

Research paper

## Assessing EFL Teachers' Teaching Success in Light of the Sociocultural Aspects of Identity and Collegiality

Zeinab Kafi<sup>1\*</sup>, & Sahar Tabatabaee Farani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khorasan Institute of Higher Education, Mashhad,  
Iran.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khayyam University, Mashhad, Iran.

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\*corresponding author: [kafi@khorasan.ac.ir](mailto:kafi@khorasan.ac.ir)

### **Abstract**

The current study probed the probable relationship between three constructs of sociocultural aspects of identity, collegiality and teacher success. 227 EFL male and female teachers constituted the participants. Three validated and reliable instruments were employed and the data were collected through Google Forms. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as well as SPSS. Results revealed a positive and significant relationship between study variables. Moreover, age and years of experience, were the sociocultural factors which proved to be predictors of teacher success in negative and positive ways respectively. Moreover, the construct of 'joint planning and assessment' within the teacher collegiality scale, correlated positively with teacher success. However, the mediating effect of collegiality in the relation between identity and teacher success proved insignificant. Pedagogical implications and concluding remarks were also presented considering the EFL teaching context.

**Keywords:** Collegiality, EFL Teachers, Identity, Sociocultural, Teacher Success

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### **Introduction**

As teachers are essential members of social communities (Khan, 2023) including the immediate family and friends, the colleagues, the institution in which they work and the society to

which they belong, they are considered the key agents of any educational reforms. The range of such influence is so vast that we have even witnessed numerous examples of the eternal impacts teachers have had on the personal lives and the mentalities of their students, resulting in the transformation of behaviors across all ages (Khan, 2023). Thus, delving into some of the sociocultural dimensions of teaching including *sociocultural aspects of teachers' identity* and teacher *collegiality* would provide insights about English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perception regarding their *teaching success*.

Teacher identity is shaped by various experiences, values and beliefs as well as the social and cultural contexts in which they work. Teachers' effectiveness as educators and their *success in their teaching practices* as well as their social relations with students and colleagues are under the influence of many factors including identity (Irfiana & Rodliyah, 2023). However, the *degree* of such impact varies among teachers which might be attributed to different sources/factors. As a result, some studies have centered around investigating whether sociocultural aspects of identity such as age, gender, academic degree, work context and years of teaching experience could act as predictors of students'/teachers' success (Bahar, 2010).

Though teacher collegiality, as Jarzabkowski (2000) elaborates, refers to any involvement (intellectual, moral, emotional, political etc.) with peers, it has rarely been given rise when it comes to its social dimensions! An in-depth understanding of collegiality brings with it plenty of social benefits for teachers themselves apart from their students and other team mates. Today, collegiality can be approached as a 'teacher culture' concept and in case this culture of collegiality is cultivated among teaching staff, it is proved to be of various benefits for teachers including an improvement in the *quality of teaching*. Additionally, promising social interaction among colleagues offers teachers a better state of emotional health which obviously reduces emotional stress and burnout

(Jarzabkowski, 2002). Therefore, the collegial culture takes place through the dynamic process of teachers socializing and working with colleagues.

Success in teaching can be considered the end product of all teachers which is of course influenced by many elements two of which were given reference so far (identity & collegiality). Assessing teachers' success in teaching could occur through various means one of which could be a self-declaring approach by teachers themselves because it offers a clear definition of "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300; as cited in Marcionetti & Castelli, 2023) or about the extent to which people might express feelings of like or dislike about their jobs (Spector, 1997). Teachers' self-evaluation and perceptions of success is crucial mainly because it is indicative of their retention (Ingersoll, 2001) in the profession.

To the best knowledge of the researchers, the critical interplay among sociocultural aspects of identity, collegiality and teachers' success in teaching, as a comprehensive approach, has not been investigated; therefore, the goal of this article would be to apply a sociocultural lens to probe the following research questions:

1. Are there significant relationships between EFL teachers' socio-cultural aspects of identity, collegiality, and their teaching success?
2. Can EFL teachers' socio-cultural aspects of identity and collegiality predict their teaching success?
3. Which of the dimensions of the teacher collegiality scale has a mediating role in the relationship between EFL teachers' sociocultural aspects of identity and teacher success?

## **Theoretical framework**

### **The sociocultural aspects of teachers' identity**

Teachers are key agents of any learning process and for them to be effective ones, *full participation*, as a member or a kind of person in that community of practice (COP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991), is required. Therefore, scrutinizing identity as the core of human beings sounds essential because it is taken as a non-unitary and dynamic issue which is shaped and reshaped on the basis of sociocultural structures (Xu & Ishola, 2023). On top of that, sociocultural aspects of teachers' life, including ethnic or national origin, gender, country, language, education, occupation, age, family, and social status are among highlighted factors which directly influence an individual's identity (Altugan, 2015). Discussing and analyzing these elements gain more significance in Islamic countries, including that of Saudi Arabia where factors such as gender come into more vivid play (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2023) because gender differences are extensively observable in almost all stages of personal and social life and teachers are no exception in this regard.

