Yahaya Halıdu

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5290-6379
PhD student, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Institute of Social Sciences; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, Turkey, greatsymbo@yahoo.com

Examining Factors That Affect Native Teacher Identity in Türkiye: Is Being a Teacher a Profession or A Calling?

Abstract

Teacher identity is the process by which teachers make sense of themselves as teachers and the ways and means they define their jobs as teachers in relation to people they share the teaching cycle with. Recent studies have shown that English teachers are constantly defining and redefining their professional identity as a result of immense changes in their professional beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, actions and the need to understand the dynamics in their teaching professions. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to shed light on the complex set of factors that shape the teacher identity of Native English Teachers in Türkiye. This study adopted a qualitative approach with a semi-structured interview and sampled 8 native teachers working in Türkiye as participants. These teachers were sampled through purposive sampling because the research context deems it fit as it offers the opportunity to sample key characteristics that are relevant to the study. Data were analyzed in through 6 key steps in order to understand the underlying themes. The findings suggested that safe and orderly school environments affect teacher identity of native teachers in Türkiye. Regarding school leadership and how it affects teacher identity, it was observed that clear and focused school leadership had the ability to positively affect teacher identity. Similarly, Parent-Teacher collaborations or relationships such as parent involvement in school decisions were found to affect teacher identity just as gender and students' expectations.

Keywords: *Teacher Identity, Calling, Profession, Native Teachers, Foreigner, Türkiye*

Türkiye'de Yerli Öğretmen Kimliğini Etkileyen Faktörlerin İncelenmesi: Öğretmenlik Bir Meslek mi Yoksa Bir Çağrı mı?

Öz

Öğretmen kimliği, öğretmenlerin kendilerini öğretmen olarak anlamlandırdıkları süreç ve öğretim döngüsünü paylaştıkları kişilerle ilişkili olarak işlerini öğretmen olarak tanımladıkları yollar ve araçlardır. Son zamanlarda yapılan çalışmalar, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki inançları, tutumları, algıları, eylemleri ve öğretmenlik mesleklerindeki dinamikleri anlama ihtiyaçlarındaki büyük değişimlerin bir sonucu olarak mesleki kimliklerini sürekli olarak tanımladıklarını ve yeniden tanımladıklarını göstermiştir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'deki Anadili İngilizce olan öğretmenlerin öğretmen kimliğini şekillendiren karmaşık faktörlere ışık tutmaktır. Bu çalışmada, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yöntemiyle nitel bir yaklaşım benimsenmiş ve Türkiye'de görev yapan 8 anadili İngilizce öğretmeni katılımcı olarak örnekleme alınmıştır. Bu öğretmenler amaçlı örnekleme yoluyla seçilmiştir çünkü araştırma bağlamı, çalışmayla ilgili temel özellikleri örnekleme fırsatı sunduğu için uygun görülmüştür. Altta yatan temaları anlamak için veriler 6 temel adımda analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, güvenli ve düzenli okul ortamlarının Türkiye'deki yerli öğretmenlerin öğretmen kimliğini etkilediğini göstermiştir. Okul liderliği ve bunun öğretmen kimliğini nasıl etkilediği ile ilgili olarak, açık ve odaklanmış okul liderliğinin öğretmen kimliğini olumlu yönde etkileme kabiliyetine sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Benzer şekilde, okul kararlarına veli katılımı gibi veli-öğretmen işbirliği veya ilişkilerinin de cinsiyet ve öğrenci beklentileri gibi öğretmen kimliğini etkilediği bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen Kimliği, Çağrı, Meslek, Yerli Öğretmenler, Yabancı, Türkiye

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Teacher identity demonstrates the level at which teachers sense, make meanings and understand themselves as teachers. Therefore, it could be said that teachers who understand and make sense of their teaching roles demonstrate and exhibit emotional attachment to the teaching profession. On the basis of this assumption, scholars within the field have increasingly acknowledged the importance of teacher identity to the teaching profession (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). According to Bei-jaard et al., (2004), the development of teacher identity is a continual process that involves teachers interpreting and reinterpreting who they are and who they could become.

From a theoretical perspective, many writers within the field seem to focus on the importance of socio-cultural dimensions and how they shape a teacher, while others stress the fact that identity is discursive and narrative. In one of such studies that emphasized the role of society and culture, the notion is that social classes and cultural beliefs such as age and

personality influence teacher identity (Salinas, 2017). This implies that, a teacher can change his or her identity as a result of their relationship with colleagues, the environment in which they work, and the demands of the language they teach. To add up to the above named, teacher identity could be said to be how teachers position themselves and how others with whom they work will regard them high and above all (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). From this perspective, teacher identity could also be influenced by the expectations of their society.

Therefore, in gaining an understanding of teacher identity, there are a variety of elements that must be considered. One of such elements includes a comprehensive understanding of the closer relationship between identity and self and the role of emotions in shaping such identity. Traditionally, it is strongly believed that career choices were associated with well-paid jobs. This view now raises eyebrows as to whether the reason why an individual opted for/decided to be a teacher in the first place, is intrinsically or extrinsically influenced. Intrinsically influenced in the sense that they perceive their teaching career as a calling from a voice within them, and extrinsically influenced in the sense that teaching is widely available as a job that one can make ends meet while waiting for a better job later.

