

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Intersection of Burnout and Identity in Novice Private School English Teachers

Gökçe Nur Türkmen^{1*} 

¹ MA Student, English Language Teaching, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale, Türkiye.

Ethical Statement

Consent forms were distributed, and Ethics Committee Approval was granted (No: 08/36, 21.06.2023, ÇOMU).

Funding Information

No funding was received for the study.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest is present in the conduction or the reporting of this study.

ABSTRACT

Novice English language educators at private schools confront a variety of issues in constructing their identities and coping with burnout, both of which can have an impact on their teaching methods and professional growth. Teaching is a very demanding profession, and it is common for instructors to experience severe stress, culture shock and burnout, especially in their early years. The purpose of this research is to investigate the causes of burnout among novice English language instructors in private schools, as well as how they negotiate and manage their teacher identity in the face of burnout. Semi-structured interviews and reflective diaries will be used as primary data collection methods in a qualitative research design based on interpretive phenomenological analysis. This study includes a sample of beginner English language instructors with fewer than three years of experience teaching in private schools. The collected data will be thematically examined to find patterns, themes, and meanings connected to burnout and teacher identity. The findings will add to the current literature on novice teacher burnout and teacher identity, as well as strategies for supporting and retaining novice English language instructors in private schools.

Keywords: burnout, teacher identity, private school, novice English teachers

Received: 06/07/2023

Accepted: 28/07/2023

***Corresponding Author**

Gökçe Nur Türkmen, MA Student, English Language Teaching, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale, Türkiye.
Email: turkmengkc@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is regarded as one of the most challenging professions (Biesta et al., 2015) because of the complex nature of the teaching process and the high level of responsibility expected from educators. In addition to content knowledge, teaching requires a variety of abilities. For example, they need to adapt their instructional methods to cater to students with different learning styles and abilities. Furthermore, teachers must also consider factors beyond the classroom, such as parental expectations in the case of private schools. These multifaceted demands highlight the intricate nature of teaching and the high level of responsibility placed upon educators. Teachers should modify their behaviors in the classroom not only to represent the principles and norms of the school but also to take into consideration of the opinions of parents and administrators in private schools. Teachers' conceptions of themselves and their teacher identity is likely to be changed and challenged because of these various demands and expectations. The process of building a teacher identity is a complex and dynamic one that encompasses personal beliefs, attitudes, and experiences, as well as contextual effects of their teaching environment.

Teacher identity is one of the essential features that has received a lot of attention in recent years. Teacher identity, according to Connolly and Hughes-Stanton (2020), is "a complex and dynamic process of becoming a teacher through personal, professional, and social influences" (p. 717). It is a critical component of a teacher's professional life since it determines instructional approaches, teaching efficacy, and overall job satisfaction. Novice teachers suffer a great deal of anxiety stemming from the discrepancy between their ideal roles and the roles they find themselves following in their practice (Jersild, 1955). In fact, instructors who perceive a clash between their personal and professional identities are more susceptible to experiencing burnout (Kokkinos, 2016).

Teacher burnout is a significant issue in education, and it has been linked to a number of factors, including teacher identity. Burnout is a psychological syndrome marked by emotional weariness, depersonalization, and lower personal success (Variyan, 2019). One issue that novice teachers face is the high tendency for burnout in the teaching profession, which can have detrimental implications for both the teacher and their students. Pressure to meet parents' expectations and preserve the school's image can lead to considerable levels of stress and burnout among novice teachers working in private schools (Connolly et al., 2018b). Furthermore, the early years of teaching are widely regarded as critical for the development of teacher identity; and burnout during this period can have long-term consequences for a teacher's professional identity and career trajectory (Ball, 2003), potentially leading to disengagement, attrition, and a loss of passion for teaching.

Literature Review

Teacher identity is a complex and dynamic process that encompasses personal beliefs, attitudes, and experiences, as well as the expectations and demands of the teaching profession and the larger societal environment (Connolly & Hughes-Stanton, 2020). Longitudinal studies and investigations into the relationship between teacher identity and other factors, such as professional beliefs and professional identity, have shed light on the development and transformation of teacher identity over time (Biesta et al., 2015; Banegas et al., 2022; Pennington & Richards, 2016). Teachers' conceptions of themselves and their professional roles are influenced by their ideas, attitudes, and life experiences (Pennington & Richards, 2016). Moreover, novice teachers face challenges in managing their professional identities as they experience transition from being students to becoming teachers (Altan, 1998; Connolly et al., 2018a). The early years of teaching are critical for the development of teacher identity as novice instructors grapple with the



complexities of the profession and negotiate their roles and expectations within their specific educational settings (Biesta, 2015; Güneş & Uysal, 2019). As they gain experience and improve themselves while working with their students in their practices, teachers are constantly evolving their identities.