To add proof to the significance of the sociocultural aspects of teachers' identity, a number of studies have shed light on the positive relation between teachers' age, experience and level of education and the sub-constructs of teachers' success in teaching including that of classroom management (Amadi & Allagoa, 2017). Others (e.g., Martin & Shoho, 2000) have added weight to the aforementioned notion reporting that teachers experience a change in their perceptions and beliefs as they age and grow in experience. Ganji and Musaie Sejzehe (2022) focused on a wider perspective of the sociocultural aspects of identity including age, gender, teaching context, teaching experience and academic degree to probe how specifically these factors could affect teachers' classroom management behaviors.

Elsewhere, Heldáková and Ďurková (2021) delved into the relation between teachers' socio-demographic factors, i.e., age, gender and type of school and teachers' level of motivation. The study outcomes proved the significant existence of such a relation between type of school and teachers' higher level of motivation. Teachers' educational status (the degree of possessing related content knowledge), as another sociocultural element, also influences students' achievement, i.e., teachers' success in teaching. As a case in point, Gess-Newsome et al. (2019) illustrated that academic content knowledge is significant for students' achievement.

As the current sample of the available literature indicates and to the best knowledge of the researchers, no study has so far been carried out to probe whether the key sociocultural variables of teachers' identity could be significant predictors of teachers' success in teaching, or how perceptions of collegiality could relate to their teaching success and collegiality, particularly in an EFL context. This thought pattern gains weight when EFL teachers are asked about their success in teaching in a self-declarative manner which highlights the research gap in this regard. This is important because the extent to which teachers perceive themselves as successful leaders of their classrooms and members of their profession, could undoubtedly impact their ultimate teaching performance as well.

### **Collegiality in academic contexts**

When it comes to talking about progress in academic career in some countries such as the United States and Canada, the three concepts of “review, promotion, and tenure (RPT)” are considered based on which the academic members are evaluated along with the three aspects of “research, teaching, and service” (Dawson et al., 2022, p. 2). To explicate, these three aspects are not necessarily expected to be equally developed; studies in the field show that research is

considered as the most invaluable aspect while teaching and service are standing as the second and the third ones, respectively (Schimanski & Alperin, 2018). In addition to these three aspects, another one, collegiality, was also introduced which was accepted to be called the fourth aspect by some scholars (e.g., Cipriano, 2015) while some others disagreed and believed that it should be categorized under the three basic aspects (e.g., the American Association of University Professors).

To understand the meaning and application of collegiality in educational and more specifically in EFL context, it should be considered that achieving improvement in any organizational system needs a sense of belonging and cooperation on part of the staff members. As Shah (2011) asserts, collegiality can range from being limited to the basic communication needs to working together and establishing business relationships. In a similar fashion, collegiality is described as the kind of relationship among teachers through which they can normally share their knowledge and understanding to achieve their goals (Maeda et al., 2021). Moreover, Lieberman and Miller (1999) maintain that collegiality specifies the result of teachers' professional relationships in order to improve the educational setting. As Ramsden (1998) puts it, the concept of collegiality can be supported and explained by some closely related and more familiar concepts such as professionalism and autonomy in academic contexts, i.e., the academic members are responsible for preserving the ideal academic community. From a sociocultural standpoint, collegiality among faculty members might be presented as how they interact and deal with each other, and it might be introduced as the cause of mutual respect (Dirani & Alshdooh, 2017). Additionally, Cipriano and Buller (2012) delineate collegiality as the by-product of departmental relationships, interactions, collaborations, and respect for one another in order to get to the final point that is the faculty member's sense of achievement and success along with a positive feeling toward the self.

To the best of the authors' knowledge, the literature is fraught with studies that have focused on the concept of academic collegiality from different aspects; for instance, collegiality and promotion (Dawson et al., 2022), collegial leadership in higher education (McGrath et al., 2019), reviewing the positive outcomes of collegiality in institutes of higher learning (Enaifoghe, 2022), and collegiality and teacher burnout (Alzahmi et al., 2022) are among the topics that have been explored. However, due to the paucity of empirical evidence revolving around the probable relations that might be found among teachers' identity, collegiality, and their experience of success in an EFL context, the present study strives for finding out how the triangulation acts in EFL contexts of education.

