Exploring the Nexus between English Teacher Identity and Socio-demographic Background: Evidence from Algeria

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate how English teachers' identity (ETI) levels vary based on different sociodemographic backgrounds in Algeria. To this end, a survey research design was adopted by utilizing a questionnaire as research instrument: The first of section elicits information about teachers' background information, including age, professional title, teaching experience, leadership position, salary level, and family condition. The second section is Yan's (2024) 19-item English Teacher Identity Measure (ETIM) to measure the teachers' levels of ETI, which consists of four indicators: self-efficacy (SE), future perspective (FP), teacher belief (TB), and career perception (CP). By using convenience sampling, an online questionnaire was emailed to 170 tertiary EFL teachers from different regions in Western Algeria, and 105 teachers voluntarily participated in this study. 30 of them participated in the pilot study and the remaining 75 teachers' responses were analyzed using SPSS. The data revealed significantly different ETI levels according to years of teaching experience. The findings showed that teachers who scored the lowest ETI levels were PhD holders, lecturers, teachers of the 1980s generation and middle-level leaders. This study informs teacher management and teacher educators of those particular teacher groups that need more support.

Keywords: *English Teacher Identity, Algerian Context, In-service Teachers, English Teacher Identity Measure, External Factors, Personal Factors, Quantitative Approach*

Introduction

Defined as who I am as an English teacher in a particular context (Beijaard et al., 2004; Xu & Tao, 2020), English teacher identity (ETI) has gained augmented scholarly attention over the past two decades (Aguilar & Rütti-Joy, 2023; Derakhshan et al., 2023; Nazari et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2022; Yao & Slater, 2024). ETI is significant for teachers' entry into the profession and subsequent professional career stages (such as mid-career) (Ölmez-Çağlar,

2022), it also predicts teachers' work outcomes, such as job burnout (Tang, 2020), teaching commitment, and job satisfaction (Ostad et al., 2019).

Relevant studies have initially centered on identity formation of pre-service or student teachers along their learning-to-teach journey (Choi & Park, 2022; Prabjandee, 2019), identity change during the pre-service to in-service transitional stage (Jiang et al., 2021). With the changing global higher education landscape, a growing body of research has been dedicated to academics' identity negotiation due to new research policy enactment (Lu & Yoon, 2024; Tran et al., 2017), the interplay between identity development and emotion (Lu, 2024; Yang et al., 2021; Yip et al., 2022), ETI tensions and conflicts arising from teaching and research misalignment (Bao & Feng, 2023; Golzar et al., 2022; Lu & Zhang, 2023), as well as how teacher agency and emotion play out in ETI development (Nguyen & Ngo, 2023; Wu, 2023). Other research themes include metaphor analysis of identities (Kamil, 2022; Liu, 2023), native (NES) and non-native English speakers (NNES)' identity (Aoyama, 2021; Hsieh et al., 2022; Seo, 2023; Weng et al., 2024). The bulk of literature demonstrates that ETI is fluid, multi-layered, and subject to the embedded contexts (Karousiou et al., 2019).

Despite the fruitful results, the non-qualitative approach to ETI has been relatively neglected, as most current systematic reviews on ETI confirm that qualitative paradigm is predominant (Neupane et al., 2022; Sadeghi & Bahari, 2022; Teng, 2018; Yan & Bava Harji, 2023).This might be explained by the commonly endorsed advantages of qualitative data collection tools such as narrative frames, documents, etc. (Karimpour et al., 2023; Teng, 2024). furthermore, few measuring instruments designed specifically for ETI are available (Mahmoodarabi et al., 2021; Zeng & Liu, 2024). Hence, how ETI levels differ among teacher groups remains under-explored (Yan, 2024), and particularly in the Algerian context, whereby scant studies have focused on ETI components and development (Djoub, 2018; Djoudir, 2019). Researchers in this study highlight the need of addressing the gap by adopting a quantitative approach to better understand how ETI differs among teachers with different backgrounds. The study will add to current ETI scholarship by offering quantitative evidence from the Algerian context.

Literature Review
Influencing Factors of ETI
The factors that facilitate and impede teacher identity has been widely discussed and can be categorized into macro, meso, and micro dimensions, in this line, Liu (2022) adopted the language investment theory and investigated an English teacher's identity construction process, he discovered that the ideologies helped the teacher survive the imagined identity crisis and construct new sub-identities. Similarly, using poststructuralism as lens, Huang (2019) examined how NNES teachers in China constructed their professional identities against the permeating Native-speakerism ideology. The study revealed four major strategies employed to obtain authority among their NES colleagues. Apart from these broad factors, many scholars asserted that institutional policies exert powerful influence on teacher identity negotiation or reconstruction (Derakhshan et al., 2024; Hao, 2011; Karimpour et al., 2023). At micro level, personal factors that could affect ETI include previous learning experiences (Dewi & Fajri, 2023), and gender (Liu et al., 2019).

