any educational context, including language classes, highly depends on teachers' professional success. Thus, understanding the antecedents of this construct is of great importance. The importance of teacher professional success has inspired many practitioners and scholars worldwide to look into the potential predictors of this variable. Nonetheless, the function of teachers' professional traits in predicting their professional success has scarcely been examined. In addition, the predictive role of professional identity and professional commitment has remained under-researched. Against this backdrop, the present inquiry inspected the connections between teacher professional identity, teacher commitment, and teacher professional success. This research also explored the effects of professional identity and commitment on Chinese English teachers' success. To this aim, 300 Chinese English teachers were recruited from Henan, Hubei, Shanghai, Beijing, Jilin, and Shandong Province. Following the distribution of consent forms, three reliable inventories were sent to respondents. The evaluation of the collected data revealed close and positive links between professional identity, professional commitment, and professional success. Data analysis also represented that professional identity and professional commitment can directly influence Chinese English teachers' success in professional environments. The outcomes of current research may have important implications for language instructors and teacher educators.
Keywords: China, English teachers, professional commitment, professional success, teacher identity

Identidad y compromiso profesional de profesorado chino de inglés y su asociación con su éxito profesional

RESUMEN: El éxito de cualquier contexto educativo, incluidas las clases de idiomas, depende en gran medida del éxito profesional del profesorado. Por lo tanto, entender los antecedentes de este constructo es vital. La importancia del éxito profesional de los docentes ha inspirado a muchos profesionales y académicos de todo el mundo a investigar los potenciales predictores de dicha variable. Sin embargo, la función de las características profesionales de los docentes en la predicción de su éxito profesional apenas ha sido examinada. Además, el papel predictivo de la identidad profesional y el compromiso profesional sigue recibiendo

escasa atención. En este contexto, el presente trabajo examina las conexiones entre la identidad profesional docente, el compromiso docente y el éxito profesional docente. Esta investigación también analiza los efectos de la identidad profesional y el compromiso en el éxito del profesorado chino de inglés. Con este objetivo, 300 profesores chinos fueron reclutados de las provincias de Henan, Hubei, Shanghái, Beijing, Jilin y Shandong. Tras la distribución de los formularios de consentimiento, se enviaron tres cuestionarios validados a los participantes. El análisis de resultados revela una relación positiva entre la identidad profesional, el compromiso profesional y el éxito profesional. Nuestros datos también demuestran que la identidad profesional y el compromiso profesional pueden influir directamente en el éxito del profesorado de inglés chino en entornos profesionales. Los resultados de este estudio pueden tener importantes implicaciones para los profesores de idiomas y los formadores de profesores.

Palabras clave: China, profesores de inglés, compromiso profesional, éxito profesional, identidad docente

1. INTRODUCTION

The success of educational programs is subject to the effectiveness of instructors (Coombe, 2019). To put it differently, how instructors' function in instructional-learning contexts directly affects the quality of educational programs (García-Martínez *et al.*, 2021). The same goes for language education curricula in that the efficiency of any language education program depends largely upon the effectiveness of its teachers (Derakhshan *et al.*, 2020; Fan & Wang, 2022). The effectiveness of teachers in educational settings is called "teacher professional success", which pertains to the degree to which a teacher succeeds in fulfilling his or her professional responsibilities (Klassen & Tze, 2014). In the realm of L2 education, teacher professional success is concerned with how efficiently instructors transmit language knowledge to their learners (Pishghadam *et al.*, 2021). For Wossenie (2014), language teachers' professional success deals with the extent to which they are successful in leading their learners toward desirable language achievements.

Given that teacher professional success is at the heart of quality education (Coombe, 2019), factors enabling teachers to function more effectively need to be widely examined. To answer this necessity, several scholars (e.g., Bardach *et al.*, 2022; Fan & Wang, 2022; Kim *et al.*, 2019; Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017; Sezgin & Erdogan, 2015, among others) have looked into the role of teachers' personal qualities in their professional success. Furthermore, many researchers (e.g., Aldrup *et al.*, 2022; Li & Wang, 2022; Nayernia *et al.*, 2020; Pishghadam *et al.*, 2021, to cite a few) have tested the function of instructors' interpersonal behaviors in their effectiveness. Nevertheless, the position of teachers' professional characteristics —including professional identity and commitment— in their occupational success has remained unclear. To fill this gap, this inquiry attempts to identify the role of professional commitment and professional identity in predicting Chinese English teachers' professional success.