Additionally, research has explored how external pressures from school administrators and parents, as well as environmental variables, contribute to the formation of teacher identity (Connolly and Hughes-Stanton, 2020). Contextual factors play a significant role in shaping teacher identity and influencing the professional roles of educators (Connolly et al., 2018a). Novice teachers in private schools face unique challenges related to high expectations, low job security, and a lack of support, which can impact their identity formation and increase the risk of burnout (Connolly et al., 2018b; Variyan, 2019). These challenges can lead to feelings of anxiety and discrepancies between their ideal teaching roles and the realities they face in practice (Jersild, 1955; Kokkinos, 2016). The experiences and interactions of novice teachers shape their attitudes towards teaching, perceptions of students, and responsibilities as educators (Schutz et al., 2018). These studies collectively contribute to understanding teacher identity and its multifaceted nature, highlighting the need for further exploration in this area.

Novice teachers face the task of constructing their professional identity during the early years of their career (Connolly et al., 2018a). The transition from student to teacher is a process that takes time, and during this period, novice instructors encounter numerous challenges in establishing their professional identity (Altan, 1998). Studies have explored how teachers' identities are shaped by their experiences, influencing their attitudes towards teaching, perceptions of students, and sense of responsibility (Schutz et al., 2018). Novice language teachers are vulnerable to these experiences as they start to navigate their professional identity construction (Nazari et al., 2023; Banegas et al., 2022). They must navigate the complexities of teaching, adapt to school culture, manage student behavior, and learn effective teaching strategies (Connolly et al., 2018a). The formation of a teacher's identity is closely linked to their ideas, values, judgments, and actions in the classroom (Biesta, 2015). This transformation occurs during the socialization process, which involves developing competence in their tasks, clarity in their work roles, realistic job expectations, and successful interpersonal relationships (Güneş & Uysal, 2019). Positive experiences, such as classroom success and support from colleagues, can enhance novice teachers' identities; while negative experiences, like student misbehavior and lack of institutional support, can have adverse effects. It is crucial to examine how novice English language teachers in private schools construct their professional identity, considering the distinct contextual challenges they face (Nazari et al., 2023; Banegas et al., 2022). External pressures from school administrators, parents, and environmental variables are also influential in teacher identity formation (Connolly and Hughes-Stanton, 2020).

Teacher burnout is a significant factor that can challenge teacher identity (Kokkinos, 2016). It is important to differentiate burnout from other factors impacting identity formation, such as culture shock. While culture shock can contribute to disorientation and stress for novice teachers in a new teaching environment, burnout is characterized by chronic exhaustion and diminished professional efficacy (Güneş & Uysal, 2019; Pravita & Kuswandono, 2021). Novice teachers in the early stages of establishing their teacher identity are particularly vulnerable to the effects of burnout (Kokkinos, 2016). While culture shock may cause temporary disorientation and stress in a new teaching environment, burnout is a long-term process that requires intervention and support to mitigate its negative effects.

The existing literature highlights the complexity of teacher identity and the influence of contextual factors on its formation. Compared to their colleagues in public schools, novice teachers in private schools face a different set of challenges, such as high expectations, low job security, and a lack of support. These difficulties might influence their

identity formation and even lead to burnout. The goal of this study is to investigate how novice English language teachers in private schools manage their teacher identity in the face of burnout. The study's findings will help to shape teacher education programs and professional development activities that target the requirements of novice teachers that want to work at private schools.

The research question of this study is: "How do novice English language instructors at private schools maintain their teacher identity in the face of burnout?". This main question is further divided into two sub-questions to delve deeper into the specific aspects of the topic.

1. How do novice English language teachers at private schools build and manage their teacher identities in the early years of their teaching careers?
2. What are the causes and effects of burnout among novice English language teachers in private schools?