Teacher Identity and Socio-demographic Factors

A handful of studies have surveyed ETI levels and the influencing factors, findings vary according to different contexts, for instance, in China, ESP teachers were found to score unsatisfactory ETI levels (Cai, 2021; Liu & Cai, 2021). Similarly, Zhang and Xu's (2017) research showed that teachers from five universities in Zhejiang Province experienced ETI crisis due to institutional transformation, curriculum reform and the performativity culture. Another line of inquiry has probed into additional factors that impact ETI levels. Tang (2015) reported that teachers from Chinese top-tier universities scored significantly lower ETI scores than their counterparts working at non-elite universities. Xie and Zhou (2016) found English teachers with higher educational levels and professional titles scored higher ETI levels in China's high school setting. Furthermore, Yan (2023) discovered that Chinese EFL teachers holding PhD degrees recorded significantly higher ETI levels than master degree holders.

In Turkey, Doğan and Erdiller Yatmaz (2018) examined early childhood education teachers' identity levels. They revealed that single and divorced/widowed teachers scored significantly higher in one teacher identity dimension than those married teachers. In a study conducted in Iran, no significant difference in ETI levels was detected based on gender and teaching experience (Mofrad, 2016). In another study, significant ETI levels were detected among Iranian female and male teachers (Ghanizadeh & Ostad, 2016). These varying research findings appear to imply that ETI might be impacted by different research contexts, samples, and teaching subject matters, which necessitate more relevant studies conducted in diverse settings.

The Study

Previous studies have primarily looked into English teacher trainees (Chen & Li, 2016; Gao, 2021), consequently, less attention has been devoted to in-service teachers, as such, we seek to measure Algerian in-service teachers' ETI levels among teachers with diverse backgrounds (such as male and female teachers, teachers with high, medium and low professional ranks). The following questions are raised:

RQ1: Are there significant differences in ETI levels between male and female teachers, master and PhD degree holders, and between teachers working at different IHL?

RQ2: Are there significant differences in ETI levels among teacher groups divided by age, professional title, teaching experience, leadership position, salary level, and family condition?

Method

Given the quantitative nature of the research questions, a cross-sectional survey design was selected.

Research Context

Algeria is a multilingual and multicultural country where Arabic and Berber are the official languages, and French and English are taught as the first and second Foreign Languages (Manel et al., 2019; Maraf & Osam, 2023). The heightened status of English is seen in the introduction of English to the third-grade primary school curriculum in 2022 and the promotion of using English to teach science subjects (bio and medical sciences, humanities and technologies courses) in 2023 (Maraf & Zekri, 2023). The macro policy impacts teachers' teaching choices:

while some prefer to teach English as a subject, others prefer to teach English for Specific Purposes (ESP), or teach English to teachers of different subjects to become EMI teachers (Zekri, 2024). English learning is highly regarded by the community (both learners and parents).

All the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) in Algeria are public and they can be categorized into universities and Higher Normale Schools (i.e. Teacher Training College). Higher academic achievement records in Baccalauréat exams (i.e., the final exam at the secondary school which marks transition to IHL) are required for students to gain admission into teacher training colleges compared to admission into universities. The four academic ranks for teachers in IHLs are professors, assistant professors (common French abbreviation used as MCA: Mettre de Conference 'A'), lecturers (MCB: Mettre de Conference 'B'), and assistant lecturers (MAB: Mettre assistant 'B'). The English teaching profession in Algeria is not financially well-paid, which affects teachers' social status (Meddour, 2017).

Participants

The participants were recruited from IHLs located in the West of Algeria, using the snowball sampling techniques to collect data only from the in-service EFL teachers working in IHLs. Teacher trainees were excluded since the focus was on in-service teachers' identity levels. 75 Algerian teachers responded to the online survey. The sample makeup is shown in Table 1: over 80% are non-leaders (82.7%), PhD holders are 86.7%, and 92% are working at universities. 76 % are female teachers. Approximately 52% were born in the 1980s, 41.3% are lecturers, and more than 60% are married with child or children.