As a professional characteristic, teacher commitment refers to "the relative strength of an individual teacher's identification with and involvement in a particular educational context" (Chan *et al.*, 2008, p. 597). As pointed out by Lee *et al.* (2011), teacher professional commitment is concerned with an individual teacher's mental and emotional attachment to his or her occupation and occupational environment. According to Wang *et al.* (2021), the degree to which teachers commit themselves to their profession and professional responsi-

bilities can directly influence students' learning outcomes. This implies that teachers who give their all to the teaching profession are more successful in promoting their students' achievements (Moses *et al.*, 2017). Another professional characteristic of teachers that may contribute to their success is professional identity (Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2019), which pertains to how teachers view their profession and define their professional responsibilities (O'Connor, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). For Beijaard *et al.* (2004), teacher professional identity is "an ongoing process of integration of the 'personal' and 'professional' sides of becoming and being a teacher" (p. 113). Concerning this definition, the professional identity of teachers is not a fixed or stable concept, but a dynamic construct that may change over time (Derakhshan & Nazari, 2022a; Han, 2017; Mehdizadeh *et al.*, 2023). To elucidate the value of this dynamic notion, Pennington and Richards (2016) mentioned that teachers' professional identity can considerably affect their functioning in professional environments. Likewise, Richter *et al.* (2021) noted that how instructors perceive their professional role has a direct impact on their instructional practices.

With the significance of teacher professional identity and teacher commitment in mind (Richter *et al.*, 2021; Wang *et al.*, 2021), several academics and scholars throughout the world (e.g., Berger & Lê Van, 2019; Derakhshan *et al.*, 2023 a,b; Dong & Xu, 2022; Ostad *et al.*, 2019; Qin, 2022; Ye *et al.*, 2022, among others) have studied the implications of these constructs in different instructional contexts, including language classes. Nonetheless, the favorable and unfavorable consequences of these constructs for teachers' professional success have remained unclear. This means that few researchers (e.g., Altun, 2017; Derakhshan *et al.*, 2020; Labbaf *et al.*, 2019) have assessed the role of instructors' identity and commitment in their effectiveness. To address the aforementioned lacunae, the current inquiry intends to delve into the impact of professional commitment and identity on Chinese English teachers' professional success. The following research questions have been developed for this purpose:

RQ1. Are there any significant associations between Chinese English teachers' professional identity, commitment, and professional success?

RQ2. Do Chinese English teachers' professional identity and commitment significantly predict their professional success?

2. Literature review

2.1. Teacher Professional Commitment

The construct of professional commitment, also known as organizational commitment, broadly refers to "the depth and strength of the attachment between an employee and his/her occupation" (Ibrahim & Iqbal, 2015, p. 36). With this definition in mind, Fathi and Savadi Rostami (2018) described teacher commitment as the emotional and psychological bond that exists between teachers, the teaching profession, and the teaching context. Wang *et al.* (2021) further characterized teacher commitment in terms of "*affective commitment*", "*normative commitment*", and "*continuance commitment*". Affective commitment, as Wang *et al.* (2021) mentioned, refers to teachers' emotional tendencies towards the teaching career. According to Wang *et al.* (2021), normative commitment pertains to teachers' intentions to pursue their

professions for ethical reasons. Finally, continuance commitment includes teachers' propensity to continue their professions due to their close and intimate relations with students, school managers, and colleagues (Wang *et al.*, 2021; Wang *et al.*, 2022).