1.2 Purpose of the present study

For those who understand the role of teachers, teaching is said to be *many jobs merged into one.* A teacher refers to someone who guides, helps, and inspires others to learn (Nyatuka, 2020). In this sense, the term is used to refer to a person who facilitates learning, someone who helps learners to get hold of their own minds and someone who helps students to acquire knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and competencies. This means a teacher does not only support and encourage students' full participation in the teaching and learning processes but acts as a mentor, a role model, and a student guidance coordinator. In some instances, a teacher could also be regarded as a professional whose job is to guide learning (Sezen-Gultekin, 2022). As such, the sole responsibility of the teacher in such instances is to impart knowledge on learners through prerequired formal methods of instruction. This notion does eliminate the role of a teacher as a change agent with the responsibility of creating awareness and instilling values, morals, and ethics.

From the above two definitions of a teacher, the questions that still stand now and attract our immediate concerns are*: 'Is teaching a profession (career) or a calling (vocation)?' And how do factors that affect teacher identity differ for a teacher who regards teaching as a calling or profession? In which significant way(s) do these factors impact the role and unique identity of such teacher(s)?* To explicitly state the aims and rationale of this study, the belief is that in today's world the roles of teachers have gone beyond imparting knowledge and merely

teaching of content. Their roles, to all intents and purposes, have now extended far beyond mentoring students, providing guidance services, impacting contents, instilling values, ethics and attitudes and teaching ways and means students could apply those acquired knowledge, competencies and skills in their respective personal, career and professional lives too.

To that reasonable extent, the objective of this study is to shed light on the complex factors that shape the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye, with particular attention to the influences of various stakeholders in the education system. Within the scope of this study, a native teacher connotes a person who is a native speaker of a country where the language and medium of instruction he/she currently teaches (professionally) is spoken and to a larger extent, the language he/she teaches is also regarded as his/her mother tongue. This definition falls within Suárez's (2000) definition of who a native is, as he defines the term native to denote locality, and someone born or brought up within an environment where English language is spoken. This means, as a result of the above description, the native teacher commands some degree of ownership in terms of the broad up-to-date grammar and vocabulary. As such, the study seeks, therefore, among other things, to find answers to the following qualitative questions:

1. How do school administrators and the school learning environment shape the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye?
2. In what ways do students and parents influence the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye?
3. How do peer/colleague teachers shape the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye?
4. How does gender impact the relationship between the above factors and the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye?

2.Review of Relevant Literature

2.1 Literature Review

Every individual must have a career goal to achieve in life. To achieve this career goal, individuals must maintain motivations and inbuilt drives and abilities. It is equally believed that career goals motivate individuals to work well (Afiyati, 2018). For this reason, to adequately understand what career or work life means, it is important to understand how a career develops. Most individuals, to a very large extent, it must be emphasized, undergo different processes to attain their occupational status. As such, career development refers to the encompassment of an individual's work experience that puts them on the path to their desired occupation or vocation

(McDonald, et al., 2016). These processes are often influenced by different factors such as personal and socio-demographic factors.

On the personal level, on the one hand, these factors may include childhood upbringing and work-related values that are dear to the individual (McDonald, et al., 2016), while those socio-demographic factors on the other hand, center around finding a balance between the job environment demand and the personal balance (McDonald, et al., 2016). This now creates a quest in determining how individuals within the work environment view themselves in the job and the kind of desire and motivation they attach to their respective jobs. The term 'calling to a job' is often used to mean a spiritual inner higher power that an individual relates to and with a particular job (Wooll, 2022). Such individuals view their jobs as the only kind of job they can or are able to do satisfactorily and find satisfaction from and have a life-long meaningful impact. But for others, they view their job as a profession they have learnt with time through sustainable professional teacher training.

2.2 Concept of Calling and the Teaching Work

According to Bullough, & Hall-Kenyon., (2011) to be *'called'* implies answering a summon which can be experienced by a force either inner or outer and sometimes from God. We can, therefore, say that *to be called* to teach comes from the voice of a teacher within the individual and when such a voice is answered, an individual feels a sense of profound gratitude and well-being (Palmer, 2017). But the concept of teaching as a calling brings together two broad terminologies that can only be understood through a deeper reflection (Madero, 2021). Teaching involves several co-existing attributes that an individual needs to possess before being able to regard him or herself as a teacher. When teaching is regarded as a calling, it means a deep-rooted belief that teaching is solely the career preference that makes sense to pursue, and it also means a lifelong passion to support learners.

Regarding teaching as a calling comes with certain peculiar expressions. Some of these expressions include such statements as ... *''I feel that teaching is my calling in life as teaching just feels right for me''* (Bullough, & Hall-Kenyon., 2011, 131), as well as statements that characterize their feelings as tutors about teaching such as *'I know that teaching is what I am supposed to do in life. I was destined to become a teacher; it was meant to be. Teaching is my duty and calling.'* (Bullough, & Hall-Kenyon., p.140). Thus, for the called teacher, teaching truly is 'something that [they] love to do' (Buskist, Benson, and Sikorski 2005, p. 118). Possessing a sense of calling to teach helps in developing and maintaining an inseparable bond with teaching. This inseparable bond in most individuals is viewed by them as a means of coming to terms with life and a means of finding oneself in the work world (Bullough, & Hall-

Kenyon., 2011). To support such a claim, in a study by Serow (1994) to ascertain the kind of motivation preservice teachers hold for teaching, it was observed that most participants who view teaching as a calling for them possess a significantly greater enthusiasm and are committed and mindful of their potential impact on students, the school environment and with the people with whom they work. These individuals were also found to be less concerned about the efforts and sacrifices they must put in, as well as regarding the colleagues with whom they have to work with and finally, they are also willing and ever ready to accept extra teaching-related roles.