Instrument

Data was gathered by using a questionnaire that comprises two sections:

(i) Nine questions on participants' background information, including workplace, professional title, teaching experience, salary level, etc.

(ii) The 19-item English Teacher Identity Measure (ETIM) that uses a five-point Likert scale. ETIM consists of four dimensions: *self-efficacy* (nine items), *future perspective* (three items), *career perception* (three items), and *teacher belief* (four items). An example item of the *self-efficacy* dimension is "I can craft a variety of good questions throughout the lesson." One example of *future perspective* dimension is "I expect to become a teacher with strong academic capability (Yan et al., 2024, p.11)".

To determine reliability, an initial pilot study was carried out with a sample of 30 Algerian in-service EFL teachers working at IHLs. The obtained Cronbach's alpha was 0.891, suggesting the internal consistency is acceptable.

Data Collection Procedure

The online questionnaire (in English language) was posted on the Google Form, the access link was sent out to 170 Algerian EFL teachers in IHLs via email. The link was active from July 2022 to Dec 2023. Participants were fully informed the principle of voluntary participation, and to obtain informed consent, a mandatory question on participant's willingness to fill in the questionnaire was set. Every participant had to answer before they could proceed to the next step.

Data Analysis
To answer the two research questions raised above, SPSS was employed to conduct Independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test.

Table 1
Characteristics of Participants

	Characteristics	Frequency N	Percentage %
IHL	University	69	92
	Teacher Training College	6	8
Gender	Male	18	24
	Female	57	76
Educational Level	Master	10	13.3
	PhD	65	86.7
Age	1990s	16	21.3
	1980s	39	52
	1970s	16	21.3
	1960s	4	5.3
Professional Title	Assistant lecturer	14	18.7
	Lecturer	31	41.3
	Assistant professor	21	28
	Professor	9	12
Teaching Experience	Within 1 year	3	4
	1-3 years	9	12
	4-6 years	7	9.3
	7-9 years	11	14.7
	10-12 years	16	21.3
	13-15 years	12	16
	16-18 years	5	6.7
	19-21 years	4	5.3
	Over 21 years	8	10.7
Leadership	Non-leader	62	82.7
	Middle-level leader	11	14.7
	Senior-level leader	2	2.7
Salary Level	Below/or 54424,54 DZ (365.81 Euro)	12	16
	Around/More than 64 659,91 DZ (434.60 Euro)	7	9.3
	Around/More than 75002, 34 DZ (504.12 Euro)	17	22.7
	Around/ More than 87642,01 DZ (589.08 Euro)	15	20
	Around/more than 108006,90 DZ (725.96 Euro)	24	32
Family Condition	Unmarried	19	25.3
	Married with no child	10	13.3
	Married with child/children	46	61.3

Results
This section presents the findings in the order of the nine factors listed in the questionnaire.

ETI Levels and Gender, Degree and Workplace
Independent sample t-test was carried out to address RQ1. As displayed in Table 2, the mean score for female teachers (*M* =4.26, *SD* =.522) is higher than that of male teachers (*M* =4.03, *SD*=.784), with a mean difference of 0.23.

Table 2

Comparison of ETI Levels by Gender

Gender	N	M	SD	Sig	t	df	*p*	Mean difference	95% CI	
									lower	upper
				.136	-1.457	73	.149	-.234	-.554	.086
Male	18	4.03	.784							
Female	57	4.26	.522							

Table 3 observes a higher ETI level among master degree holders (*M* =4.36, *SD* =.296) than PhDs (*M* =4.18, *SD*=.630), with a mean difference of 0.18.

Table 3

Comparison of ETI Levels by Degree

Education	N	M	SD	Sig	t	df	*p*	Mean difference	95% CI	
									lower	upper
				.276	.848	73	.399	.173	-.233	.578
Master	10	4.36	.296							
PhD	65	4.18	.630							

As shown in Table 4, the mean score for teachers working at teacher training colleges (*M* =4.32, *SD* =.392) is slightly higher than the teachers from universities (*M* =4.20, *SD*=.613), i.e., a mean difference of 0.12.

Table 4

ETI Levels by Workplace

Workplace type	N	M	SD	Sig	t	df	*p*	Mean difference	95% CI	
									lower	upper
				.674	-.487	73	.628	-.125	-.635	.385
University	69	4.20	.613							
Teacher Training College	6	4.32	.392							

The *p* values for the Sig. (2-tailed) in Tables 2, 3, and 4 are all more than 0.05, revealing that no significant difference in ETI levels was detected between male and female teachers, teachers with different degrees and from different workplaces.