As put by Yu *et al.* (2021), committed teachers are more inclined to assist their students and respond to their academic needs. Similarly, Liu (2019) stated that teachers who are emotionally attached to the teaching profession and their professional role typically devote more time and energy to their students' learning. Therefore, teachers with a high level of professional commitment can make a substantial difference in their students' learning outcomes (Lu, 2021). Considering the importance of teacher commitment, several researchers (e.g., Dai & Wang, 2023; Derakhshan *et al.*, 2022; Gilbert *et al.*, 2014; Hallinger *et al.*, 2018; Han *et al.*, 2016; Zheng *et al.*, 2020) have scrutinized the inner (i.e., teacher-related factors) and outer (i.e., student- or context-related factors) determinants of this construct. Gilbert *et al.* (2014), for example, examined the influences of teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction on their professional commitment. To this end, a total of 109 language teachers were invited to engage in the data-gathering process. The analysis of gathered information demonstrated that self-efficacy and job satisfaction can considerably influence the professional commitment of language teachers. In another inquiry, Hallinger *et al.* (2018) assessed the impact of instructional leadership on Iranian teachers' occupational commitment. For this purpose, 345 teachers and 111 educational administrators were recruited from different primary schools in Iran. Then, two reliable surveys were virtually administered to participants. The study outcomes disclosed that instructional leadership has a significant impact on teachers' occupational commitment. In a similar vein, Zheng *et al.* (2020) studied the effect of paternalistic leadership on Chinese teachers' organizational commitment. To do so, 419 teachers were randomly chosen from various elementary schools in China. Following that, a survey comprising two questionnaires was distributed among respondents. The respondents' answers to the questionnaires revealed that paternalistic leadership can considerably improve teachers' commitment to their organization.

2.2. Teacher Professional Identity

Professional identity in its broadest definition pertains to how individuals define themselves and their position in working environments (Pratt *et al.*, 2006). In instructional environments, professional identity refers to teachers' viewpoints about themselves that originate from their ongoing interpretations of professional experiences (Xu, 2013). For Sun *et al.* (2022), teacher professional identity is about "an individual teacher's optimistic attitude and a strong sense of commitment to the teaching profession, which is reflected in his or her desire to pursue this profession" (p. 2). As Kao and Lin (2015) mentioned, teacher professional identity is a multidimensional variable that consists of six major components. To them, the professional identity of teachers is mainly constructed on "*self-expectation*", "*professional duties*", "*external influential factors*", "*pedagogy*", "*instructional skill and knowledge*", and "*citizenship behavior*". As the first dimension, self-expectation includes teachers' personal appraisal of their profession. The second dimension, professional duties, embraces teachers' perceptions of their responsibilities towards pupils. The third dimension, external influential factors, is related to teachers' viewpoints about school policies. The fourth

dimension is pedagogy, which concerns teachers' opinions regarding the impact of education on students' behaviors. As the fifth dimension, instructional skills and knowledge have to do with teachers' appraisal of their competence and subject knowledge. Finally, citizenship behavior, as the last dimension, alludes to teachers' perspectives about voluntary behaviors that are beyond their professional duties (Kao & Lin, 2015).

As pointed out by Van Lankveld *et al.* (2017), the beliefs and ideas that teachers hold about themselves and their professional position directly influence their performance in academic settings. Accordingly, teachers who positively assess themselves and their professional status will perform better than their colleagues (Delima, 2015). With respect to the undeniable role of professional identity in teachers' professional performance (Delima, 2015; Van Lankveld *et al.*, 2017), many scholars (e.g., Berger & Lê Van, 2019; Derakhshan & Nazari, 2022b; Motallebzadeh & Kazemi, 2018; Sheybani & Miri, 2019; Wang, 2021; Yüce *et al.*, 2023) have endeavored to recognize the internal and external sources of this construct. Motallebzadeh and Kazemi (2018), for instance, delved into the role of Iranian teachers' self-esteem in their professional identity. To accomplish this, using a convenience sampling technique, 224 teachers were handpicked from various language classes in Iran. Then, through two closed-ended questionnaires, the needed data were gathered. The analysis showed that Iranian teachers' self-esteem favorably predicted their professional identity. Furthermore, Berger and Lê Van (2019), probed the function of secondary teachers' pedagogical beliefs in constructing their professional identity. To do so, 236 secondary teachers were selected from various schools in France. A survey was administered to participants to assess their views on the role of pedagogical beliefs in teachers' professional identity. The results depicted that teachers' pedagogical beliefs can positively contribute to their professional identity. Additionally, Sheybani and Miri (2019) looked into the role of critical thinking in teachers' professional identity. In doing this, two valid instruments of "professional identity questionnaire" and "critical thinking scale" were distributed among 259 Iranian English teachers. The outcomes disclosed that teachers' professional identity can be substantially predicted by their critical thinking ability.