### **EFL teacher success**

Giving consideration to the role of teachers as the cornerstones of educational settings (Pishghadam et al., 2021) and dependence of high-quality education on teacher's sense of effectiveness (Pishghadam et al., 2022) attaches weight to the concept of teacher success even in foreign language learning and teaching fields (Pishghadam et al., 2021). To shed light on the meaning of teacher success, Hung et al. (2007) put it as "the sense of achievement which teachers obtain from their work" (p. 415). To unfold, in this case, achievement means "getting a promotion, acquiring skills and knowledge, and improving patterns of behavior regarding relationships with students and instructional techniques" (Pishghadam et al., 2021, p. 4). In addition, as Bary (2010) and Hung et al. (2007) put it, being successful and effective in teaching process can be pertinent to what teachers know and perform in their profession and what they expect and concern about in the field. In a similar fashion, as Elizabeth et al. (2008) explicate, teacher success can be regarded as utilizing cognitive, socio-emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal skills by the teacher in order

to provide proper content material, effective instruction, adapting the teaching plans, and giving feedback to create rapport.

Additionally, to evaluate teacher success precisely, several studies have been administered to introduce the underlying constructs of teacher success and have developed some questionnaires (e.g., Khojastehmehr & Takrimi, 2008). Relatedly, teacher success has been investigated from different aspects through the time. For instance, Pishghadam et al. (2012) focused on the link between teacher effectiveness and creativity that came up with a positive relationship. In a multidimensional study, Pishghadam et al. (2019) stated that teacher success along with credibility and stroke could represent a positive impact on the EFL learners' willingness to attend language classes. Noorbakhsh et al. (2018) realized that there is a strong correlation between teacher success, identity, and stroke; besides, they presented that in case of reducing teacher burnout, EFL teacher success would be increased. In a similar line of study, Derakhshan et al. (2020a) could specify that teacher's autonomy and professional identity significantly and positively predict teacher success. Furthermore, Derakhshan et al. (2020b) indicated that EFL teacher's positive attitude toward research and their inclination to continuing professional development, both, can affect teacher success.

One of the points worth to be considered was that in most of the studies conducted in the realm of EFL teacher success, the learners were going to assess and evaluate their teachers' level of success. Hence, due to the dearth of evidence of teachers' conception of success in their own profession, and also, lack of study investigating the combination of factors such as identity and collegiality, the present work focuses on how the three factors can be related to and predict each other.

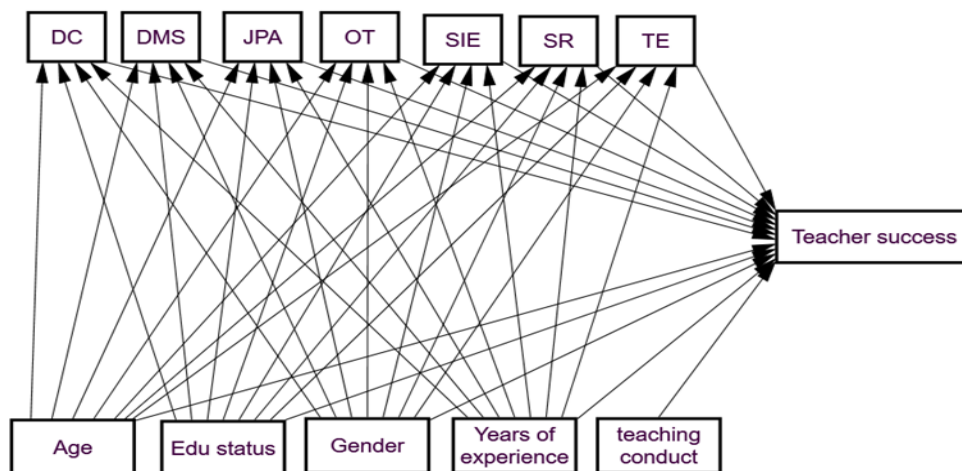
### The hypothesized model

To examine the interrelationships between the sociocultural aspects of teacher identity, collegiality and teaching success, a structural model is proposed. The model specifications are drawn upon the reviewed literature (i.e., knowledge of the theory) and/ or previous empirical research (Byrne, 2010). As discussed earlier, a plethora of research have probed the positive relation/ effect of age, gender, educational status and teaching experience with/on the success of teachers and students (Gess-Newsome et al., 2019). Therefore, we hypothesize a path from each of the sociocultural aspects of teachers' identity to the teacher success construct.