ETI Levels and Other Factors

One-way ANOVA was conducted to examine ETI levels among different age groups. Table 5 captures the ANOVA output and arranges the ETI levels in descending order, the Sig. value for Levene's test based on mean is greater than 0.05 (*p* =.500), suggesting that the homogeneity of variance assumption has not been violated. Hence, there is no statistically significant difference in ETI levels among the four groups: $F(3, 71) =.481$, *p*=.696.

Table 5

ANOVA Results for Different Age Groups

Age	N	M	SD	Sig	df		F	*p*
					Between groups	*Within groups*		
				.500	3	71	.481	.696
1960s	4	4.50	.293					
1970s	16	4.27	.371					
1990s	16	4.19	.432					
1980s	39	4.15	.740					
Total	75	4.21	.598					

In the same vein, Table 6 shows no statistically significant difference in ETI levels among the four groups: $F (3, 71) =.635, p=.595$. Professors scored the highest ETI score (*M* =4.37, *SD* =.181), followed by assistant lecturers (*M*=4.26, *SD*= .311) and assistant professors (*M* =4.25, *SD* =.584)**.** Lecturers recorded the lowest mean score (*M* =4.10, *SD* =.762), which was also lower than the total mean score (*M* =4.21, *SD* =.598).

Table 6

ANOVA Results for Professional Title

Professional Title	N	M	SD	Sig	df		F	*p*
					Between groups	*Within groups*		
				.164	3	71	.635	.595
Professor	9	4.37	.181					
Assistant lecturer	14	4.26	.311					
Assistant professor	21	4.25	.584					
Lecturer	31	4.10	.762					
Total	75	4.21	.598					

With regard to teaching experience, participants were divided into nine groups. Table 7 indicates a statistically significant difference in ETI levels in the nine groups: $F (8, 66) =1.515, p=.169$.

Table 7

ANOVA Results for Teaching Experience

Teaching experience	N	M	SD	Sig	df		F	*p*
					Between groups	*Within groups*		
				.001	8	66	1.515	.169
Over 21 years	8	4.54	.256					
16-18 years	5	4.40	.178					
10-12 years	16	4.38	.299					
1-3 years	9	4.27	.424					
13-15 years	12	4.16	.804					
19-21 years	4	4.13	.298					
4-6 years	7	4.02	.436					
7-9 years	11	3.95	.637					
Within 1 year	3	3.50	.790					
Total	75	4.21	.598					

The post-hoc LSD test was selected to identify significantly different groups. The results (Table 8) indicate that three groups, namely, teachers serving over 21 years (M=4.54, SD =.256), 16-18 years (M= 4.40, SD=.178) and 10-12 years (M= 4.38, SD=.299) recorded significantly higher ETI levels than teachers serving less than one year (M= 3.50, SD =1.790). Additionally, significant differences in ETI levels were found between teachers serving over 21 years (M=4.54, SD =.256) and 7-9 years (M= 3.95, SD =.637).

Table 8
Tukey HSD Test Results for Varying Teaching Experience

LSD					95% CI	
		Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower bound	Upper bound
Within 1 year	Over 21 years	-1.039[*]	.394	.010	-1.826	-.252
	10-12 years	-.884[*]	.366	.019	-1.61	-.153
	16-18 years	-.897[*]	.425	.039	-1.746	-.049
7-9 years	Over 21 years	-.587[*]	.270	.034	-1.127	-.047

One-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate whether teachers with senior medium**;** and no leadership positions displayed significantly different ETI levels. As can be inferred from Table 9, there was no statistically significant difference in ETI levels among the three groups: F (2, 72) =.865, p=.425.

Table 9
ANOVA Results for Leadership Positions

Leadership position	N	M	SD	Sig	df		F	p
					Between groups	*Within groups*		
				.424	2	72	.865	.425
Senior leader	2	4.74	.167					
Non-leader	62	4.20	.534					
Middle-level leader	11	4.14	.918					
Total	75	4.21	.598					

Table 10 displays the One-way ANOVA results about ETI levels and salary. No statistically significant difference in the ETI levels between the three groups: F (4, 70) =.788, p=.537.

Table 10
ANOVA Results for Salary Level

Salary Level	N	M	SD	Sig	df		F	p
					Between groups	*Within groups*		
				.270	4	70	.788	.537
Around/more than 87642,01 DZ	15	4.36	.315					
Below/or 54424,54 DZ	12	4.34	.277					
Around/more than 108006,90DZ	24	4.19	.711					
Around/more than 75002,34 DZ	17	4.09	.804					
Around/more than 64659,91 DZ	7	3.99	.435					
Total	75	4.21	.598					

One-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate whether teachers with different family conditions displayed significantly different ETI levels (Table 11). There was no statistically significant difference in ETI levels between the three groups: F (2, 72) =2.168, p=.122.