2.3. Teacher Professional Success

Professional or occupational success generally pertains to the degree to which an employee successfully fulfills his or her professional responsibilities (Vincent-Höper *et al.*, 2012). More specifically, teacher professional success refers to how well an instructor delivers the instructional content, governs the classroom environment, and fulfills students' academic needs (Barrera *et al.*, 2010; Schmidt, 2015). In the language education domain, teacher success alludes to the effective performance of teachers in instructing language skills (Pishghadam *et al.*, 2019). However, as Bremner (2020) mentioned, the professional success of language teachers is not just about their instructional abilities. Simply said, what directs language teachers towards professional success is much more than the effective delivery of language knowledge. According to him, a successful language instructor is someone who creates a comfortable learning atmosphere, cares for learners' emotions, and builds a strong rapport with them.

As reported by previous studies (Gershenson, 2016; Wossenie, 2014), the professional

success of instructors is the key to attaining desirable language achievements. Considering this, numerous scholars (e.g., Fan & Wang, 2022; Li & Wang, 2022; Nayernia *et al.*, 2020; Pishghadam *et al.*, 2021; Sezgin & Erdogan, 2015; Wang *et al.*, 2023, to cite a few) have studied the personal and interpersonal characteristics of language teachers concerning their professional success. For instance, Sezgin and Erdogan (2015) assessed the impact of educational desire, educational optimism, and hope on Turkish teachers' success. For this aim, 600 Turkish teachers were chosen from 27 educational institutes in Ankara. Three pre-designed questionnaires were used to assess participants' perspectives. The results indicated that these three factors have a favorable impact on teachers' success. In another investigation, Nayernia *et al.* (2020) tested the influences of nonverbal immediacy and source credibility on Iranian teachers' professional success. To do so, three reliable inventories, namely the "nonverbal immediacy scale", "source credibility scale", and "characteristics of successful teacher questionnaire", were emailed to 134 Iranian teachers. The outcomes uncovered that these two communicative behaviors can largely influence teachers' professional success. Furthermore, Fan and Wang (2022) evaluated the effects of emotion regulation and well-being on Chinese instructors' occupational success. To accomplish this, 357 Chinese instructors were invited to answer three researcher-made surveys. The survey outcomes revealed that Chinese instructors' well-being and emotion regulation can desirably affect their success.

Besides, some studies (e.g., Al-Seghayer, 2017; Altun, 2017; Derakhshan *et al.*, 2020; Labbaf *et al.*, 2019) have investigated the role of professional qualities in language teachers' effectiveness or occupational success. For example, Al-Seghayer (2017) examined the role of different professional characteristics, including enthusiasm and commitment, in English teachers' professional success. The study outcomes indicated the level of commitment and enthusiasm an English instructor demonstrates in instructional settings is highly important for his/her success. Similarly, Altun (2017) evaluated the impact of professional commitment on student achievement, which is the main indicator of teacher effectiveness. To do this, some interview sessions were held with a group of students chosen from different language classes. The results of interviews indicated that a high level of professional commitment results in increased student achievement. The outcomes also showed that teachers' commitment to their profession can drastically improve their teaching effectiveness. In another research, Labbaf *et al.* (2019) inspected the effect of professional identity on Iranian English teachers' effectiveness. To this end, two researcher-made questionnaires were given to 143 Iranian teachers. The findings represented that English teachers' professional identity has a considerable effect on their effectiveness. Likewise, Derakhshan *et al.* (2020) explored the influence of professional identity on English teachers' professional success. To attain the required data, two valid measures of professional identity and professional success were virtually administered to 190 English teachers chosen from Iranian language institutes. The results demonstrated that English teachers' professional identity can directly influence their success in educational environments. Notwithstanding these scholarly endeavors (Altun, 2017; Derakhshan *et al.*, 2020; Labbaf *et al.*, 2019), it is still an open question whether the professional characteristics of language teachers contribute to their occupational success. The present research aims to answer this question by exploring the role of two professional traits, namely professional commitment and professional identity, in Chinese English teachers' occupational success.

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

A random sampling technique was employed to choose 300 Chinese instructors teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). They were chosen from English language classes located in six different provinces of China (i.e., Henan, Hubei, Shanghai, Beijing, Jilin, and Shandong). The sample was made up of 267 women (89%) and 33 men (11%), varying in age from 24 to 48 ($M = 31$, $SD = 2.8$). As to the academic discipline, the instructors majored in different branches of English, namely "Applied Linguistics", "Linguistics", "English Language Literature", "English Language Translation", and "Teaching English as a Foreign Language". They had different educational experiences between 1 to 25 years ($M = 11$). Finally, concerning the academic degree, the majority of instructors (87%) hold a bachelor's or master's degree. The rest of the instructors (13%) had a doctoral degree. To adhere to the moral standards of research, the confidentiality of respondents' information was guaranteed. For the same reason, respondents were also informed of their right to leave the study at any point throughout the data-gathering process.