Consistent with the research outcome by Cipriano and Buller (2012) who introduce collegiality as a mean through which faculty members can get to the final point, which is a sense of achievement and success along with a positive feeling toward the self, a path from each of the constructs of the teacher collegiality scale was added to the teacher success construct. The hypothesized model is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*The Proposed Model of the interrelationships between Sociocultural Aspects of Identity, Collegiality and Teaching Success*



## Methodology

### Participants and Setting

The Participants of the study embraced 227 EFL (English as a Foreign language) teachers within the context of Mashhad, Iran, who were instructors of universities (37.4 percent), English language institute teachers (75.3 percent) or school teachers (26.9 percent). On a common basis, English language teachers work in more than one teaching context; therefore, they were given the chance of choosing more than one setting as their current workplace.

The educational status of these teacher participants centered around B.A (36.1%), M.A (40.5%) and PhD (23.3%) in the field of English Language Teaching, Translation and Literature. Majority of the participants (34.8 percent) possessed a teaching experience of 1-5 years. Regarding gender, 65.2 percent constituted female and 34.4 percent were male respondents. The average age range of the participants was 31. Additional demographic information regarding the participants is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Frequency and descriptive statistics for demographic information of the respondents*

Variable		Frequency / mean	Percent / Std. Deviation
Age		31.85	8.694
Gender	Female	148	65.2
	Male	78	34.4
	Total	227	100.0
Are you a school teacher?	No	166	73.1
	Yes	61	26.9
	Total	227	100.0
Are you a language institute teacher?	No	56	24.7
	Yes	171	75.3
	Total	227	100.0
Are you a university lecturer?	No	142	62.6
	Yes	85	37.4
	Total	227	100.0
Educational degree	BA	82	36.1
	MA	92	40.5
	PhD	53	23.3
	Total	227	100.0
Teaching background	1-5 years	79	34.8

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5-10 years	49	21.6
10-15 years	50	22
15-20 years	25	11
more than 20 years	24	10.6
Total	227	100.0

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## **Instrumentation**

### *Sociocultural aspects of teachers' identity*

To gather the required information regarding socio-demographic variables of teachers, a bio data section was inserted into the EFL teachers' collegiality questionnaire which asked the teacher participants about their age, educational status, gender, teaching context, and years of teaching experience.

### *Teacher collegiality scale*

There exists an abundant number of instruments for assessing teacher collegiality. However, the teacher collegiality scale developed and validated by Shah (2011) was employed to gather data. A 7-point Likert scale design ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) constituted the questionnaire. The instrument embraced seven constructs namely as: demonstrating mutual support and trust (DMS): 6 items, observing one another teaching (OT): 3 items, joint planning and assessment (JPA): 6 items, sharing ideas and expertise (SIE): 6 items, teaching each other (TE): 4 items, developing curriculum together (DC): 4 items and sharing resources (SR): 3 items. The Cronbach alpha employed in this study to assess the reliability for each of the constructs of the teacher collegiality scale depicted a range of .72 to .77.

### *Teacher success scale*

A single-item survey was applied to measure teachers' success which was taken from Pishghadam et. al., (2022). Participants were invited to choose how successful they perceive themselves as EFL teachers on a five-point scale. The item was rated from 1 demonstrating "very low" to 5

demonstrating “very high”. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was 0.9, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

### **Procedure**

The core aim of the research was to investigate the interrelationship between the sociocultural aspects of EFL teachers' identity, collegiality and their teaching success. To do so, three valid and reliable means of data collection were employed. To begin with, a socio-demographic section was inserted into the teacher collegiality scale so as to gather information about EFL teachers' age, gender, educational status, teaching context and teaching experience. Afterwards, all items regarding the study variables were transformed into Google Forms so as to gather data online through various social network platforms. The data collection process took 6 months. The link to the questionnaires were sent to different groups/channels each of which possessed a minimum number of 1000 teacher-members out of which a total of 227 responded back.

### **Data analysis**

To commence data analysis, the obtained information was analyzed using the SPSS software version 27 and SmartPLS software. The statistical methods employed in the study included descriptive statistics techniques and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM was picked as the statistical tool because it is a multivariate statistical analysis technique which is used to analyze structural relationships between measured variables and latent constructs. Once data analysis was carried out, the results were discussed according to the educational and sociocultural aspects of teaching in an EFL context.

## Results

### Preliminary analysis of the variables

The prominent scope of the study was to assess the interrelationship between EFL teachers' sociocultural aspects of identity, collegiality and teacher success. Regarding the sociocultural aspects of teachers' identity, for the data which were considered quantitative, such as gender, frequency and percentage were applied, and for the ones which possessed a qualitative nature such as age, mean and standard deviation were applied which were previously reported in Table 1.