Table 11

ANOVA Results for Family Condition

Family Condition	N	M	SD	Sig	df		F	p
					Between groups	*Within groups*		
				.211	2	72	2.168	.122
Married with child (ren)	46	4.32	.502					
Married with no child (ren)	10	4.08	.502					
Unmarried	19	4.00	.794					
Total	75	4.21	.598					

Major Findings

To conclude, this study demonstrates significant difference in ETI levels among teachers with varying teaching experience. No significant difference in ETI levels was detected with respect to the remaining eight factors. Figure 1 captures the ETI patterns among different teacher groups.

Table 12

Summary of Findings

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in ETI levels between male and female teachers, master and PhD holders and between teachers working at different IHLs?	
Gender	Female> male
Degree	Master > PhD
Institution	Teacher training college> university
RQ2: Is there a significant difference in ETI levels among teacher groups divided by age, professional title, teaching experience, leadership, salary level, and family condition?	
Age	1960s>1970s>1990s>1980s
Professional title	Professor> assistant lecturer> assistant professor> lecturer
Teaching experience	Over 21 years>16-18 years>10-12 years>1-3 years>13-15 years>19-21 years>4-6 years>7-9 years>within 1 year
Leadership	Senior leader>non-leader>middle-level leader
Salary level	Around/more than 87642,01DZ>Below/or 54424,54 DZ> Around/more than 108006, 90 DZ > Around/more than 75002,34 DZ>Around/more than 64659,91DZ
Family condition	Married with child(ren)>married without child>unmarried

Discussion

This section discusses answers to the research questions in relation to prior studies conducted in other contexts. Consistent with studies conducted in China (Song & Wei, 2007; Yan, 2023) and Turkey (Doğan & Erdiller Yatmaz, 2018), Algerian female teachers scored higher than male teachers. One possible explanation is that female teachers tend to prefer the teaching profession, as flexible working hours in the IHLs allow them more convenience for carrying out family and social responsibilities.

Contrary to Yan's (2023) finding that Chinese PhD holders recorded significantly higher ETI levels than masters, this study revealed lower ETI levels among PhD holders, which could

be attributed to the contrastive national policies. While PhD degree holders (especially in the English discipline) generally enjoy many more learning opportunities and better financial benefits than Master degree holders in China, this is not true in Algeria. PhD degree holders receive only 20% of the total budget of short-term training abroad, as cited in Decision number 742 issued in 2019 related to the program of teacher training policy (Selection Criteria of Approval for Training Abroad, 2019). The lack of financial resources might negatively affect teachers' perceptions of the teaching profession. Another plausible reason is that PhD holders in Algeria tend to experience more stress at work. Teachers with Master degrees can work full-time without any further internships. However, PhD holders must pass a national contest followed by a one-year pedagogical internship that officially warrants their tenure.

This finding indicates that teachers from teacher training colleges recorded higher ETI than their university counterparts. A possible reason may be that the former teach students with better academic achievements, besides, teacher training colleges are equipped with adequate infrastructure and better technological tools than universities, which in turn may give teachers a greater sense of job satisfaction. By contrast, universities usually have larger class sizes, but limited infrastructure. This aligns with previous findings that student quality and working conditions affect teachers' job satisfaction (W. Chen, 2007), and job satisfaction was positively correlated with ETI (Meng, 2019; Wei, 2015).

With regards to age, the 60s and 70s generations scored higher on the ETI levels than the 90s and 80s generations, which might be due to the satisfaction or confidence derived from the long-term teaching and research experience. Most senior teachers are professors and the promotion policy in the past was less stringent compared to the current policy. Relatedly, seniority is given importance in the Algerian promotion system, as senior teachers have the opportunities to hold administrative positions and organize conferences and workshops, which facilitate their promotions. In sharp contrast, teachers born in the 1990s and 1980s, with less experience in teaching and research, encounter more demands under the current promotion system. This is similar to Tang's (2015) findings that Chinese teachers in prestigious universities who face more stringent work demands record lower ETI levels than those from average IHLs.