3.2.1. Teacher Identity Questionnaire

The "Teacher Identity Questionnaire" (Xiong & Xiong, 2017) was utilized to assess Chinese EFL teachers' perceptions of their professional identity. This inventory includes 33 closed-ended items. Respondents should answer the items of this questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The following are some of the items in this questionnaire: "*I finish my job of English teaching every day seriously*" (item 1), "*I like, care and respect students from the bottom of my heart*" (item 6), and "*Teachers' work is important for students' growth and development*" (item 12). In this investigation, the reliability of this inventory was 0.78.

3.2.2. Professional Commitment Questionnaire

To measure how deeply Chinese English teachers are committed to the teaching profession and the educational institution, the "*Professional Commitment Questionnaire*" (Meyer & Allen, 1997) was used. This questionnaire embraces three essential facets, namely "*Affective Commitment*", "*Continuance Commitment*", and "*Normative Commitment*". Each facet contains six items, some of which are as follows: "*I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own*" (item 2), "*I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization*" (item 10), and "*I owe a great deal to my organization*" (item 18). In the current inquiry, a reliability coefficient of 0.88 was found for this instrument.

3.2.3. Characteristics of Successful Teachers Questionnaire

The "Characteristics of Successful Teachers Questionnaire" was used to evaluate Chinese English teachers' success in instructional environments. This instrument, which is designed by Moafian and Pishghadam (2008), encompasses 47 items, examining teachers'

success in terms of "*teaching accountability*", "*interpersonal relationships*", "*attention to all*", "*examination*", "*commitment*", "*learning boosters*", "*creating a sense of competence*", "*teaching boosters*", "*physical and emotional acceptance*", "*empathy*", "*class attendance*", and "*dynamism*". This scale is a Likert-type questionnaire, the responses to its items can vary from "completely disagree" to "completely agree". The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this inventory was 0.85.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

To receive the written permission, a consent form was initially shared with participants. After obtaining permissions, three valid inventories, including "Teacher Identity Questionnaire", "Professional Commitment Questionnaire", and "Characteristics of Successful Teachers Questionnaire" were electronically administered to respondents. To obtain reliable and accurate data, respondents received some instructions on how to rate the questionnaire items. The needed data were fully gathered in eight days.

3.4. Data Analysis

Following the collection of the dataset, the obtained information was fully screened to identify and exclude the outliers. Following that, through the Cronbach alpha coefficient, the reliability of the inventories was calculated. Then, using the IBM SPSS Amos program (version 24), structural equation modeling (SEM) was implemented to inspect the connections between the constructs and the role of professional identity and professional commitment in Chinese English teachers' professional success. The IBM SPSS Amos is an easy-to-use SEM program that enables researchers "to specify, estimate, assess, and present models to show hypothesized relationships among variables" (Arbuckle, 2011, p. 1).

4. RESULTS

As mentioned in the previous section, the internal consistency of instruments was computed through the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The results indicated that all inventories (Teacher Identity Questionnaire, Professional Commitment Questionnaire, and Characteristics of Successful Teachers Questionnaire) enjoyed an acceptable internal consistency (Table 1).

Table 1. *The results of reliability analysis*

Scales and subscales	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha (based on standardized items)	Items (N)
1. Teacher Identity Questionnaire	.81	.78	33
2. Teacher Commitment Questionnaire	.90	.88	18
2.1. Affective commitment	.75	.73	6
2.2. Continuance commitment	.73	.71	6
2.3. Normative commitment	.79	.76	6

3. Characteristics of Successful Teachers Questionnaire	.89	.85	32
3.1. Familiarity with foreign language and culture	.83	.80	8
3.2. Teaching accountability	.87	.84	11
3.3. Teaching booster	.74	.71	4
3.4. Learning booster	.83	.81	10
3.5. Interpersonal relationships	.79	.74	7
3.6. Physical and emotional acceptance	.71	.69	2
3.7. Availability	.72	.70	2
3.8. Attention to all	.73	.69	2

Then, "structural equation modeling" (SEM) was implemented to test the following hypotheses:

I. EFL teachers' professional identity does not predict English teachers' professional success.
II. EFL teachers' commitment does not predict English teachers' professional success.
III. EFL teachers' professional identity does not predict English teachers' commitment.