However, the descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis for the other variables of the study (teacher collegiality and teacher success) were employed and the results are illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Success and Teacher Collegiality Scale*

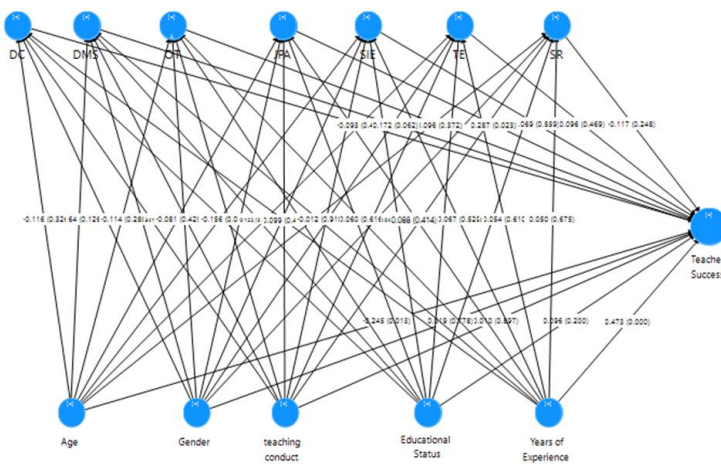
Questionnaire. Constructs	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Deviation	Kurtosis	Skewness
DMS (Demonstrating Mutual Support and trust)	4.653	1.167	6.833	1.086	0.721	-0.627
OT (Observing one another Teaching)	3.780	1.000	6.667	1.042	0.129	-0.066
JPA (Joint Planning and assessment)	4.142	1.167	7.000	1.122	-0.294	-0.315
SIE (Sharing Idea and Expertise)	4.386	1.000	6.667	1.082	0.672	-0.704
TE (Teaching Each other)	4.319	1.000	7.000	1.267	-0.168	-0.421
DC (Developing Curriculum together)	3.837	1.000	7.000	1.170	-0.559	-0.174
SR (Sharing Resources)	4.209	1.000	7.000	1.432	-0.622	-0.312
Teacher success	3.780	2.000	5.000	0.719	-0.557	0.069

As illustrated, the mean score for the teacher success variable is 3.780. Regarding the dimensions of the teacher collegiality scale, the highest mean score belongs to DMS with an average of 4.653 and a standard deviation of 1.086, while the lowest mean score is reported for the OT construct with an average of 3.780 and a standard deviation of 1.042. According to Table 2, the values of Skewness and Kurtosis fell between -2 and 2, which indicates normal distribution of the data (Hair et al., 2022).

### Structural model analysis

In this research model, since the study variables are observable ones, a measurement model cannot be applied /does not fit. Therefore, for further examination of the model, fit indices are reported in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**  
*Coefficients (significance level) of the Structural Model for Teacher Success*



SRMR=0.046  
NFI=0.933

According to Figure 2, the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) index was less than 0.01 (0.046), indicating a good fit for the model. Additionally, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) was above 0.9 (0.933), which also indicates a good fit for the structural model (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). Therefore, as the structural model was confirmed, the research hypotheses/questions related to the study were examined. The model coefficients and their significance levels are reported in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*Coefficients and significance level for the structural model*

Path	Coefficients( $\beta$ )	T Statistics	P Values
Age -> DC	-0.116	1.002	0.317
Age -> DMS	0.164	1.502	0.134

Age -> JPA	-0.081	0.787	0.431
Age -> OT	-0.114	1.093	0.275
Age -> SIE	-0.014	0.126	0.900
Age -> SR	-0.042	0.357	0.721
Age -> TE	-0.008	0.072	0.942
Age -> Teacher success	-0.245	2.630	0.009
DC -> Teacher success	-0.093	0.860	0.390
DMS -> Teacher success	0.172	1.678	0.094
Edu.status -> DC	-0.156	1.888	0.060
Edu.status -> DMS	-0.122	1.423	0.155
Edu.status -> JPA	-0.108	1.288	0.198
Edu.status -> OT	-0.146	1.798	0.073
Edu.status -> SIE	-0.042	0.483	0.630
Edu.status -> SR	-0.020	0.212	0.832
Edu.status -> TE	-0.199	2.315	0.021
Edu.status -> Teacher success	0.096	1.202	0.230
Gender -> DC	-0.014	0.220	0.826
Gender -> DMS	-0.059	0.919	0.359
Gender -> JPA	-0.002	0.028	0.978
Gender -> OT	0.029	0.446	0.655
Gender -> SIE	-0.076	1.182	0.238
Gender -> SR	-0.010	0.157	0.875
Gender -> TE	-0.073	1.106	0.269
Gender -> Teacher success	0.019	0.284	0.776
JPA -> Teacher success	0.287	2.363	0.019
OT -> Teacher success	-0.096	0.939	0.348
SIE -> Teacher success	-0.069	0.594	0.553
SR -> Teacher success	-0.117	1.143	0.253
TE -> Teacher success	0.096	0.715	0.475
Years of experience -> DC	0.099	0.808	0.420
Years of experience -> DMS	-0.012	0.109	0.913
Years of experience -> JPA	0.088	0.772	0.441
Years of experience -> OT	0.060	0.499	0.618
Years of experience -> SIE	0.067	0.599	0.550
Years of experience -> SR	0.050	0.393	0.694
Years of experience -> TE	0.054	0.475	0.635
Years of experience -> Teacher success	0.473	4.527	<0.001
teaching conduct -> DC	0.025	0.251	0.802
teaching conduct -> DMS	0.066	0.551	0.582
teaching conduct -> JPA	0.091	0.662	0.508
teaching conduct -> OT	0.075	0.592	0.554

