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A Tale of Two Contexts: Diverging Models of Immunity and Possible Selves Among Iranian Junior and Senior High School EFL Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' immunity and their possible selves. The participants included 200 in-service English language teachers working in junior and senior high schools across Markazi province, selected through random sampling. Data were collected using two validated instruments: the Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ) by Hiver (2017) and the Possible Language Teacher Selves Questionnaire (PLTQ) by Karimi and Nourozi (2019). Both instruments utilized a six-point Likert scale to measure key dimensions of teacher immunity (e.g., self-efficacy, burnout, resilience) and the three constructs of possible selves (Ideal, Ought-to, and Feared). Pearson correlation, independent samples t-tests, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) via structural equation modeling (SEM), were conducted using SPSS version 21. The findings revealed significant relationships between teachers' immunity and their possible selves, highlighting the influence of professional resilience and emotional responses on self-perceptions. This study points to teacher identity and provides insights into how immunity factors shape EFL teachers' future-oriented self-concepts in educational contexts.

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1. Introduction

In the contemporary world, English has become the most widely taught foreign and second language, bringing with it a range of challenges and developments. As Mirra (2018) asserted, Modern language work plays a crucial role in education by enhancing understanding, enriching intellect, and fostering empathy among learners (Kahvand et al., 2024). The past few decades have witnessed significant advancements in linguistics, psychological theory, and educational research, which have transformed language teaching into a highly dynamic and interdisciplinary field. These developments, combined with the inherently human aspect of teaching and learning, have made the discipline both complex and vital (Canagarajah, 2016). Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping societies by transmitting knowledge and personal attributes to learners (Hiver & Dornyei, 2017). In the EFL context, language teachers face unique challenges stemming from diverse student backgrounds, the expectations of educational stakeholders, and the demands of continuous professional development (Mekie & Gezahegn, 2022; Shoja Razavi, 2023). Iranian EFL teachers, like their global counterparts, grapple with pressures such as limited autonomy, professional accountability, inadequate working conditions, and insufficient resources (Gholaminejad & Raeesi-Vanani, 2021). These stressors often lead to burnout and attrition, as shown by studies in the Iranian educational context (Salahshour & Esmaeili, 2021). Managing such pressures can be overwhelming and may result in job dissatisfaction and psychological distress. Closely linked to the concept of teacher immunity is the notion of Possible Selves, first introduced by Markus and Nurius (1986). Possible Selves represent an individual's cognitive image of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they fear becoming (Dunkel & Kerpelman, 2006). These self-representations shape behavior by connecting past and present experiences with future aspirations (Henry et al., 2015).

Teacher identity is a dynamic construct shaped by personal experiences, social contexts, and professional roles (Achirri, 2020). For EFL teachers, identity formation is further complicated by the evolving nature of language itself, changing pedagogical paradigms, and the intersection of cultural and linguistic expectations. Research indicates that language teachers undergo continuous identity transformations as they navigate these complex realities (Norton & Toohey, 2011; Wang, & Fang, 2025). The current study aimed to compare junior and senior high school teachers' possible selves and their immunity levels. There is a growing body of research in the field of Language Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves individually and separately (Jiang et al., 2024; Li, 2021; Niloufari & Dastgoshadeh, 2019; Rezapoor & Mohammadzadeh, 2024), for example, Li (2021) explored psychological well-being, mindfulness, and teacher immunity. It emphasizes mindfulness as a protective factor against burnout but does not discuss possible selves. Also, Niloufari and Dastgoshadeh (2019) examines possible selves' correlates with self-efficacy and student achievement but does not include immunity. As it is axiomatic, studies touched the variables of possible selves and teachers' immunity, but that integrated explorations of their interplay—particularly in the Iranian EFL context among junior and senior high school teachers—remain scarce. This distinction is crucial, as the literature has indeed advanced in examining immunity (e.g., its sources, development, and

links to related psychological factors like mindfulness and emotion regulation) and possible selves (e.g., their role in teacher motivation and identity), but few studies have empirically bridged the two. Existing studies often focus on general teacher cognition and development (Borg, 2019; Lim, 2016), leaving a gap in understanding the nuanced relationship between immunity and self-concept. Addressing this gap is particularly important in the Iranian EFL context, where unique sociocultural and institutional factors may influence these psychological constructs (Gao & Xu, 2014).

By comparing the immunity systems and Possible Selves of junior and senior high school EFL teachers, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers cope with professional challenges and envision their future selves. Such insights can inform the design of more effective teacher training programs, support systems, and policy initiatives aimed at enhancing teacher resilience and reducing attrition. This research is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the emerging body of literature on Language Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves by offering empirical insights from the Iranian EFL context. Second, it emphasizes the dynamic interplay of personal, social, and situational factors in shaping teacher identity. Third, by quantitatively examining the relationship between teacher immunity and possible selves, the current study's contribution lies in being one of the first studies to statistically model the relationship between two constructs. Also, the study is significant since it tried to quantify differences between teacher groups in the Iranian context. Moreover, the findings have practical implications for educational policymakers and teacher educators. Understanding how immunity and self-concept interact can inform strategies to support teacher well-being, foster professional growth, and reduce attrition. Given the critical role of teachers in educational reform (Gao & Xu, 2014), addressing these psychological dimensions is essential for sustaining a motivated and effective teaching workforce. In conclusion, exploring the divergent models of immunity and Possible Selves among Iranian junior and senior high school EFL teachers offers valuable insights into the psychological mechanisms that shape teacher identity. This study aims to illuminate how these constructs interact, providing a deeper understanding of the challenges and aspirations that define the professional lives of language educators. Through this investigation, the research seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on teacher resilience, identity, and the future of language education in Iran and beyond.

2. A brief note of previous works

The concept of teacher immunity in the field of EFL education has garnered increasing attention in recent years, particularly concerning the psychological and professional challenges faced by teachers. There are different studies that tried to explore various dimensions of EFL teacher immunity, including its sources, developmental trajectories, and relationships with other psychological constructs such as mindfulness, emotion regulation, and reflective practices. While each study provides valuable insights, they differ in their methodological approaches, theoretical frameworks, and the depth of analysis regarding the dynamic and context-dependent nature of teacher immunity. Haseli Songhori et al. (2020), for instance, provide a comprehensive exploration of the sources and

developmental pathways of EFL teacher immunity in Iran. Using qualitative methodologies, including interviews and thematic analysis, they identify key sources of immunity such as institutional pressures, student behavior, and socio-cultural expectations. The findings revealed that EFL teachers with positive immunity continued to function effectively in their classrooms. In contrast, those with maladaptive immunity exhibited indifference toward their students and a sense of complacency, lacking professional agency. These teachers had, in effect, surrendered in the face of the numerous challenges they encountered throughout their professional careers. The study also highlighted several strategies to promote the development of adaptive immunity. These included improving teachers' economic conditions through salary increases, recognizing and appreciating their efforts, providing practical in-service teacher training programs, and offering institutional support from principals and other educational authorities.