The SEM results demonstrated that there were close and positive associations between professional identity, professional commitment, and professional success. The results also indicated that professional identity positively predicted Chinese teachers' professional success, implying that the first hypothesis was rejected. With respect to the following table (Table 2), professional identity predicted about 43% of changes in Chinese teachers' professional success.

Table 2. *Standardized regression weights (Default model)*

			Estimate
Teacher Commitment	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.723
Teacher Professional Identity	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.435
Teacher Commitment	←	"Teacher Professional Identity"	.614
Affective Commitment	←	"Teacher Commitment"	.654
Continuance Commitment	←	"Teacher Commitment"	.362
Normative Commitment	←	"Teacher Commitment"	.413
Familiarity with language and culture	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.390
Teaching accountability	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.634
Teaching booster	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.516
Learning booster	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.527
Interpersonal relationships	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.717
Physical and emotional acceptance	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.453
Availability	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.762
Attention to All	←	"Teacher Professional Success"	.694

Furthermore, as shown in the table above, the second hypothesis was also rejected because professional commitment favorably predicted 72% of changes in Chinese teachers' professional success. In addition, professional identity also predicted Chinese teachers' professional commitment positively. This suggests that the researchers' third hypothesis was also rejected.

Among the three components of professional commitment, affective commitment served a more significant role in improving Chinese teachers' professional commitment (Table 2). Accordingly, more than 65% of changes in Chinese teachers' professional commitment can be predicted by their emotional characteristics. Among different facets of teacher success, teaching accountability and availability more significantly contributed to Chinese teachers' professional success. Thus, the professional success of teachers is largely determined by their accountability (63%) and availability (76%). Taking into account the above findings, the following structural model (Figure 1) was developed.
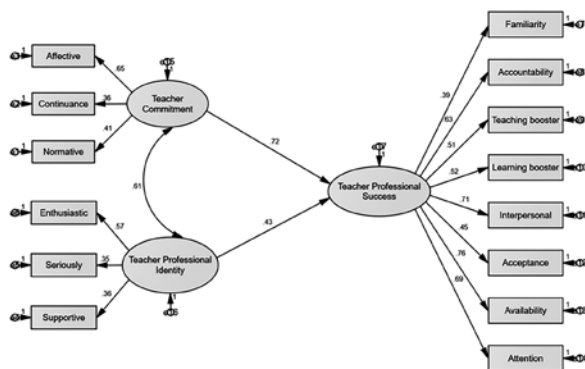

Figure 1. *The research model in the standardized estimation mode*

This figure was designed to depict the associations between the constructs and the significant role that professional identity and professional commitment play in predicting the professional success of Chinese English teachers. Following the development of this figure, the goodness of the model was computed through fit indices (i.e., RMSEA, CFI, NFI, CMIN/DF, and GFI). The outcomes are represented in the table below (Table 3).

Table 3. *Model fit result*

Model	CMIN/DF	DF	P	CMIN	GFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Default model	3.803	8	.000	30.426	.910	.921	.913	.0714
Saturated model		0		.000	.911	.934	1.000	
Independence model	6.523	17	.000	110.891	1.000	1.000	.000	.091

As shown in Table 3, all fit indices of the structural model were within the specification range. It suggests that the research model had an acceptable fit with the obtained data. The fitted model is demonstrated in Figure 2.
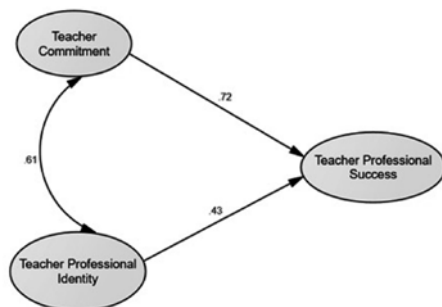
Figure 2. *The fitted model*

According to this model, professional commitment and professional identity are positive predictors of Chinese teachers' professional success and greatly contribute to their effectiveness at work. To put it another way, professional commitment and professional identity play a significant role in ameliorating Chinese teachers' effectiveness.