teaching conduct -> SIE	0.145	0.803	0.422
teaching conduct -> SR	0.056	0.474	0.636
teaching conduct -> TE	0.081	0.639	0.523
teaching conduct -> Teacher success	-0.010	0.132	0.895

**Analysis of the study research questions**

To answer the first research question, “Are there significant relationships between EFL teachers’ socio-cultural aspects of identity, collegiality, and their teaching success?”, the correlation coefficients and significance level were assessed and the results are depicted in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Correlation (Significance Level) of the Main Research Variables for the model*

Questionnaire	teaching success	teacher identity	teacher collegiality scale
teaching success	1		
teacher identity	0.134(0.044)	1	
teacher collegiality scale	0.130(0.050)	0.272(<0.001)	1

In case the significance level for the correlation coefficients is less than 0.05, a meaningful relationship between the research variables is indicated. Therefore, according to Table 4, the correlation coefficient between teachers’ collegiality and teachers’ identity is 0.272, indicating a direct relationship between them. In other words, an increase in teachers’ collegiality leads to an increase in teachers’ identity. Also, the correlation coefficient between teaching success and teachers’ identity is 0.134, indicating a direct relationship between them which means an increase in teaching success leads to an increase in teachers’ identity.

Additionally, the correlation coefficient between teaching success and teacher collegiality is 0.130, indicating a direct relationship between them; thus, an increase in teaching success leads to an increase in teachers’ collegiality. Therefore, there are significant relationships between EFL

teachers' collegiality, socio-cultural aspects of identity, and teaching success. Regarding the second research question, "Can EFL teachers' socio-cultural aspects of identity and collegiality predict their teaching success?", a reference is given to Figure 2 and Table 3. Considering the sociocultural aspects of the teachers' identity, the effect of age on teacher success proved to be negative and significant ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $\beta = -0.245$ ), meaning that as age increases, the teacher success score decreases. Moreover, the effect of years of experience on teacher success was positive and significant ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $\beta = 0.473$ ), which means as years of experience increases, the teacher success score increases accordingly.

On the other hand, with regard to the teacher collegiality scale, the effect of joint planning and assessment (JPA) on teacher success indicated to be positive and significant ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $\beta = 0.287$ ), meaning that as JPA increases, the teacher success score increases as well. However, the effects of the remaining variables on teacher success were not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). To conclude, age, joint planning and assessment (JPA) and years of experience, can be considered as predictors of EFL teachers' success; however, the remaining variables cannot predict EFL teachers' teaching success.

To examine the last research question, "Which of the dimensions of the teacher collegiality scale has a mediating role in the relationship between EFL teachers' sociocultural aspects of identity and teacher success?", the mediating effect of the dimensions of the teacher collegiality scale on the relationship between the sociocultural aspects of teacher identity and teacher success was examined through the Bootstrap method and Sobel Test. If the significance level is less than 0.05, the indirect mediating role is accepted as effective. Based on this index, the significance or non-significance of the indirect path is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
*Bootstrapping method and Sobel Test for the Indirect Effect of the Model*