Furthermore, Namaziandost et al. (2023) investigate the relationships between Iranian EFL teachers' reflective teaching practices, emotion regulation strategies, and immunity. Employing a quantitative correlational design, the study identifies significant positive associations between reflective practices and teacher immunity. Emotion regulation emerges as a mediating factor, suggesting that teachers who engage in reflective practice and effectively manage their emotions are more likely to develop robust immunity. The study's use of validated psychometric instruments enhances its methodological rigor. However, its cross-sectional nature prevents the establishment of causal relationships. Additionally, the study does not account for contextual variables, such as institutional support and teaching conditions, which could mediate these relationships. Arslan and Almacioğlu (2023) adopt a reflective lens to examine how language teachers cultivate immunity through reflective practice. Drawing on a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative surveys with qualitative reflective journals to capture teachers' experiences. Their findings suggest that reflective engagement fosters adaptive immunity, enabling teachers to navigate professional challenges. A key contribution of this study is its integration of quantitative and qualitative data, which provides a holistic view of the interplay between reflection and immunity. Nonetheless, the study focuses primarily on the Turkish EFL context, limiting its direct applicability to Iranian settings. Additionally, while the reflective approach is well-articulated, the study could benefit from a deeper engagement with socio-cultural factors influencing teacher immunity.

In terms of individual differences and immunity development, Ahmadi et al. (2020) explored how individual difference variables (e.g., personality traits, self-efficacy) influence the development of EFL teacher immunity. Using a quantitative survey methodology, they demonstrate that personality factors such as emotional stability and openness to experience significantly predict immunity levels. This study offers a novel contribution by emphasizing the role of individual differences in shaping immunity trajectories. However, its exclusive reliance on self-reported survey data raises concerns regarding social desirability bias. Furthermore, the study does not consider the interactive effects of contextual and institutional factors, which are critical in understanding the

complexity of immunity formation. Li (2021) offered a theoretical review that synthesizes existing literature on the relationships between psychological well-being, mindfulness, and teacher immunity. The review highlights the protective role of mindfulness practices in fostering emotional resilience and reducing burnout. While the paper provides a valuable theoretical framework, its lack of empirical evidence is a key limitation. Moreover, the review does not adequately address cultural and institutional differences, which are critical for understanding immunity in specific contexts such as Iran. The absence of a systematic methodology for literature selection also weakens the study's comprehensiveness and reproducibility. Together, the studies provide a comprehensive yet fragmented picture of EFL teacher immunity. While they collectively underscore the importance of reflective practice, emotion regulation, and individual differences, they also reveal significant methodological and contextual gaps. Addressing these gaps requires more holistic, longitudinal, and culturally grounded approaches to fully understand the complex dynamics of teacher immunity in diverse educational contexts.

It is worth noting that although existing literature on EFL teacher immunity provides valuable insights into its sources, developmental trajectories, and relationships with psychological constructs like mindfulness, emotion regulation, and reflective practices (Haseli Songhori et al., 2020; Namaziandost et al., 2023; Arslan & Almacioğlu, 2023; Ahmadi et al., 2020; Li, 2021), significant gaps remain unexplored. Notably, there is a lack of research investigating the relationship between EFL teachers' immunity and their possible selves, particularly within the Iranian junior and senior high school context. This study seeks to fill these gaps by exploring the relationship between EFL teachers' immunity and their possible selves among Iranian junior and senior high school teachers. This study extends prior work by providing the first quantitative examination of the relationship between immunity and possible selves in the Iranian junior and senior high school EFL context, using validated instruments and comparing teacher groups to uncover context-specific divergences. By adopting a quantitative approach, this study will provide nuanced insights into the complex interplay between teachers' professional visions, emotional resilience, and classroom practices, offering a culturally grounded perspective on EFL teacher immunity that is currently missing from the literature. To this end, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: Is there any significant relationship between the aspects of Iranian EFL teachers' immunity and the components of teacher Possible Selves?

RQ2: Is there any significant difference between Iranian junior high school English teachers and senior high school English teachers in terms of immunity and their Possible Selves?

A critical construct that has emerged to address these challenges is Language Teachers' Immunity, introduced by Hiver (2015). This concept refers to a psychological mechanism that helps teachers cope with the negative experiences they encounter in their professional lives (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). Immunity is not a static condition but a dynamic system that shifts along a continuum from positive to negative depending on various factors (Ordem, 2017). Positive immunity enables teachers

to remain resilient and committed, while negative immunity may result in indifference or even a decision to leave the profession. Language Teachers' Immunity can be classified into two main types: adaptive and maladaptive. Adaptive immunity helps teachers to recover from setbacks and maintain their motivation (Wang et al., 2024). In contrast, maladaptive immunity may lead to emotional exhaustion and disengagement (Hiver, 2017). Some teachers exhibit "double-barreled" immunity, fluctuating between positive and negative responses based on situational and personal factors. This variability underscores the dynamic nature of teacher immunity and its profound impact on professional identity and well-being (Irgatoglu & Kirmizi, 2023). The Possible Selves framework has been increasingly applied to teacher education, highlighting how teachers' visions of their professional future influence their current attitudes and actions (Chan, 2014). The interplay between immunity and Possible Selves is crucial for understanding the professional trajectories of language teachers (Hiver, 2013). Positive immunity tends to foster a more optimistic view of one's future self, whereas negative immunity can reinforce fears and self-doubt. Investigating this interaction is essential, as it sheds light on the psychological processes that underlie teacher identity development and professional resilience (Pourbahram & Sadeghi, 2020).

3. Research methodology

In this correlational-based study, the participants were in-service Iranian EFL teachers working in state schools across Markazi province. According to official records, the total population of English language teachers in this region is 298, with 175 teachers (83 men and 92 women) working at senior high schools and 123 teachers (52 males and 71 females) employed in junior high schools. Based on the sample size determination table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a suitable sample size for a population of approximately 300 is 169 participants. However, following the recommendation by Slavin and Smith (2009) that larger samples enhance the reliability of research findings, this study aimed to collect data from 200 teachers across Markazi province. To ensure a fair representation of the population, participants were randomly selected after securing official access to the list of English language teachers in the province. This random sampling approach minimized selection bias and improved the generalizability of the findings. To examine the potential influence of teaching experience on the relationship between teacher immunity and possible selves, the study included participants across a broad age range from 25 to 50 years. This diverse age range allowed the study to capture perspectives from both early-career and experienced teachers.