Manuel and Brindley (2005) regard these efforts and willingness as being driven by intrinsic motivations, and one of these motivations comes because of realizing one's personal and social values. Equally, we can conclude by affirming the fact that calling or calling to teach is a means of finding purpose, direction, and moral strength in doing what one finds very meaningful and rewarding not just by material means but also, by such internal fulfilment and comfort.

2.3 Concept of Profession and Work

For a teacher to be regarded as a professional, it is important that the teacher possesses adequate formal training to become an expert with knowledge and teaching professional ethics (Erden, 2007). So, teaching as a profession refers to an occupation that is made up of a group of professionals who possess knowledge of both socio-cultural and scientific attitudes (Erden, 2007). It can, therefore, be said that, teachers who are trained professionally are aware of the problems learners bring into the learning environment and are trained to answer learners' questions. To others, a non-professional teacher cannot convey acquired knowledge systematically regardless of how competent they are (Hotaman, 2010). Therefore, the argument on the notion that teaching as a profession connotes the fact that, teachers need to acquire teaching skills and the need for them as teachers to belong to professional groups (Erden, 2007). Some of these skills centre on planning and executing lessons, evaluating learners, maintaining a conducive learning environment, and ensuring learners participate actively in the learning process.

Therefore, the conclusion on the part of the notion that teaching as a profession stresses the skills teachers must acquire to enable them to carry out their teaching jobs. This view, according to Ün Açıkgöz (2004), is essential in order to have a successful teaching career as a teacher and emphasizes the need to have basic teaching qualities such as being knowledgeable in the subject area, being able to instigate and motivate learners, being aware of learners' individual differences, being able to communicate and evaluate teaching objectives and finally designing the teaching and learning environment.

In short, arguably, teaching as a profession means teachers must realize their personal qualities as teachers as a result of their acquired educational qualifications. Also, they must be aware of the demand and passion with which they represent the profession with, just as devoting ample time to inspire and empower students to achieve and exceed their potentials.

2.4 Factors That Influence Teacher Identity

The success and failure of every education system is solely dependent on the shoulders of teachers. This means teachers are central to the teaching curriculum and the educational system. But, most often than not, certain factors consistently influence the beliefs and judgements teachers bring into the teaching and learning environments. Teacher identity can, therefore, be said to be heavily influenced by many factors within and outside the educational environment (Gholampour & Ayati, 2020). According to Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), it is of no new news that teacher identity is constantly being shaped and reshaped as they interact with others in their professional engagement. To a larger extent, native teachers are expected to work with school administrations, parents, students and other colleague teachers for the betterment of their students. As such, the views and the overall judgements of the aforementioned individuals (parents and students) and institutions (school administrations) placed on native teachers also go a long way towards shaping their identity. As rightfully stated in the introductory section of this study, native teachers are native speakers of the language they teach. In the views of Lee (2005), six broad characteristics define who a native speaker is: (1) Acquisition and constant use of the language at an early stage, (2) having instinctual command of the language, (3) ability to use language fluently, (4) ability to use the language in different spontaneous discourses, (5) having communicative competence in the language, and (6) being identified by the language community.

These sets of interrelated factors denote that native teachers of English in Türkiye are mostly foreigners as Turkish is not their mother tongue. To this end, such teachers need to possess native culture in the country they teach or work to be able to provide inclusive atmosphere with caring, and trust, in order to be rightly welcomed and valued. Therefore, they do need the support and cooperation of all stakeholders within the school they work to be able to maintain a positive mindset. In line with that, the most popular view is that a very successful school is often a reflection of competent school administration in collaboration with stakeholders for the benefit of students (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). From theoretical perspectives, different theories have attempted to take a critical look into how teacher identity is formed as well as the factors that are responsible for those identity formations. This makes it paramount to take a critical examination of at least one of such theories in order to understand

the inter-relationships between teachers and the components that shape their identity. From the behaviourism theory, the learning and development of any skills is presumed to reflect the grasping of a learned understanding and formation of habits as a result of reinforcement (Mitchell et al. 2013). The insight we get from Michel et al. suggests that, as individuals and professionals for that matter, the way we act has a very direct result on what we have learnt through our own lived experiences. As a consequence, our learning to a significant extent, happens through conditioning, where our behaviours are either encouraged through positive reinforcement, or discouraged by negative reinforcement. According to a recent blog publication release entitled *''Behaviorism in Education: What Is Behavioral Learning Theory?''* by the National University in San Diego, ''learning is a change in observable behavior that results from experience.'' (See more at https://www.nu.edu/blog/behaviorism-in-education/). As such, strengthening the expressed views above regarding learnt and formation of habits as a result of reinforcements, proponents and many of those who subscribe to this theory have written extensively on how many people learn and behave, on why some students do excel in certain subjects whiles their mates struggle and on how teachers positively influence their students' behaviour and motivation.