Path	indirect effect			Sobel Test	
	Coefficients( β)	T Statistics	P Values	Statistic s	P Value s
Age -> DC -> Teacher success	0.011	0.532	0.595	0.648	0.517
Edu.status -> DC -> Teacher success	0.014	0.724	0.470	0.753	0.451
Gender -> DC -> Teacher success	0.001	0.142	0.887	0.208	0.834
Years of experience -> DC -> Teacher success	-0.009	0.458	0.647	-0.600	0.548
teaching conduct -> DC -> Teacher success	-0.002	0.167	0.867	-0.225	0.822
Age -> DMS -> Teacher success	0.028	1.081	0.280	1.175	0.239
Edu.status -> DMS -> Teacher success	-0.021	1.090	0.276	-1.071	0.284
Gender -> DMS -> Teacher success	-0.010	0.781	0.435	-0.818	0.412
Years of experience -> DMS -> Teacher success	-0.002	0.097	0.923	-0.115	0.908
teaching conduct -> DMS -> Teacher success	0.011	0.470	0.638	0.489	0.624
Age -> JPA -> Teacher success	-0.023	0.708	0.479	-0.787	0.430
Edu.status -> JPA -> Teacher success	-0.031	1.045	0.296	-1.099	0.271
Gender -> JPA -> Teacher success	-0.001	0.027	0.979	-0.031	0.975
Years of experience -> JPA -> Teacher success	0.025	0.671	0.502	0.777	0.437
teaching conduct -> JPA -> Teacher success	0.026	0.609	0.543	0.606	0.544
Age -> OT -> Teacher success	0.011	0.605	0.545	0.681	0.495
Edu.status -> OT -> Teacher success	0.014	0.796	0.427	0.777	0.436
Gender -> OT -> Teacher success	-0.003	0.290	0.772	-0.398	0.691
Years of experience -> OT -> Teacher success	-0.006	0.327	0.744	-0.446	0.655
teaching conduct -> OT -> Teacher success	-0.007	0.366	0.714	-0.477	0.633
Age -> SIE -> Teacher success	0.001	0.071	0.944	0.127	0.898
Edu.status -> SIE -> Teacher success	0.003	0.213	0.831	0.366	0.714
Gender -> SIE -> Teacher success	0.005	0.473	0.637	0.522	0.601
Years of experience -> SIE -> Teacher success	-0.005	0.281	0.779	-0.427	0.669
teaching conduct -> SIE -> Teacher success	-0.010	0.431	0.667	-0.469	0.638
Age -> SR -> Teacher success	0.005	0.259	0.796	0.367	0.713
Edu.status -> SR -> Teacher success	0.002	0.162	0.871	0.216	0.828
Gender -> SR -> Teacher success	0.001	0.123	0.902	0.150	0.880
Years of experience -> SR -> Teacher success	-0.006	0.292	0.771	-0.400	0.688
teaching conduct -> SR -> Teacher success	-0.006	0.364	0.716	-0.423	0.671
Age -> TE -> Teacher success	-0.001	0.040	0.968	-0.077	0.938

Edu.status -> TE -> Teacher success	-0.019	0.633	0.527	-0.677	0.497
Gender -> TE -> Teacher success	-0.007	0.480	0.632	-0.598	0.549
Years of experience -> TE -> Teacher success	0.005	0.243	0.808	0.406	0.684
teaching conduct -> TE -> Teacher success	0.008	0.340	0.734	0.466	0.640

According to the results of the indirect effects and the Sobel Test reported in Table 5, the significance levels for all the indirect relationships are greater than 0.05. This means there is no significant relationship between the sociocultural aspects of teachers' identity and teacher success considering the mediating role of the dimensions of the teacher collegiality scale.

## **Discussion**

The triangulation of the study variables (i.e. socio-cultural aspects of teachers' identity, collegiality and teaching success) offered invaluable insights regarding the complex interrelationship between the variables. The results revealed some nuanced findings while also challenging some prevailing assumptions. Likewise, Cheng (2021) probed the complex nature of teacher identity development, interaction with colleagues, professional roles and social context as factors which highly influence educational outcomes.

The prominent outcome of the study rests on the existence of a positive and significant relationship between EFL teachers' socio-cultural aspects of identity, collegiality and their teaching success which is also supported by other similar studies (Asaoka et. al., 2020). They provided evidence that collegiality and professional collaboration improves teaching success. Delving into the obtained data also proved the positive role of years of experience in predicting teaching success. This stands for the fact that professional maturity as well as accumulating practical knowledge in teaching can directly contribute to EFL teachers' sense of accomplishment in their position. This perspective is supported by previous research on the value of experience in

improving classroom management, instructional strategies, and emotional resilience (Ganji & Sejzehi, 2022). This could also give weight to the fact that seasoned teachers are better at navigating educational complexities of their teaching context. In line with this pattern of thought, Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2010) also provided report on the significant predictive role of years of experience on teaching success.