3.1 Instruments

The Language Teachers Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ) used in this study consisted of three main subsections, each addressing a distinct construct related to the research objectives. Participants were required to respond to a series of statement-type questions on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This structure allowed for a detailed examination of various

dimensions of language teacher immunity. Below is a comprehensive description of each subsection. The Language Teacher Immunity Scale was originally developed by Hiver (2017) and included 39 statement-type items that measured seven aspects of teacher immunity. The first subsection, consisting of items 1 to 7, focused on teaching self-efficacy and was adapted from Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), with modifications by Hiver. These items assessed EFL teachers' perceptions of their teaching effectiveness. The second subsection measured burnout through items 8 to 12, which were adapted from Maslach and Jackson's (1981) study. This section evaluated teachers' emotional responses and levels of chronic stress related to their professional duties.

The third subsection included five resilience-related items (13–17), adapted from the Connor and Davidson (2003) resilience scale, which assessed teachers' ability to overcome adversity. Additionally, items 18 to 22, modified from Gagné et al. (2010), evaluated the teaching-related component of immunity, focusing on teachers' professional engagement and motivation. Openness to change was assessed through items 23 to 28, which were adapted from McCrae (1996), reflecting teachers' willingness to adapt and embrace new practices. Classroom affectivity, which measured the emotional atmosphere and teachers' emotional responses within the classroom, was assessed through items 29 to 34, adapted from Watson, Clark, and Tellegan (1988). The final subsection evaluated coping strategies through items 35 to 39, which were adapted from Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub's (1989) work. These items measured teachers' ability to resolve conflicts and manage stress effectively.

The Language Teacher Immunity Scale included 39 statements in total, presented in a mixed order. Of these, 21 items addressed maladaptive immunity, reflecting negative emotional and professional responses, while 18 items assessed positive immunity, capturing adaptive and resilient behaviors. This comprehensive instrument was used without modifications to collect data for the current study's objectives, ensuring consistency with previous research and allowing for a thorough examination of teacher immunity across multiple dimensions. To ensure the validity and reliability of the Language Teachers Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ) in the context of this study, several steps were undertaken. Firstly, the selection and adaptation of items were justified based on their alignment with the theoretical framework of teacher immunity and their extensive use in prior empirical studies. Each subsection was carefully chosen to capture key dimensions of teacher immunity, including both positive and maladaptive responses. Secondly, the instrument underwent a pilot test involving a sample of 15 Iranian EFL teachers from the same context to assess its clarity, comprehensiveness, and internal consistency. Feedback from the pilot study led to minor wording adjustments to enhance item clarity. Thirdly, the internal reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded satisfactory results across all subsections, indicating strong internal consistency. These validation and reliability measures ensure that the LTIQ is an effective and robust tool for examining language teacher immunity in academic research. The internal reliability of the LTIQ was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha for each of the seven subscales. All subscales demonstrated

acceptable to strong reliability:

- Teaching self-efficacy ($\alpha = .79$),
- Burnout ($\alpha = .76$),
- Resilience ($\alpha = .78$),
- Professional engagement ($\alpha = .80$),
- Openness to change ($\alpha = .77$),
- Classroom affectivity ($\alpha = .78$), and
- Coping strategies ($\alpha = .75$).

These values indicate consistent internal reliability across all dimensions, supporting the robustness of the LTIQ as a multidimensional instrument for examining language teacher immunity in academic research.

The Possible Language Teacher Self Scale was designed to explore English language teachers' hypothetical selves, encompassing three key constructs: (I) Ideal Self, (II) Ought-to Self, and (III) Feared Self. This scale was theoretically grounded in Kubanyiova's (2007, 2009) framework of possible language teacher selves, which draws upon Markus and Nurius's (1986) Possible Selves Theory, Higgins's (1987, 1998) Self-Discrepancy Theory, and Dörnyei's (2005, 2009a) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). Based on Kubanyiova's (2007, 2009, 2012) conceptualization, the three constructs are defined as follows:

1. **Ideal Language Teacher Self:** This reflects language teachers' self-representation of the kind of teacher they aspire to become. It is shaped by their personal experiences, identity goals, and professional ambitions.
2. **Ought-to Language Teacher Self:** This represents language teachers' perceived duties and responsibilities and reflects the type of teacher they believe they should be to meet external expectations and work-related obligations.
3. **Feared Language Teacher Self:** This refers to language teachers' self-representation of the kind of teacher they fear becoming if they fail to meet their professional goals, responsibilities, and obligations.

Building on these theoretical foundations, Karimi and Nourozi (2019) developed the Possible Language Teacher Selves Questionnaire (PLTQ) to empirically measure these constructs. The PLTQ consists of 34 items divided across the three self-dimensions:

- Items 1–13 assess the Feared Language Teacher Self.
- Items 14–28 measure the Ideal Language Teacher Self.
- Items 29–34 evaluate the Ought-to Language Teacher Self.

Each item is rated on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from "Very untrue of me" to "Very true of me," allowing for a nuanced understanding of participants' self-perceptions.

The questionnaire underwent a rigorous validation process. In the item generation and development/validation phases, 1711 Iranian language teachers participated, recruited through

convenience sampling. The face validity and content validity of the questionnaire were confirmed by five expert reviewers. Following this, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirmed the three-factor structure of the questionnaire. The reliability of the PLTQ was also established through test-retest reliability ($r = 0.91$) and internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.94$) (Karimi & Nourozi, 2019). These results indicate that the PLTQ is a reliable and valid instrument for assessing the possible selves of language teachers across the three key dimensions.

3.2 Procedure

The collection of the quantitative data of the study served as the initial stage of data collection. As explained earlier the quantitative phase of the study included administering the two main immunity and possible-self questionnaires. First, the electronic versions of the questionnaires were created using the Google forms option. Then, the researcher took official permission to join Markazi Province EFL teachers' groups in Shad application. Shad application is an education messenger developed at the COVID-19 pandemic to provide the opportunity of online and off line education for Iranian pupils. All Iranian teachers and students must have had an account on Shad application during the pandemic and afterwards all the official groups and channels of the ministry of education were formed on that application. Therefore, it was the most convenient way of contacting the target group. Markazi Province EFL teachers have two official groups (junior high school teachers & senior high school teachers) in Shad application with about 300 members.

In the next step the researcher reached out to approximately 300 members in two separate groups for junior and senior high school teachers and sent the link of the two questionnaires to each member of the groups individually. Due to the limitation of sending only 100 new messages each day in Shad Application, it took 3 days to send the questionnaires to all the members and the overall process of gathering the questionnaires took about 2 weeks. The rights of the participants to voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidential treatment of their data were made abundantly clear. The questionnaires were not administered manually to prevent response duplication. This was done to eliminate the possibility of the same participant providing both paper-and-pencil and electronic responses, which could violate the data independence assumption, which is a requirement for parametric statistical analysis techniques. Additionally, the Google Forms option to "Limit to one response" was activated, allowing each participant to submit only one response. The questionnaires were administered at the weekends to make sure that the teachers have enough time to respond the questions and to improve the possibility of their participation.