5. DISCUSSION

The present investigation was designed to assess the connections between professional identity, professional commitment, and professional success (RQ1). This research also aimed to evaluate the potential of professional identity and professional commitment in predicting Chinese teachers' professional success (RQ2). The examination of the obtained data disclosed that Chinese teachers' success is closely linked to their professional commitment and identity. A strong connection was also observed between teachers' professional commitment and professional identity. Data analysis also exhibited that Chinese English teachers' professional identity and professional commitment have a desirable impact on their professional success. Put differently, the results indicated that the professional identity and professional commitment of English teachers can considerably contribute to their professional success.

The outcome of this inquiry about the close association between Chinese teachers' professional identity and professional commitment can be logically justified by the fact that teachers' commitment to the teaching profession has something to do with how they view their profession and professional duties (Richter *et al.*, 2021). This outcome is in agreement with the idea of Liu (2019), who argued that teachers' appraisal of their professional role is directly related to the amount of energy they spend on their profession. Furthermore, the current study's finding on the connection between Chinese teachers' identity and professional success is consistent with that found by Labbaf *et al.* (2019), who discovered that English teachers' professional identity is linked to their effectiveness. In addition, the result of this research regarding the close connection between Chinese teachers' professional commitment and success is in line with that of Al-Seghayer (2017), which exhibited that teachers' commitment to their profession is related to their occupational success. Besides, the study outcomes on the significant role of professional identity in enhancing Chinese teachers' professional success lends support to the observations of Derakhshan *et al.* (2020), who found

that language instructors' professional identity can drastically influence their success. This outcome also mirrors Labbaf *et al.*'s (2019) results, which revealed that English teachers' effectiveness is subject to their professional identity. Finally, the result of the current inquiry concerning the power of professional commitment in improving Chinese teachers' professional success supports Altun's (2017) outcomes, which disclosed that instructors' commitment is critical to increasing their effectiveness. This result also corroborates that of Al-Seghayer (2017), who reported that teachers' professional success can be dramatically affected by their organizational commitment.

It goes without saying that all investigations are subject to a number of limitations, and the present research is not an exception by any means. One of the major limitations of the current investigation is that it was conducted entirely in China. This may noticeably restrict the generalizability of the study outcomes. Future researchers are thus required to conduct a cross-cultural or multi-national investigation into the implications of professional identity and professional commitment to EFL teachers' professional success. Another important limitation of this study is that the dataset was fully gathered from teachers' viewpoints. In fact, students' opinions regarding the relationships between the constructs were neglected. To reduce response bias, future surveys should also take into account students' perceptions of the determinants of teacher professional success. Another issue that was disregarded in the current study was whether teachers' experiences, majors, or academic degrees affect the connections between the variables. Future research studies are strongly recommended to look into the possible influences of these contextual factors. The last limitation of the present research is related to its data-gathering instrument. The present study used some close-ended surveys to examine respondents' outlooks on the connections between professional identity, professional commitment, and professional success. To attain more authentic data, other data-gathering instruments such as observation and memory writing should be employed by future scholars.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The present paper was an endeavor to scrutinize the associations between professional identity, professional commitment, and professional success, as well as the impact of professional identity and professional commitment on Chinese English teachers' success. The most obvious outcome to emerge from this paper was that professional identity and professional commitment are closely linked to teacher professional success. The second major outcome was that Chinese English teachers' professional identity and professional commitment have a significant impact on their professional success. These outcomes add substantially to language teachers' understanding of the determinants of professional success. With respect to the study findings, language teachers who have positive perspectives towards themselves and their professional status have a higher chance of succeeding in the teaching profession. Accordingly, language teachers need to develop a positive attitude towards their professional role to become successful in their careers. The results suggested that professional commitment also contributes to language teachers' professional success. With this in mind, teachers should devote more time and energy to their profession to function more effectively at work. The study outcomes also offer an enlightening implication for teacher trainers. To lead teachers

toward professional success, teacher trainers should teach them how to build up a positive professional identity. To do so, they need to familiarize their teacher students with their professional strengths and weaknesses, encourage them to interact with their experienced colleagues, and keep them up to date with what is going on in the world of teaching.

7. Rᴇꜰᴇʀᴇɴᴄᴇꜱ

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