This means that, teachers in general or native teachers to be specific, will at least, at the bearest minimum, strongly echo the confidence school administrations, and work environments place on them. On such a point, it is believed that productive schools are schools with functional and dedicated administration which consciously dedicate a great deal of time to planning and are visible to issues that affect teachers and the learning environments (Simmons & Taylor, 2019). Moreover, previous studies suggested that teacher identity is affected by the school environment (Canrinus et al., 2012). For instance, in order to understand the influence of school administration and school environment on the identity formation of teachers, it was discovered that teachers who see themselves as activist within the school are more likely to be motivated, and self-efficient (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

In other compelling study as well, it was also opined that society and the teaching environment are also factors that repeatedly influence and affect teacher identity (Doğutaş, 2021). As a matter of fact, the study proceeds to elaborate further that the manner in which society (in this instance, parents, students and other colleague teachers alike) views teachers, or that, the nonchalant attitude that society has towards teachers, affects their identity formations in no uncertain terms. To be more specific, it was categorically stated in the study that teachers perceive a lack of respect towards the teaching profession now compared to the past, which goes a long way to negatively affect their identity formation. However, for those with

supportive schools along with determined and eager students ready to learn, they perceived their teacher identity being positively affected (Doğutaş, 2021). It can therefore, be concluded that, being enthusiastic on the part of teachers is often a reflection of positive attitudes as well as commitment and keenness on the part of school administration in fostering positive and healthy teaching and learning environments.

2.5 Summary of Literature Review

The concept of career teaching as *a calling* and teaching as *a profession* markedly defers to a certain extent. On the part of individuals who view their teaching jobs as *a calling* may not have a predetermined schedule in terms of working hours or the individuals with whom they work because it is an intrinsic individual process that is full of positive energy. Therefore, for a calling, emotional attachment or contentment is key as it gives the drive to pursue the job. But teaching as a profession simply means an individual has no emotional attachment to the job but is engaged in the job as a result of professionally acquired skills and training.

From what emerged from the literature, there is clear evidence to suggest that the teacher identity of teachers (*whether they view their role as a calling or profession*) is often influenced by the views of school administration, colleague teachers, students, and parents. This is so because, the afore-mentioned stakeholders are very determined at their success in the environment in which they work.

3.Methodology

3.1 Study Design

This study is a qualitative research that was conducted to analyze data which was collected among Native English teachers in Türkiye. As stated in the introductory section, the study's main objective is to determine the differences between teaching as *a calling* and teaching as *a profession* by examining such factors that help to shape the native teacher identity of foreign teachers in Türkiye. The target population of the study includes all formal private schools and all English Language Course Centres in Ankara, Türkiye. To achieve this stated objective, a ***semi-structured interview schedule*** was used to elicit responses from Native English teachers. A semi-structured interview schedule as defined by Bearman, is a list of topics and its associated follow-up questions that an interviewer asks to elicit qualitative information (Bearman, 2019). A semi-structured interview therefore, is a data collection method that relies on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework. However, the questions are not set in order or in phrasing. In research, semi-structured interviews are often qualitative in nature as the purpose of this is to generate a richer description of the phenomenon of interest. Even though semi-structured interviews can be presumed to be easier means of data collection,

researchers utilizing qualitative research data have constantly outlined methods and strategies that should be followed in conducting a semi-structured interview with the view to accessing very rich and useful data.

In semi-structured interview schedule as a means of data collection, a key component of sample size that should be considered is argued to differ from heterogeneous and homogeneous populations. Just as key processes and procedures must to be followed in semi structured interviews to achieve desired results. Regardless of the characteristics of the population, Cresswell (2007) strongly opined that semi structured interview requires a sample size between 5 and 25. Therefore, the current study sampled 8 teachers in formal schools and private English course centers for the process of data collection.

3.2 Sampling

The main sampling method used for this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique where the researcher deliberately chooses participants of a study due to the qualities they possess (Etikan, et al., 2016). In selecting the ideal district within Ankara from which to collect and or used for the study, the researcher deployed purposive sampling. This method was also used to define the formal private schools and private English course centers of interest. Schools and English course centers around Çankaya were chosen for the study based on the account that the district constitutes one of the most prominent districts in Ankara and largely based on the fact that it consists of elite families who will want their children to learn English from Natives. The main reason for adopting purposive sampling technique was to ensure that the data collected is a true representation of the nature of factors that help to shape native teacher identity.