3.3 Data Analysis

For the purpose of analyzing the data and answering the addressed research questions in the study, different analytical methods were computed by SPSS software, version 21. Once the data were obtained, they were then entered into SPSS 21, and statistics for the data were calculated and summarized and the descriptive information including mean score, standard deviation, minimum and

maximum scores of the variables for each scale was explained. Then, the correlational coefficient analysis was used to check the strength of the relationship between the relative movements of the variables. Besides for answering the second research question, the researcher used independent sample t-test. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized factor structure of the questionnaire. CFA is used to evaluate how well a proposed measurement model fits the observed data, based on prior theoretical expectations.

4. Results

4.1 Revisiting the First Research Question

The first research question aimed to answer whether there is any significant relationship between the aspects of Iranian EFL Teachers' Immunity and the components of teacher Possible Selves. Table 1 indicates the descriptive statistics for main variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Possible Selves and Teachers' Immunity

Questionnaires	Components	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Possible Selves	Feared Language Teacher Self (Feared LTS)	45.36	15.17	20	73
	Ideal Language Teacher Self (Ideal LTS)	52.36	17.21	21	82
	Ought to Language Teacher Self (Ought to LTS)	17.68	5.97	6	29
Total Score of Possible Selves		115.39	37.89	56	176
Teachers' Immunity	Self-efficacy	24.66	8.30	9	40
	Chronic stress	17.51	6.01	5	29
	Overcome adversity	17.62	6.05	7	29
	Teaching related component	17.44	5.98	6	30
	Openness to change	21.13	7.24	6	35
	Classroom activity	20.86	7.30	8	35
	Ability to resolve conflicts	17.50	5.92	6	29
Total Score of Teachers' Immunity		136.71	45.58	68	207

For the variable of Possible Selves, the component of Feared LTS showed that the mean score is 45.36 with a standard deviation of 15.17, indicating moderate levels of feared Possible Selves, with scores ranging from 20 to 73. The mean score of Ideal LTS is 52.36 and a standard deviation of 17.21 suggesting relatively higher levels of ideal Possible Selves compared to feared LTS, with scores spanning from 21 to 82. Also, Ought to LTS component has a lower mean score of 17.68 with a standard deviation of 5.97, reflecting lower levels of 'ought to' Possible Selves, with a range of 6 to 29. The total mean score of

115.39 and a standard deviation of 37.89, with scores ranging from 56 to 176, summarize the overall perception of Possible Selves, suggesting a diverse range of responses among the teachers.

In terms of Teachers' Immunity, the component of Self-efficacy showed the mean score is 24.66 with a standard deviation of 8.30, indicating a moderate level of self-efficacy among the teachers, with scores ranging from 9 to 40. Chronic stress component had a mean score of 17.51 and a standard deviation of 6.01, indicating moderate levels of chronic stress, with a range of 5 to 29. Overcome adversity with a mean score of 17.62 and a standard deviation of 6.05, indicates moderate levels of the ability to overcome adversity, with scores ranging from 7 to 29. The mean score of Teaching-related component is 17.44 and a standard deviation of 5.98 reflect moderate levels of teaching-related immunity, with scores ranging from 6 to 30. The mean score of Openness to change is 21.13 with a standard deviation of 7.24, suggesting a relatively higher openness to change among the teachers, with scores spanning from 6 to 35. Furthermore, Classroom activity component has a mean score of 20.86 and a standard deviation of 7.30, indicating moderate levels of classroom activity, with scores ranging from 8 to 35. Finally, Ability to resolve conflicts' mean score of 17.50 and a standard deviation of 5.92 reflect moderate levels of conflict resolution ability, with scores ranging from 6 to 29. The total mean score is 136.71 with a standard deviation of 45.58, and scores ranging from 68 to 207. This overall measure suggests a wide variability in Teachers' Immunity levels.

In other words, the descriptive statistics for Possible Selves show that teachers have a moderately high level of ideal Possible Selves, indicating aspirations and goals they strive towards in their professional lives. The relatively lower scores for feared and 'ought to' Possible Selves suggest that teachers are less concerned with negative outcomes and obligations. For Teachers' Immunity, the scores reflect a balanced profile with moderate levels across most components, such as self-efficacy, ability to overcome adversity, and openness to change. This indicates that while teachers experience some stress and challenges, they also possess a moderate capacity to manage these aspects effectively. The variability in the total score of Teachers' Immunity highlights the individual differences among teachers in coping and resilience strategies. In sum, the data suggest that while teachers have aspirations and goals (as indicated by the ideal LTS), they also face moderate stress and challenges. However, their ability to manage these challenges is relatively balanced, with a notable openness to change, which could be a positive indicator for professional growth and adaptability in their teaching practices. Table 2 indicates the correlation between the aspects of Iranian EFL Teachers' Immunity and the components of teacher Possible Selves.

Table 2. Correlation of Iranian EFL Teachers' Immunity and Teacher Possible Selves

	Components of teacher Possible Selves			
	Feared LTS	Ideal LTS	Ought to LTS	Total Score of Possible Selves
Self-efficacy	0.956**	0.962**	0.935**	0.967**
Chronic stress	0.944**	0.945**	0.937**	0.955**

Overcome adversity	0.949**	0.950**	0.920**	0.957**
Teaching related component	0.951**	0.952**	0.935**	0.960**
Openness to change	0.958**	0.956**	0.938**	0.966**
Classroom activity	0.948**	0.959**	0.938**	0.963**
Ability to resolve conflicts	0.952**	0.957**	0.943**	0.964**
Total Score of teachers immunity	0.977**	0.981**	0.961**	0.988**

** , significant at 0.05 probability level

The relationship between Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves components was investigated through Pearson's correlation coefficient. According to the results, all correlation coefficients are significant at the 0.05 probability level, indicating strong and statistically significant correlation. It is worth noting that the correlation between self-efficacy and all components of teacher Possible Selves is very high, with coefficients ranging from 0.935 to 0.967. This suggests that higher self-efficacy is strongly associated with higher levels of feared, ideal, and 'ought to' LTS, as well as the total score of Possible Selves. Chronic stress also showed a strong positive correlation with all components of teacher Possible Selves, with coefficients ranging from 0.937 to 0.955. This indicates that teachers experiencing higher chronic stress levels also report higher levels of Possible Selves, which may reflect the impact of stress on their professional identity and aspirations. The ability to overcome adversity is highly correlated with all components of Possible Selves, with coefficients ranging from 0.920 to 0.957. This suggests that teachers who are better at overcoming adversity have higher levels of Possible Selves.

