Abstract

Title of Document:	INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING ESL TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A MIXED METHODS STUDY
	Doaa Rashed, Ph.D., 2017
Directed By:	Professor, S. Blunck, Education Department Professor, C. Rakes, Education Department

This study examined the relationship between factors influencing the professional identity of teachers of English as a second language (ESL). The sample consisted of 480 ESL teachers in English language programs in universities and four-year colleges in the United States. Four contextual factors were identified from the literature: self-efficacy, job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment. An online survey was compiled from previously validated subscales to measure ESL teacher professional identity and the four contextual factors. The survey included both open- and close-ended questions.

The study followed a convergent parallel mixed methods design, a triangulation design in which the quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed at the same time and synthesized for interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analyzed in NVivo following the typological development strategy (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008). Quantitative data were used to test eight hypothesized structures to model ESL teacher professional identity. Structural Equation Modeling (maximum likelihood estimator with robust SE) was used to compute all fit indices and model parameters.

These analyses resulted in four key findings. (1) ESL Teacher Professional Identity is the sum of multiple interactions between contextual factors in the workplace resulting in three professional identity profiles. (2) ESL teachers' linguistic diversity and cultural sensitivity and experiences influence their professional identity. (3) Commitment is a defining characteristic of ESL teacher professional identity. (4) The native and non-native English speaking status of ESL teachers does not have a strong influence on the factors or ESL teacher professional identity. These findings indicate that, in the ESL teaching context in higher education, contextual factors interact with each other and with teacher professional identity, resulting in three emerging professional identity profiles that characterize this interaction. A clear understanding of ESL teacher professional identity should take into consideration the impact of the work environment as well as the constant influence of teachers' professional identity on such environment.