As expected, professors scored the highest ETI level, because they generally possess the higher levels of self-efficacy due to their knowledge and expertise. The finding that lecturers recorded the lowest ETI may be explained by the fact that lecturers have to go through stringent procedures to be promoted to assistant professors. Another finding is that assistant lecturers scored even higher ETI than assistant professors, which may be related to their greater work enthusiasm during their early teaching career (Väisänen et al., 2017).

In line with findings by Ghanizadeh and Ostad (2016) and Xie and Zhou (2016), this study found that teaching experience has an impact on ETI. Echoing previous studies on the reality shocks experienced by first-year teachers (Mintz et al., 2020) and institutional constraints that hinder ETI development (Wang, 2021), novice teachers tend to place high expectations on themselves (Hue & Lau, 2015), teachers in their first year recorded the lowest ETI. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see those who had served 1-3 years recorded the 4th highest score, implying that teachers in their earlier career phases may be gaining enhanced teacher efficacy and gaining more enthusiasm at work.

Aligned with Kamtsios' (2018) finding that teachers with four or five years of teaching experience exhibited the highest burnout levels, this study found the lowest score among teachers who had served a span of 4 to 9 years, which seems to imply that teachers at this phase are vulnerable to burnout. Interestingly, the 9th year appears to be a turning point, as the teachers who had served 10-12 years recorded a much higher score. Teachers who had served for over 21 years recorded the highest, suggesting that most of them would have secured professorship, and consequently enjoyed a greater sense of achievement as well as job satisfaction.

Middle-level leaders recorded the lowest ETI levels, which could be due to their numerous and overwhelming administrative duties. This may result in being less satisfied with their teaching profession and more prone to burnout. This aligns with the findings that ETI is positively related to job satisfaction (Chai & Wang, 2014; Shi et al., 2018), and negatively related to burnout (Lin et al., 2022).

Another finding is that teachers with monthly income of around or more than 87642,01 DZ (587.54 Euro) scored the highest ETI, which speaks to the fact that lecturers who were newly promoted to assistant professors are likely to experience heightened job satisfaction. Teachers in previous ranks have low salaries compared with salary of assistant professors. This could be one main reason that enhances their ETI.

This study shows that teachers with child(ren) scored the highest ETI, this might be explained by the additional pension such as marriage, childbirth, boys' circumcisions entitled to them by the Algerian government. The number of children can also help teachers benefit from staff housing. Another possible reason might be that teachers with parenting experience are more likely to develop more nuanced understanding of their children and students.

Conclusion

On the whole, this study consolidates the understanding of ETI as complicated, fluid and dynamic, and it is shaped by both personal factors (such as self-efficacy and stress) and contextual factors (such as working conditions, training opportunities, and financial benefits). The current findings, in accordance with the Job Demands-Resources model and previous empirical studies, supply evidence that certain factors at the workplace, including stringent promotion requirements, unfavorable working conditions, insufficient training opportunities, and lack of financial benefits are negative factors and can decrease ETI. By contrast, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and good student quality can strengthen ETI.

Several implications are evident. Firstly, given the findings in relation to teaching experience, it is important for teacher educators to pay special attention to teachers who are likely to struggle in their first year. The fourth year is also an important career juncture as teachers display decreased ETI levels. Another issue is for teacher management to provide more support to teachers with the lowest ETI levels, including PhD holders, middle-level leaders, lecturers, and the 1980s generation. Accordingly, we contend that teachers need to be empowered with favorable working conditions, financial sufficiency, and more training opportunities. Teacher management should also pay attention to teachers' well-being since too much work demands are able to reduce ETI levels.

While our quantitative findings generate insights into the ETI levels and socio-demographic feature, we acknowledge the following limitations: first, the conclusions are exclusive to the West of Algeria, hence, changed geographical context (such as the desert area) might lead to

different findings. Second, the lack of research community support for data collection in Algeria, the small sample size and low questionnaire return rate is considerably unrepresentative of the whole tertiary EFL teacher population. Third, snowball sampling was adopted for lack of personal connections and networks, therefore the findings cannot be generalized. It is desirable to engage in random sampling technique in future research.

In addition, for the lack of follow-up qualitative data, the reasons for some quantitative results are conjectures and might not be true to the real experiences of the participants. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct follow-up interviews or observations to clarify the reasons, as mixed-methods approach could provide a more lucid picture of this issue. Future scholars could also perform in-depth comparative studies by involving teachers of high and low ETI levels, they can also complement the current findings by using longitudinal survey design. Another avenue for future research is to develop hypotheses and explore the relationship between ETI and other constructs using the structural equation modelling technique.

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Ethics Declarations

Competing Interests

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