Teaching Related Component showed positive correlations with Possible Selves, with coefficients ranging from 0.935 to 0.960. Teachers who score higher on teaching-related immunity also report higher levels of Possible Selves. Moreover, Openness to change is strongly correlated with Possible Selves, with coefficients ranging from 0.938 to 0.966. Teachers more open to change tend to have higher levels of Possible Selves. The correlation between classroom activity and Possible Selves ranges from 0.938 to 0.963, indicating that more active teachers in the classroom tend to have higher levels of Possible Selves. Ability to Resolve Conflicts component is also highly correlated with Possible Selves, with coefficients ranging from 0.943 to 0.964. Teachers who are better at resolving conflicts report higher levels of Possible Selves. The total score of Teachers' Immunity has the highest correlations with Possible Selves components, ranging from 0.961 to 0.988. This suggests that overall immunity is a strong predictor of teachers' Possible Selves. To say differently, the high and significant correlations across all components of Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves indicate a robust relationship between these constructs. Based on the results, the first null hypothesis, which claimed "there is no significant relationship between the aspects of Iranian EFL Teachers' Immunity and the components of teacher Possible Selves" was rejected at p value less than 0.05 and based on the results of correlation analysis, it was approved that there is a significant relationship between the aspects of Iranian EFL Teachers' Immunity and the components of teacher Possible Selves.

4.2 Revisiting the Second Research Question

The second research question investigates whether Iranian junior high school English teachers' immunity and possible selves differ from those of Iranian senior high school English teachers. The comparison of the average difference of the components of the Junior and Senior sections based on Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves is included in Table 3.

Table 3. Independent Sample T-test between Junior and Senior High School Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves

Parameters	Teaching at.	Mean \pm SD	T	P-value
Feared LTS	Junior	42.75 \pm 14.57	-2.65	0.009
	Senior	48.35 \pm 15.38		
Ideal LTS	Junior	49.29 \pm 16.17	-3.75	0.007
	Senior	55.88 \pm 17.78		
Ought to LTS	Junior	16.58 \pm 5.54	-2.83	0.005
	Senior	18.94 \pm 6.21		
Total score of Possible Selves	Junior	108.62 \pm 35.81	-2.75	0.006
	Senior	123.17 \pm 38.91		
Self-efficacy	Junior	23.19 \pm 8.01	-2.73	0.007
	Senior	26.34 \pm 8.35		
Chronic stress	Junior	16.63 \pm 5.66	-2.25	0.025
	Senior	18.53 \pm 6.27		
Overcome adversity	Junior	16.58 \pm 5.69	-2.65	0.009
	Senior	18.82 \pm 6.26		
Teaching related component	Junior	16.53 \pm 5.86	-2.31	0.022
	Senior	18.47 \pm 5.98		
Openness to change	Junior	19.85 \pm 6.9	-2.72	0.007
	Senior	22.6 \pm 7.38		
Classroom activity	Junior	19.7 \pm 6.94	-2.43	0.016
	Senior	22.18 \pm 7.52		
Ability to resolve conflicts	Junior	16.62 \pm 5.82	-2.29	0.023
	Senior	18.52 \pm 5.9		
Total Score of teachers' immunity	Junior	129.09 \pm 43.7	-2.57	0.011
	Senior	145.46 \pm 46.35		

Table 3 presents the results of an independent sample t-test comparing junior and senior high school teachers on various parameters related to immunity and Possible Selves. The results indicated that senior-level teachers exhibited significantly higher average scores across all components compared to junior-level teachers ($P < 0.05$). The analysis reveals significant differences between the two groups across all measured parameters. Senior high school teachers consistently score higher than their junior counterparts in feared LTS ($M = 48.35$, $SD = 15.38$), ideal LTS ($M = 55.88$, $SD = 17.78$), 'ought to' LTS ($M = 18.94$, $SD = 6.21$), and the total score of Possible Selves ($M = 123.17$, $SD = 38.91$). They also exhibit higher self-

efficacy ($M=26.34$, $SD=8.35$), chronic stress ($M=18.53$, $SD=6.27$), ability to overcome adversity ($M=18.82$, $SD=6.26$), teaching-related components ($M=18.47$, $SD=5.98$), openness to change ($M=22.60$, $SD=7.38$), classroom activity ($M=22.18$, $SD=7.52$), and ability to resolve conflicts ($M=18.52$, $SD=5.90$). Consequently, senior high school teachers have a significantly higher overall immunity score ($M=145.46$, $SD=46.35$) compared to junior high school teachers. These findings suggest that senior high school teachers possess greater resilience, professional confidence, and a more developed sense of professional identity and aspirations.

The independent sample t-test reveals significant differences between junior and senior high school teachers across all parameters of Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves. Senior High School Teachers consistently score higher across all aspects, including self-efficacy, chronic stress, ability to overcome adversity, teaching-related components, openness to change, classroom activity, and conflict resolution ability. Senior high school teachers have higher scores in feared, ideal, and 'ought to' Possible Selves, as well as the total score of Possible Selves, indicating a stronger sense of professional identity and aspirations compared to junior high school teachers. Moreover, senior high school teachers exhibit significantly higher scores in both Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves compared to junior high school teachers. Based on the results, the second null hypothesis, which claimed "Iranian junior high school English Teachers' Immunity and their Possible Selves are not distinct from those of Iranian senior high school English teachers" was rejected at p value less than 0.05. These findings suggest that senior high school teachers may have developed greater resilience, self-efficacy, and professional aspirations, possibly due to more experience or different contextual factors associated with teaching at a higher educational level. The significant differences across all measured parameters underscore the importance of considering teaching context and experience level in studies of teachers' professional identity and resilience. Based on the research questions and theoretical foundations, a hypothesized measurement model was developed. To assess the validity of this proposed structure, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). As Adelheid and Penny (2012, p. 127) explain, "CFA is used to examine the fairness of fit of one or more hypothesized factor models of a measure." Seven measurement models were introduced in this study, and their goodness of fit must be checked. The current study intended to test the subscales of the Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ) as separate measurement models, this should be explicitly stated. CFA was run through AMOS software. Figures 1 and 2 indicate the path diagram of the suggested model.