On the other hand, a negatively significant correlation was observed between age and teaching success which indicates that older teachers reported lower levels of perceived success. Previous studies on teacher burnout (Alzahmi, et al., 2022) convey similar trends saying that prolonged exposure to stress in a profession, without abundant support on behalf of the institution, may result in a diminished job satisfaction among older teachers and educators. As the aforementioned researchers discuss, this thought pattern introduces a critical perspective regarding senior teachers: in adapting themselves to evolving educational settings, seasoned teachers might experience feelings of professional stagnation. This particular result, challenges the prevailing assumption that age and experience enhance teacher efficacy in a uniform manner! This issue seems to call for further investigation within the sociocultural context of teaching in Iran!

As mentioned earlier, collegiality and teaching success revealed a significant relation in the Iranian EFL context. Joint planning and assessment (JPA), as one of the constructs of teacher collegiality scale, depicted a predictive role for teaching success meaning that when teachers engage in cooperative planning and evaluation, their perception of professional efficacy is enhanced. Jarzabkowski's (2002) theory provides support for this outcome, claiming that collegial relationships enhance mutual support which result in teaching quality. Moreover, research on teacher collaboration aligns with this finding, enforcing that strong collegial ties, specifically

through collaborative assessment and planning, enhance teaching quality as well as reducing isolation, promoting innovation, and improving job satisfaction (Enaifoghe, 2022).

Contrastive perspectives rose when other sociocultural aspects of teacher identity such as educational status and gender did not significantly predict/correlate with teacher success. This raises a critical reflection because the traditional perception regarding educational attainment has always stood for the point that advancing one's education undoubtedly results in better teaching outcomes. This particular outcome provides reason for the perspective that while formal qualifications are essential, they do not guarantee the practical skills or collegial engagement necessary for success in the classroom (Derakhshan et al., 2020b).

Moving further in the study results, collegiality and teacher identity significantly correlated with each other meaning that the EFL teachers' sociocultural aspects of identity could be enhanced by the kind of interaction they have with their colleagues. The theory of identity by Wenger (1991) provides support, asserting that identity is a dynamic construct which develops through participating in communities of practice, reinforcing the idea that collegiality is a determinant factor in teacher identity and teaching effectiveness. However, based on the outcomes of the current study, further examination and research is demanded when it comes to the insignificant mediating role of collegiality in the relationship between identity and teacher success. It can be concluded that though collegiality has previously been introduced as an important factor in professionalism (Shah, 2012), its mediating role may mostly stay under the influence of context, leadership style or the culture of the institute (McGrath, et. al., 2019), if success in teaching is to be the end product of EFL teachers' classes! Also, a culture of collegiality (Jarzabkowski, 2000) sounds to be essentially cultivated among the community of EFL teachers in order to reach effectiveness in teaching. Older teachers (i.e. age factor), not being highly willing to collaborate

with young or less experienced teachers, could be another reason for the poor/insignificant role of collegiality in the EFL context of teaching in Iran (Askari & Tabatabaee-Yazdi, 2023). As reported by the same authors, this lack of collegial ties could relate to other personal factors as well.

### **Conclusion**

The current study scrutinized the teaching success of EFL teachers with regard to the sociocultural aspects of their identity as well as their collegiality. Shedding light on the primary outcomes of the study, years of experience and joint planning and assessment (JPA) were the positive predictors of EFL teachers' success while age proved to be a negative one. Additionally, the mediating role of collegiality when giving reference to identity and teacher success has to be investigated in a broader context, probably not only that of an EFL setting.

This kind of observed outcome is probably because the interplay between sociocultural aspects of identity, collegiality and teaching success is both complex and context-dependent. Therefore, it is highly recommended that educational institutions provide their best to foster a collaborative culture which brings together continuous support for teachers of any age to ensure sustained professional growth and job satisfaction/success. Removing the aforementioned barrier would contribute to a broader understanding of how these multifaceted aspects interact to shape teachers' professional outcomes (collegiality and teaching success) in an EFL teaching context. The study by Tavanapour and Chalak (2019) provides support that issues such as low salaries, methods of teaching, lack of facilities etc. are among common reasons among teachers which result in lack of motivation and success.

The study results also give rise to the suggestion that institutions should give priority to the retention strategies they are applying in order to save as many experienced teachers as they can,

so as to guarantee long term professional growth. Moreover, interventions, such as mentorship and various continuous professional development programs are deemed necessary in retaining senior teachers and addressing any causes of potential burnout or lack of teaching success. Exploring the role of other factors which have been indicated as influential elements in promoting teachers' success, such as self-assessment (Zohoorian, et al., 2024), within a wider context, can also provide fresh insights in this realm. Moreover, future studies could explore other possible dimensions to find whether collegiality's impact on success is moderated by external organizational factors or internal personal dynamics. Finally, probing reasons/challenges for the absence of a collegial environment in some EFL educational settings can also provide useful insight into removing possible barriers of teacher success.

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