3.3 Demographic Characteristics of Sample

N = 8

Characteristics	N	%
Sex		
Male	5	62.5
Female	3	37.5
School Type		
Language Center	2	25.0
Formal School	6	75.0
Number of years in Türkiye		
1 – 3	1	12.5
3 and above	7	87.5

Job experience		
1 – 3	3	37.5
3 – 5	2	25.0
5 and above	3	37.5
Countries of origin		
Iran	3	37.5
Nigeria	2	25.0
America	1	12.5
Ghana	1	12.5
Australia	1	12.5

From the table above, in total the sample has 8 counts. From the total count, 5 (62.5%) were male and 3 (37.5%) were female. On the distribution of participants based on school, 2 (25.0%) were teachers from Private language centers, and 6 (75.5%) teachers from formal schools. In terms of participants number of years in Türkiye, it was observed that majority 7 (87.5%) have been living in Türkiye for more than 3 years whereas 1 (12.5%) have been living in Türkiye between (1 – 3 years). Similarly, in terms of job experiences, those with 1 – 3 years' experience constitute 3 (37.5%) just as those with 5 and above years of experience, whereas 2 (25.0%) had 3 – 5 years of experience. As for participants' countries of origin, it was observed majority were Iranians with 3 (37.5%), followed by Nigerians 2 (25.0%) whereas Ghanaians, Americans, and Aussies (Australians) constituted 1 (12.5%) each.
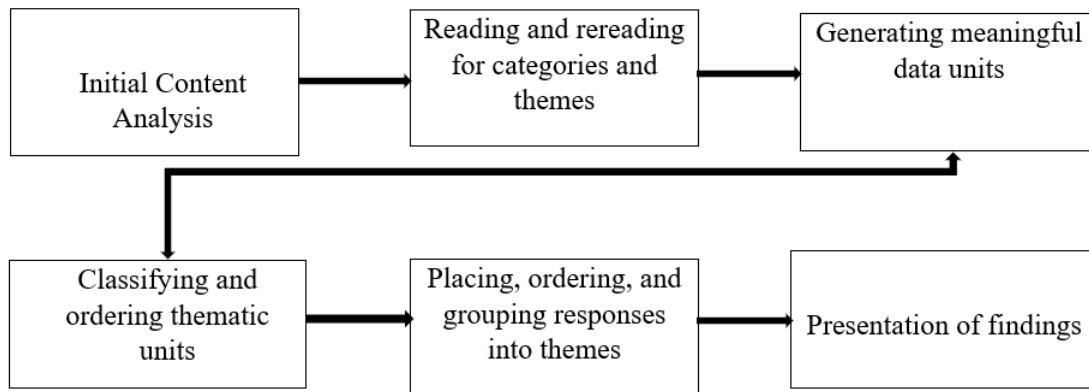
3.4 Instruments

The instrument used to collect data from the sampled subjects/respondents is a semi structured interview schedule. The choice of this instrument was in view of its advantages over other tools. In the first place, it allows for probing by either the interviewer or the respondent where a response or question that was not clear enough and the fact that it is easily used for exploring thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of respondents on a particular phenomenon (Melissa, & Lisa, 2019). Although it is difficult to statistically establish the validity and reliability of semi structured interviews which is a qualitative research instrument, experts within the field of social science research opined that semi-structured interviews provide high validity measures as the researcher is able to collect first-hand accounts with regards to the research questions (Ahlin, 2019). Thus, suggesting the ability of the instrument to measure what it was intended to measure. In other views, Noble and Smith (2015) posited that validity and reliability of a semi-structured interview could be established by maintaining neutrality and consistency in the

data collection period, whereas Scrooby (2012) strongly believed that validity and reliability are not necessary when using a qualitative research instrument for data collection. It can therefore, be concluded that, validity and reliability of qualitative data to all intents and purposes, heavily depend on the credibility of the researcher and his/her ability to maintain neutrality and consistency in and during the research process.

In conducting a semi-structured interview, it is of great importance for the researcher to consider ethical issues, establish trust and rapport, and demonstrate the trustworthiness of the search process (Melissa, & Lisa, 2019). As such, before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from school's administrations. In the selected schools, teachers' participation in the process of data collection was made voluntarily. Interested teachers were presented with consent forms long before the semi structured interviews were even conducted. For the purpose of confidentiality, respondents were equally informed and extremely assured that their various individual responses will be handled confidentially. It is important to also note that respondents were automatically fit and deemed eligible for data collection if they were native English teachers within the enclaves of where the research was conducted.

3.5 Analysis

To begin data analysis, the researcher first spent considerable amount of time and resources to analyze the contents from all responses collected. This was followed by reading and rereading the contents again to determine categories and emerging themes. Analysis of data were then done through a-two-step coding *(a) by generating meaningful units of data, and (b) by classifying and ordering these under thematic units.* This process was expected to reduce the quantity of data collected to a reasonable number. Thus, the researcher first determined the meaningful themes from which the data could be classified, then placing, ordering, and grouping responses to the predetermined themes. At the end of this process, five broad thematic codes emerged on factors that influence teacher identity in the study area, and within these thematic codes, findings were presented. The table below gives a pictorial representation of this process.