Figure 1: Confirmatory factor analysis for Teachers' Immunity

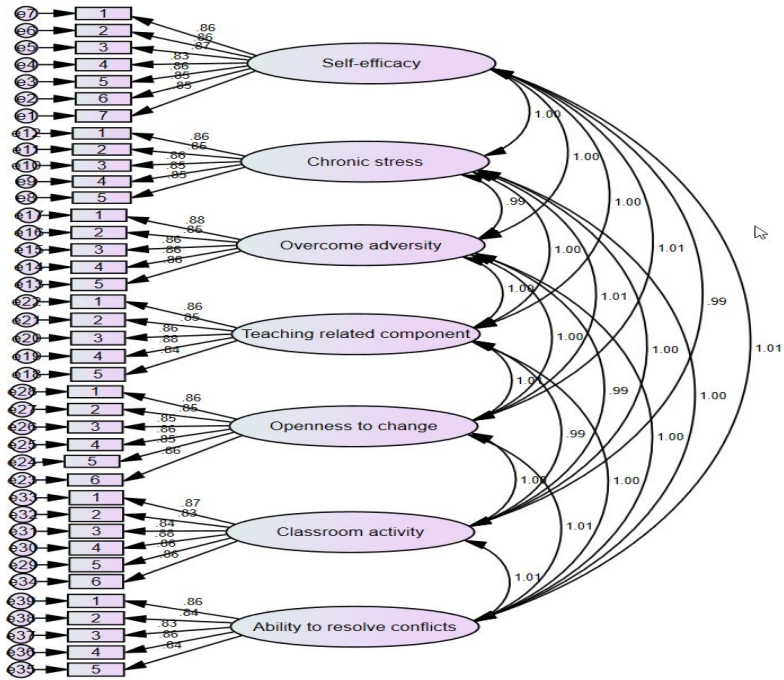
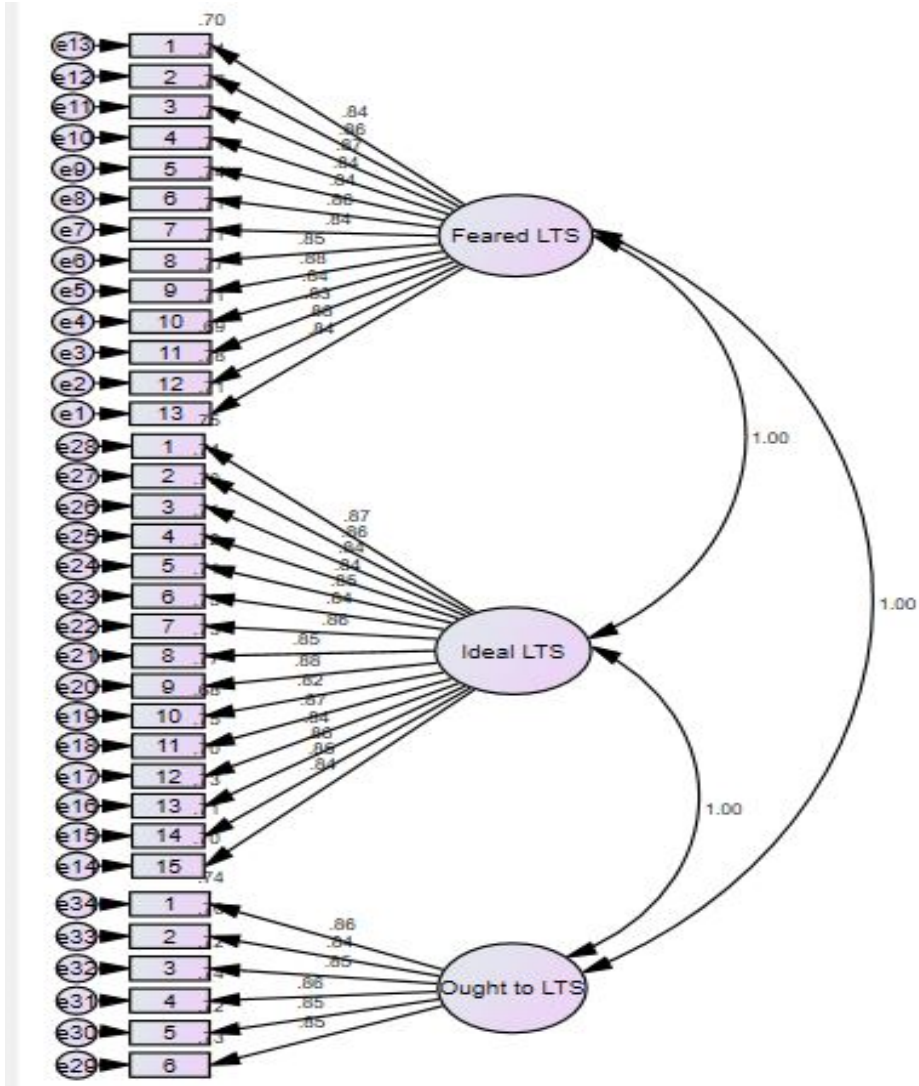


Figure 2. Confirmatory factor analysis for Possible Selves



Considering carefully, it can be seen that a confirmatory factor analysis has been performed in the previous section. This section shows the goodness of fit and validity of the CFA performed. That is, it tells us whether the fit of our model in CFA was favorable or not and whether we can trust its results or not. Fit indices were checked for model appraisal. The first index is RMSEA; the population root means square error of approximation. The recommended cut-off points for RMSEA are < 0.08 is considered a good fit, between 0.08 and 0.1 indicates adequate fit, and > 0.1 showed poor fit (Kenny et al., 2014). Regarding this study, as it is noticeable in Table 4.7, RMSEA is 0.034. The next index is the comparative fit index (CFI), with values larger than 0.90 are acceptable. In this study (CFI) value is 0.984 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Regarding the next index (IFI), the normal fit index should exceed 0.90 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). In this study, the value of IFI is 0.984. The other fit indices are the normal fit index

(NFI) and the TLI, which should be over 0.9 for a good fit (Bentler, 1990). In this study, these values are 0.918 and 0.983, respectively. Table 4 shows model fit summary.

Table 4. Model Fit Summary (N=200)

Fit indices	Questionnaire	RMSEA	CFI	IFI	NFI	TLI
The obtained value	Teachers' Immunity	0.033	0.984	0.984	0.918	0.983
	Possible Selves	0.034	0.985	0.985	0.924	0.984
The acceptable value		< 0.1	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90

Table 4 presents the fit indices for two constructs: Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves. These indices are used to assess how well the model fits the data. Both constructs, Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves, show excellent fit indices across all the measures. All obtained values are within the acceptable ranges, and most exceed the minimum acceptable values significantly, indicating that the model fits the data very well for both constructs.

5. Discussion

As stated, the main objectives of the current study were to delve into the intricate investigation of two pivotal constructs-immunity and possible self-among Iranian state sector in-service EFL teachers. The study aimed to elucidate the dynamic relationship and interdependencies between these constructs within the context of EFL teaching. The overarching objective of this research was to propose a comprehensive model that elucidates how teachers' Possible Selves intertwine with their immunity levels. Employing a quantitative-based approach, this study utilized surveys and statistical analyses to explore correlations between immunity and possible self, as well as relationships among various components within each construct.

The first research question tried to explore the existence of any significant relationship between the aspects of Iranian EFL Teachers' Immunity and the components of teacher Possible Selves. The results of the first research question showed all the components of Teachers immunity and Possible Selves had a significant relationship. Specifically, teachers with higher self-efficacy tend to have more positive Possible Selves, indicating confidence in their teaching abilities and future professional identity. The positive correlation with chronic stress might seem counterintuitive but could suggest that teachers with higher Possible Selves are more aware of their stressors. Teachers' ability to overcome challenges and their teaching-related competencies are crucial for a strong sense of Possible Selves. Besides, teachers who are more adaptable and open to change likely envision a wider range of future possibilities in their professional lives. Active engagement in the classroom and effective conflict resolution skills contribute positively to teachers' Possible Selves. The total score of Teachers' Immunity being highly correlated with Possible Selves underscores the importance of a comprehensive immunity framework in shaping teachers' professional identity and aspirations. The analysis revealed that all aspects of Teachers' Immunity are significantly and positively related to

the components of their Possible Selves. This suggests that enhancing Teachers' Immunity, particularly self-efficacy, resilience, and openness to change, can positively impact their professional identity and future aspirations. The strong correlations imply that interventions aimed at improving Teachers' Immunity could lead to more positive Possible Selves, contributing to better teaching outcomes and professional satisfaction.

The outcomes of this study align with and extend previous research on teachers' identity, immunity, and possible selves. Notably, these findings corroborate the work of Ordem (2017), which explored the relationship between a teacher's adaptive skills, self-conception, and motivation. While Ordem's longitudinal case study identified maladaptive behaviors and low motivation related to ideal self and self-efficacy, our study demonstrates a broader, statistically significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' immunity and their possible selves. Unlike Ordem's single-teacher focus, our research examines multiple teachers across different educational levels, offering more generalizable insights.

The study also supports the findings of Amirian et al. (2023), who highlighted the relationship between reflective teaching, language teacher immunity, and work motivation. Our research complements their work by showing that higher levels of immunity—encompassing resilience, stress management, and self-efficacy—are associated with more positive and well-defined possible selves. Both studies emphasize the value of reflective teaching practices and continuous professional development in enhancing immunity and sustaining motivation throughout teachers' careers. Moreover, our findings are consistent with Rahimpour et al. (2020), who emphasized the theoretical link between reflective teaching and teacher immunity. However, our study provides a more detailed examination by demonstrating how specific sub-factors of immunity predict work motivation and future professional identity. Similarly, the work of Namaziandost et al. (2023) underscores the importance of reflection and emotional regulation in fostering teacher immunity and motivation, which aligns with our findings. Both studies suggest that professional resilience is vital for maintaining positive possible selves and long-term success in the teaching profession.

The findings also resonate with and extend Hiver's (2015, 2017) work on the interconnected nature of language teacher immunity, vision, and motivation. Hiver (2017) emphasizes that a lack of productive immunity can lead to low morale and motivation, while robust immunity supports a positive professional identity. Our research confirms that teachers with higher levels of immunity exhibit more positive possible selves. Furthermore, our study emphasizes the importance of deliberate change in bridging the gap between teachers' actual and ideal selves, as highlighted by Hiver. The present study on Iranian EFL teachers' identity, focusing on immunity and Possible Selves, aligns with and extends the findings of prior research, particularly Niloufari and Dastgoshadeh's (2019) investigation into the relationships between EFL teachers' Possible Selves, self-efficacy, and students' achievement. Both studies underscore the importance of Possible Selves in shaping teachers' professional identity and its subsequent impact on teaching effectiveness.

Niloufari and Dastgoshadeh (2019) identified significant relationships between the development of EFL teachers' Possible Selves and their self-efficacy, as well as student achievement. Their regression analysis revealed that the ideal, ought-to, and actual selves were strong predictors of teacher self-efficacy and student success.

The exceptionally high and statistically significant correlations between Teachers' Immunity and the components of Possible Selves, as shown in Table 2, reflect the strong interconnectedness of these constructs within the context of Iranian EFL teachers. Rather than indicating redundancy or measurement flaws, these results can be interpreted as evidence that teachers' psychological resilience, professional efficacy, adaptability, and even stress responses are deeply intertwined with how they envision their professional future selves. For example, the strong correlation between chronic stress and all Possible Selves components may suggest that stress, in this context, does not necessarily undermine teachers' aspirations but instead coexists with a heightened sense of professional responsibility and self-expectation. The strong alignment between immunity factors such as self-efficacy, openness to change, and ability to overcome adversity with Ideal, Ought-to, and Feared LTS supports the notion that a teacher's psychological stance plays a central role in shaping their identity trajectories. These findings highlight the robust internal consistency of the constructs, the appropriateness of the instruments in capturing contextually relevant dimensions, and the nuanced psychological reality of teachers who, despite facing systemic challenges, remain driven by strong possible selves.

The current study found that senior high school teachers, who likely have more experience and exposure to professional development, exhibited higher levels of immunity and more positive Possible Selves in comparison with the junior high school teachers. This suggests that continuous professional growth and support are crucial for fostering a productive form of immunity that can facilitate positive changes in teachers' professional identities. Moreover, Hiver proposes that a lack of productive teacher immunity can lead to low teacher morale, motivation, and self-esteem. Our study corroborates this by showing that teachers with higher immunity levels, which include resilience, stress management, and self-efficacy, tend to have well-defined and positive Possible Selves. This indicates that a strong sense of immunity is integral to maintaining high motivation and a positive professional identity. Hiver also suggests that the future development of teacher immunity should focus on motivating language teachers to thrive in their profession. This is echoed in our findings, which highlight the importance of supporting less experienced teachers to help them develop resilience and a strong professional identity. By enhancing immunity through reflective teaching practices and continuous professional development, as suggested by Amirian et al. (2023), teachers can maintain high motivation and avoid the pitfalls of maladaptive immunity. The current study corroborates these findings by demonstrating a robust relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' immunity and their Possible Selves, where higher immunity levels, encompassing resilience and self-efficacy, correlate with well-defined and positive Possible Selves. In line with Niloufari and

Dastgoshadeh's (2019) findings, our study indicates that senior high school teachers, who exhibited higher levels of immunity and more positive Possible Selves, are likely to contribute more effectively to their students' academic progress. These results highlight the practical value of fostering well-developed Possible Selves in teacher education programs to enhance teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