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┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│                 │      │ Reading and     │      │                 │
│ Initial Content │ ───► │ rereading       │ ───► │ Generating      │
│ Analysis        │      │ for categories  │      │ meaningful      │
│                 │      │ and themes      │      │ data units      │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
        │                                                  ▲
        ▼                                                  │
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│ Classifying and │      │ Placing,        │      │                 │
│ ordering        │ ───► │ ordering, and   │ ───► │ Presentation    │
│ thematic        │      │ grouping        │      │ of findings     │
│ units           │      │ responses       │      │                 │
│                 │      │ into themes     │      │                 │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
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3.6 Data Credibility, Transferability, Dependability & Confirmability

To ensure truthworthiness of the study, the researcher took steps in ensuring that findings emerged from the data and not own predisposition by exploring concept such as: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Just as opined by Merriam (1998), credibility in qualitative research has to do with the questions, "how close are the findings or outcomes of the study with reality?". In answering that question, the researcher adopted a research method that is widely acceptable in qualitative studies, as well as adopted procedures in data collection and data analysis that have been used in past similar studies. This according to Yin (2009) are means of ensuring credibility in qualitative research. On the concept of transferability in qualitative research, Firestone (1993) argued that the researcher can ensure this concept by providing detailed information on the contextual population of the study. It is therefore, within the principals of this study as the researcher limited the findings of the study to native teachers especially those within the Çankaya District of Ankara in Türkiye. Finally, on ensuring dependability and confirmability, the researcher provided and reported in details the research process, thus, making it possible for a future researcher to replicate this study in order to confirm and gain a deeper understanding of the research findings.

4. Findings and Results

4.1 Introduction

With reference to the aims and objectives of the study, the following sub-questions were posed: *How do school administrators and the school learning environment shape the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye? In what ways do students and parents influence the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye? How do peer/colleague teachers shape the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye? How does gender impact the relationship between the above factors and the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye? How do you view your teaching profession? Is it a profession to you or a calling?* In

all, five (5) main themes emerged from the study as shown from the table below titled final themes presentation from the above-mentioned sub-questions. The final findings are therefore, presented in accordance with the generated themes:

1. Safe and orderly school environment and teacher identity
2. Clear, focused & instrumental school leadership and teacher identity
3. Home-school relationship and teacher identity
4. Expectation climate for success and teacher identity
5. Gender and teacher identity

4.2 Final Themes Presentation

Theme Number	Theme Description	Data Linked Evidence	N
1	Safe and orderly school environment and teacher identity	**Code 4 − 8:** School tradition/culture and teachers' values	5
		Code 3: Toxic environment and interpersonal conflict	1
		Code 1 & 2: Neglect of native teachers in selecting school materials.	2
2	Clear, focused & instrumental school leadership and teacher identity	**Code 9 & 10:** Teacher professional well-being and school administrators	2
		Code 11 − 16: School administration and their views and opinions on teachers	2
3	Home-school relationship and teacher identity	**Code 17:** Parent involvement with schools should be limited	1
		Code 18: Home-school relationship	1
		Code 19: Parents views on language learning.	1
4	Expectation climate for success and	**Code 20:** The expectation of students on teachers influences	1
		Code 21 & 22: The expectation of modern educational system	2

	teacher identity	**Code 23:** Inconsistences between teachers' core values and action	1
		Code 24: Conflict between administrators and teachers.	1
5	Gender and teacher identity	**Code 25:** Different gender desires and professionalism.	1
		Code 26: Teacher's relationship with students' and parents.	1
		Code 27: Relationship share by teachers.	1

4.2.1 Safe and Orderly School Environment and Teacher Identity

Teachers were asked how school administrators and the school learning environment shape teacher identity. Most cited two broad factors:

*Teacher (A and D)

"By making native teachers' part of the team that decide or develop the materials used in the classroom, it leads to the feeling of connectedness and trustworthiness". Whereas the rest of the teachers focused their attentions on School traditions and culture and how they affect the kind of value teachers attribute to themselves. On that note**, Teacher (E)** said, *"for some schools, the environment is just not right as it is often full of interpersonal conflicts between sub-administrative units".*

4.2.2 Clear, Focused & Instrumental School Leadership and Teacher Identity

Teachers were asked how and in which ways school administrators and the school learning environment shape teacher identity. Most submissions of respondents on this centred around school administration and their views and opinions on teachers. In most cases: Almost all respondents opined that clearly focused and instrumental leadership on the part of school administration elicit native teachers' sense of well-being. For them, this led to developing more passion about their teaching profession and are better able to maintain and spread more positive energy. More specifically,

*Teacher (B and C) opined that:

"Teacher professional well-being is a product of engaged and cooperative relationship they share with their own repective school administrators" And "This helps teachers to realize and maintain their own key values and strengths".

4.2.3 Home-School Relationship and Teacher Identity

Teachers were asked in what ways students and parents influence the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye. From all the findings on this question, what seemed common is the diverse opinion shared by respondents. These views are:

*Teacher (H):

"Parent-teacher relationship is a complicated one that must be approached with respect, when parents want to participate in the educational life/lives of their children, it should be based on mutuality with the participation of teachers that is characterized with warmth and respect for teachers' opinions on the progress of students. When this happens, it increases students' achievements and maintain teachers' motivations and improve their emotional competenciesss".

*Teacher (G):

"Parent involvement with schools should be limited to volunteering when needed in school activities, communicating with teachers to find out the progress of their children. But when parents go beyond this to an extent to evaluate the professionalism and competence of teachers, this may drastically affect the professional development of teachers and lower their strong bonds and sense of morale with students".

*Teacher (F):

"Home-school relationship when indexed by respect, support, shared values and expectations and trust, it positively improves feelings of competence and belief of teacher self-adequacy. But most often than not, parents in schools hardly ever develop relationship with native teachers. This may be because of language barriers and school policies. Native teachers hardly have a feeling of how parents view them and their ability to improve the language journey of their students".

*Teacher (D):

"Parents consistently forget that language learning is different from learning other subjects, so native teachers are often in panic when parents schedule meetings with them. This panic mostly affects native teachers' professionalism and positive energy. It is therefore important for parents to treat the relationship they share with teachers with care. The relationship should be a problem-solving partnership, but not confronting teachers with what is wrong with my child?".

4.2.4 Expectation Climate for Success and Teacher Identity

When asked in what ways students and parents influence the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye, the section of this theme highlighted what students expect(ed) from

teachers within the teaching and learning environments. The key submissions included but not limited to:

*Teacher (A):

"The expectation of students on teachers influences the kind of values native teachers hold and maintain. Most teachers' attitudes in the class is often a reflection of their students' attitudes. Here, students' cautiousness not to offend the feelings of teachers positively help teachers to maintain a positive mindset and value the relationship they share with their students and this in the long run helps teachers to be supportive directly in matters that affect students".

*Teacher(s) (C and E):

"In the expectation of modern educational system, especially in Türkiye, students' happiness with teachers is regarded as students doing well in the teacher's class but this may not always be the case. Teachers are mostly coerced or forced by school administrators to be smiley around students even in situation where they are not expected to, this contradicts the inner feelings of teachers around certain students and the outer feelings and emotions they naturally do exhibit".

When this constantly keeps happening, according to:

*Teacher (C):

"Teachers lose their individual core values because of disparity between their thoughts and action".

*Teacher (E):

"Teachers feel been pushed around and this creates conflicts between administrators and teachers. As a result, teachers keep losing their faith with teaching".

4.2.5 Gender And Teacher Identity

When asked how peer/colleague teachers shape the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye, findings suggest that, gender plays a crucial role in the formation and maintenance of teacher identity. According to some teachers:

*Teachers (B):

"Female teachers struggle in their desire to be regarded as professionals, whereas their male counterparts find it extremely difficult to get along with female colleagues as they are often struggling to participate in female dominated topics. This is because, most of the teachers are females".

*Teacher (C):

"Native teachers in most schools have no talking relationships with students' parents, as such, they find it difficult to ascertain the feelings and views parents have around their

professional ability. For female native teachers, they can easily engage in discusssions with other teachers to find out what parents say about them. Male teachers are mostly anxious as they feel lost when females keep discussing and they are not involved".

*Teacher (D):

"The relationship shared by most female teachers is characterized by behind the scenes or after school hours socialization, which men often feel excluded. So, females oversee everything that happen, and they tend to have different unspoken gestures, rules and laughter that underpin hidden messages that males cannot see or understand. This constantly distresses male professional identity".

5. Discussion of Findings, and Conclusion

The objective of this study was to critically take an introductory survey to examine and shed light on the complex sets of factors that shape the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye. For that reason, the major results reported several insightful findings.

First of all, safe and or orderly school environment was found to influence the teacher identity of native teachers. More specifically, conflicts between individual native teachers' values and school traditions were found to shape and reshape teacher identity. This finding, to a larger extent, directly supported Pennington and Richards (2016) study as they found favouring school condition to favour the likelihood of teachers finding a balance between their individual ideals and their classroom teacher identity. In other studies, it was equally suggested that teacher identity is dynamic in nature and as a result it can alter due to school environment settings and culture (Eslamdoost, King, & Tajeddin, 2019) and this shift can become unbearable as a result of immigration (Zacharias, 2010). All these suggest the struggles native teachers are subjected to as they try to find a balance between their native culture and way of life and those of a new environment. Thus, it becomes even more paramount for school leadership and administration to make conscious efforts to help native teachers achieve a good match between their values and those of the school.

Secondly, a clearly focused & an instrumental school leadership was found to influence school identity. On this finding, participants suggested how views and opinions of school managements and key decision makers affect their teacher identity. This further attests to past studies on the subject matter. For example, a capable, skilled, and well supportive school leadership was reported to help and foster a sense of ownership among teachers (Mulford, 2003). Moreover, in a study among primary (Mulford et al, 2000) and secondary (Mulford, 2001) schools in Australia, it was reported that the more well-equipped and positive teachers view school management and administration, the more likely they view the ability of school

administration and management to influence their identity positively. This suggests how cooperative and consultative relationship is important among school administrators and teachers as it helps in positively developing teacher identity and performance as well leave a positive remark on students' perceptions on relationships that exist in schools as various individuals work for their benefit.

Furthermore, the current study also showed how communicative-based approach or collaborative effort, thus, home-school relationship, influences the identity forming of teachers. Participants lamented on why parents' involvement in school decision making should be limited. It makes sense to view this finding on the grounds of how parents' involvements in school decision making may undermine perceive teacher (autonomy) authority. Past studies suggested mix findings as in most times teacher perceives this as a negative factor that inhibits their performance whereas sometimes it is perceived as a means of involving parents in order to get the best from students. For example, in Fisher and Refael (2022), it was observed that high level of parental involvement predicts greater perceived level of teachers' authority. By contrast, it was also observed that in most countries of the Western world, increased parental-involvement in the educational pursuit of their children and their attitudes towards teachers have led to the deterioration of teachers' authorities (Fisher & Refael, 2022). Similarly, with increasing availability of knowledge in different learning forms, parents were found to undermine the pedagogical authority of teachers and hardly do they find teachers as individuals they should consult (Gilat and Vangarovitz, 2018). All these poor self-images because of lack of teachers' authority in the learning environment suggest a greater likelihood of poor teachers' and students' performance.