Further supporting our findings, Dastgoshadeh (2018) developed a model of EFL teachers' Possible Selves specifically tailored for the Iranian context. This study employed rigorous methodologies, including theoretical framework development, questionnaire validation, and factor analysis, to categorize EFL teachers' Possible Selves into four types: ideal, ought-to, actual, and feared selves. Similar to our study, Dastgoshadeh (2018) emphasizes the significance of promoting positive and well-defined Possible Selves to enhance teachers' self-efficacy and professional growth. Both studies highlight the practical implications of understanding and cultivating Possible Selves in educational contexts, advocating for targeted support and development programs for teachers at different career stages. Additionally, our study's findings align with Huang et al.'s (2015) investigation of the relationship between identification with social role obligations, Possible Selves, and L2 motivation among Taiwanese college students. While their study focuses on learners rather than teachers, both studies highlight the influence of Possible Selves on motivation and behavior. Huang et al. (2015) emphasize the impact of cultural and social identities on motivational dispositions, using Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self-system as a foundational framework. Although our study focuses on Iranian EFL teachers, it similarly underscores how Possible Selves, shaped by teaching experience and professional identity, influence motivation and resilience. Both studies advocate for educational programs that acknowledge and leverage identity constructs to enhance outcomes, whether in language learning or teaching.

The second research question in our study aimed to examine differences between Iranian junior high school and senior high school English teachers regarding their immunity and Possible Selves. The results revealed significant distinctions between these two groups. Senior high school teachers consistently demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy, stress management, resilience, teaching-related competencies, openness to change, classroom engagement, and conflict resolution skills. These findings suggest that experience plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' resilience and professional aspirations. The differences between junior and senior high school teachers can be attributed to several key factors, primarily teaching experience and professional maturity. Senior high school teachers typically possess more extensive teaching experience, contributing to enhanced self-efficacy, better stress management, and greater adaptability (Aktaş, 2023). Moreover, the complex academic content and behavioral challenges associated with senior high school teaching may foster advanced problem-solving abilities and resilience (Tran, 2021). These findings refute the initial hypothesis that teaching experience has no impact on resilience levels and professional aspirations, underscoring the importance of supporting less experienced teachers to foster a robust professional

identity and long-term success. In conclusion, the present study expands on previous research by providing an integrated perspective on the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' immunity and Possible Selves. It highlights the critical role of teaching experience in developing professional resilience and identity. Our findings align with and extend the work of Niloufari and Dastgoshadeh (2019), Dastgoshadeh (2018), and Huang et al. (2015), collectively emphasizing the importance of fostering positive Possible Selves through tailored educational programs. These insights have significant implications for pre-service and in-service teacher development, advocating for comprehensive support mechanisms that enhance teachers' self-efficacy, professional identity, and long-term well-being.

6. Conclusion

The present study explored the dynamic aspects of Iranian EFL teachers' identity, focusing on their Immunity and Possible Selves. The study centered around two key research questions, aiming to understand the relationships between Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves and existence of any significant difference between Iranian junior high school English teachers and senior high school English teachers in terms of immunity and their Possible Selves. To this end, a sample of 200 in-service Iranian EFL teachers of Iranian state schools from Markazi province was selected based on the convenience sampling to fill out Teachers' Immunity and Possible Selves questionnaires. The participants' demographic information such as length of service or experience, and being senior or junior EFL teachers were studied as well. The findings demonstrated a robust and statistically significant relationship between aspects of Iranian EFL teachers' immunity and components of their possible selves (first research question). The high correlation coefficients indicated that overall immunity is a strong predictor of teachers' possible selves, rejecting the first null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between these constructs. The study also revealed significant differences between junior and senior high school teachers (second research question) regarding their immunity and possible selves. Senior high school teachers consistently scored higher across all aspects, including self-efficacy, chronic stress management, ability to overcome adversity, teaching-related components, openness to change, classroom activity, and conflict resolution ability. These results suggest that senior high school teachers possess greater resilience, self-efficacy, and professional aspirations, likely due to more extensive experience or different contextual factors associated with teaching at a higher educational level. Consequently, the second null hypothesis that claimed there is any significant difference between Iranian junior high school English teachers and senior high school English teachers in terms of immunity and their Possible Selves was rejected.

This study has several implications for EFL learners, teachers, curriculum developers, policy makers, and researchers. The findings of this study on the dynamic aspects of Iranian EFL teachers' identity, focusing on their immunity and possible selves, have several important pedagogical implications. These insights can guide educational policies, teacher training programs, and classroom practices to enhance the professional development and well-being of teachers. Teacher training programs should incorporate

modules that focus on developing teachers' immunity. This includes strategies for stress management, resilience building, and enhancing self-efficacy. Providing teachers with tools and techniques to handle classroom challenges can lead to a more positive teaching experience and professional growth. Encouraging teachers to engage in reflective practices can help them better understand their possible selves and professional aspirations. Reflection can be facilitated through regular workshops, mentoring sessions, and peer discussions. Establishing mentorship programs where experienced teachers support novice teachers can significantly enhance the latter's professional resilience and identity. Mentors can provide guidance, share experiences, and offer emotional support to help new teachers navigate the challenges of their early careers. Providing continuous professional development opportunities tailored to the needs of less experienced teachers can help them build the necessary skills and confidence. Workshops, seminars, and training sessions focused on classroom management, innovative teaching methods, and personal well-being are crucial.

This study had several limitations, including low sample size. The relatively small sample size compared to the total population of EFL teachers in Iran might limit the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts. The reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires may introduce bias, as participants might provide socially desirable responses or may not accurately recall or report their experiences and attitudes. While the Language Teachers Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ) and Possible Language Teacher Self Questionnaire (PLTSQ) are comprehensive, they may not capture all possible aspects of teacher immunity and possible selves, potentially omitting relevant factors that could influence the study's findings. The study's cross-sectional design captures data at a single point in time, which limits the ability to observe changes and developments in teachers' immunity and possible selves over time. Longitudinal studies would be needed to understand how these constructs evolve. Future research could explore several avenues to expand upon the findings of this study. For future research, interested researchers can compare Iranian EFL teachers' immunity and possible selves with those in different educational contexts (e.g., private vs. public schools, urban vs. rural schools). This could offer insights into the contextual factors influencing these constructs, helping to identify best practices and challenges specific to different settings. It is recommended for future research to investigate the influence of external factors such as policy changes, socio-economic conditions, and technological advancements on teachers' immunity and possible selves. Understanding how these external factors affect teachers can help in designing supportive policies and interventions. For further research, it is suggested to assess the effectiveness of various professional development programs in enhancing teachers' immunity and shaping their possible selves. Experimental studies can determine which types of training and support are most beneficial for teachers at different career stages.

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