On gender and how it influences teacher identity as well as how students influence and affect the identity formation of teachers, the study found that gender affects the professional identity of teachers and the relationship they are able to keep with teacher, while at the sametime too, students' influences were found to determine the kind of social values teachers attribute to themselves. In past studies, Mason and Chik (2020) argued that gender is a key aspect that greatly influences the professional identity construction of teachers. The study went further to suggest that being a female native teacher increases the likelihood of being treated without respect from colleagues. On the positive effect of being a female teacher, it was reported in past studies that female teachers are more able to build a positive teaching and learning relationship with students when compared to male teachers and this makes the classroom interaction resourceful (Wadsworth-Hendrix, 2016).

Another factor that has been reported in past studies on how students influence the identity formation of native teacher identity is the issue of gender imbalance in the educational environment. Most modern primary and secondary schools are mostly dominated by female teachers and this imbalance between the genders affects teacher-student conflict (Hannula, 2008). Wadsworth-Hendrix (2016) suggested that as far as modern schools are dominated by female teachers, teacher-student relationship mostly favours female students, which in effect may hinder the professional identity development of male teachers.

Conclusion

The bigger question still remains very relevant and validly so regarding the construct of whether teaching is considered *a profession or a calling*. From the available evidence, whiles some teachers view their teaching as a profession, thus, economically progressive, as there are no viable options and ventures for them, many others still see teaching instead as a calling for them regardless of whatever satisfaction they derive from doing their jobs. Yet still, there are others who view multiplicity of reasons and factors as shaping their identities. As such, they identify with both labels and view themselves both as teachers within a certain tradition (profession) and favoured few (calling), giving credence to the popular adage that *''many are called, but few are chosen.''* Therefore, in gaining an understanding of teacher identity, there are indeed, a variety of elements that must be considered. One of such elements includes a comprehensive understanding of the closer relationship between identity and self and the role of emotions in shaping such identity. Traditionally, it is strongly believed that career choices were associated with well-paid jobs. This view now raises eyebrows as to whether the reasons behind why an individual opted for/decided to be a teacher in the first place, is intrinsically or extrinsically influenced. Intrinsically influenced in the sense that they perceive their teaching career as a calling from a voice within them, and extrinsically influenced from the sense that teaching is widely available as a job that one can make ends meet whiles waiting for a better job later.

This study has significantly deepened our understanding in shape, form, content, design and substance surrounding such compelling factors that are more likely to shape and re-shape native English teacher identity in Türkiye. It equally adds up to past knowledge on how sociocultural factors impact and affect teacher identity. Hardly is there a study (specifically in Türkiye) that tried to explore teacher identity of native (Foreign) English teachers in Türkiye. Therefore, in an era of globalization, this study offers the opportunity for decision makers to see and reflect on agents and factors that impede identity constructs of native teachers, as this could improve education quality in line with acceptable international standards. For the

betterment of English Language teaching in Türkiye, there is a strong need for periodic examination of matters that affect native teachers in Türkiye as these kinds of studies offer them the opportunity to share their experiences, ideas and information of benefit that could significantly make or improve practices.

Limitations

Even though this study explored key contexts on teacher identity, it had some limitations. First, the sample size is relatively too small. This researcher had limited time to conduct and conclude the study for that reason it was important to minimize the sample to size to allow for a quicker manipulation of data. It is therefore, extremely difficult to generalize the findings of the study because a small sample size of just 8 participants may not truly project, represent or explain factors that affect teacher identity of the entire or vast majority of foreign or native teachers in Türkiye. Thus, further study is required in the study area with a significantly larger sample size in order to verify and compliment this study. Finally, the interpretation and discussion of the study was affected for that sole reason, many current studies focused on non-native teachers and current available studies on teacher identity of native teachers was thus, extremely limited in both content and scope. This gives credence to the saying that, alot needs to be done moving forward if we are to experience changes in this discourse. But, regarding this study in particular, in examining factors that affect native teacher identity formation in Türkiye still remains with the fact that, *so little done, so much to do.*

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APPENDICES A

EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT NATIVE TEACHER IDENTITY IN TÜRKİYE: IS BEING A TEACHER A PROFESSION OR A CALLING?

A. Demographic Information

1. Sex: Male ( )   Female ( )

2. School type: Formal school ( )   Language center ()

3. Years of experience: 1 – 5 years ( )   5 and above ( )

4. Country of origin _____

B. Interview guide questions (semi structured question)

1. How do school administrators and the school learning environment shape the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye?

2. In what ways do students and parents influence the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye?

3. How do peer/colleague teachers shape the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye?

4. How does gender impact the relationship between the above factors and the teacher identity of Native English teachers in Türkiye?

5. How do you view your teaching profession? Is it a profession to you or a calling?