The first sub-question will investigate novice teachers' experiences with teacher identity formation, specifically how they develop and manage their sense of self as instructors within the framework of a private school. The second sub-question will investigate the potential sources of burnout experienced by novice teachers in the private school setting and how it affects their personal and professional lives. By addressing these research questions, the study aims to provide insights into the teacher identity and burnout experiences of novice teachers in private schools and contribute to the literature on these topics.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a qualitative research approach, to explore how novice English language instructors at private schools manage their teacher identity in the face of burnout. IPA focuses on understanding individuals' experiences and the meaning they assign to those experiences (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). IPA entails an in-depth investigation of individual experiences via interviews, with the researcher adopting a phenomenological attitude of bracketing their expectations and prejudices to enable impartial data analysis (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). In this study, IPA was used to record, transcribe, and analyze the semi-structured interviews and reflective diaries. The data analysis process involved several key steps, including familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, identifying emerging themes, analyzing, and refining these themes, and finally, defining and labeling the identified themes (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The identified themes were then investigated in-depth to gain a better understanding of how novice teachers at private schools effectively manage their teacher identity in the face of burnout.

Setting and Participants

Language instructors from various educational contexts, including English language teaching departments, English language and literature departments, and Translation and Interpreting departments, took part in this study. The teachers had experience working in private primary, secondary, and high schools. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who met specific criteria, including having at least one year of teaching experience and currently teaching or having previously taught the English language in a private institution. The sample consists of ten people, six of whom are female participants. All participants worked/are currently working for at least one year, no more than three years.



Participants' ages range from 22 to 34. Six of the participants graduated from English language teaching department, while three from English language and literature department, and one from translation and interpreting department. All participants have a bachelor's degree, two of whom received a pedagogical formation degree before they started working as a teacher, while one of the participants is currently enrolled in an English language teaching master's program.

Instruments

Semi-structured interviews and reflective diaries were the key data collection tools for this study. The semi-structured interviews were performed in an online meeting platform, using pre-determined interview questions to gather information on the participants' experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about their teacher identity and burnout. Reflective diaries were used as an additional data collection instrument for one participant due to their time-intensive nature. The selected participant was asked to maintain a reflective diary for a month, which allowed for further reflection on her experiences and provided deeper insights into the complex nature of the phenomenon under investigation.

Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary method for collecting data, allowing participants to share their experiences, perceptions, and comments on teacher identity management. The interview consisted of 10 open-ended questions that allowed the teachers to provide more detailed and expansive responses. These questions encompassed their perspectives on teaching and the factors that shaped their teacher identities. Additionally, the interview explored the causes of burnout and solicited their strategies for coping with burnout effectively. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to ensure the reliability and validity of the data.

In addition to the interviews, reflective diaries were offered to all participants as a coping mechanism to assist them when they felt overwhelmed at school. Among the participants, one teacher, who felt particularly burdened and on the verge of burnout, volunteered to maintain a reflective diary for one month. This diary served as a tool for her to process and navigate any challenges she encountered and did not know how to handle, especially considering the clash between her ideal identity and the realities she faced. Other participants mentioned having their coping mechanisms, and they did not encounter overwhelming situations to the extent faced by the selected participant. The reflective diaries were designed to give further insights into novice teachers' experiences and everyday actions in controlling their teacher identity and overcoming burnout. The use of semi-structured interviews and reflective diaries enabled a more thorough study of novice teachers' experiences.

Data Analysis

The data collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective diaries were examined using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), a qualitative approach that allows for an in-depth study of participants' experiences and perspectives (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The data was verbatim transcribed, and the transcripts were reviewed and re-read to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the data. The transcripts were then coded to find patterns and themes in the data (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). The coding process entailed extracting significant ideas, concepts, and themes from the data and categorizing them. These categories were refined and developed into coherent themes that reflected the core experiences of the participants (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The study had a continual procedure, with themes enhanced and developed as new data was acquired and examined. This method

provided for a more in-depth and nuanced study of the data while also ensuring that the conclusions were founded on the participants' experiences and opinions.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings, multiple measures were employed. First, member checking was conducted, wherein participants were given a summary of their conversation and verified the accuracy and interpretation of their answers. This process allowed the participants to give input and ensured that their viewpoints were accurately represented (Tong et al., 2007). Second, triangulation was employed by using multiple data collection methods, namely semi-structured interviews and reflective diaries. The combination of these methods allowed for a comprehensive examination of novice teachers' experiences and perspectives on teacher identity and burnout. In addition, peer briefing was used, in which the researcher discussed emerging themes with two colleagues who are familiar with qualitative research methodologies. This process helped validate the data analysis and minimize the author's potential bias (Stahl & King, 2020).

FINDINGS

In this study, transcripts and reflective diaries provided by teachers were meticulously examined. As a result of this thorough data-driven approach, specific themes emerged from their responses, which were then organized into sub-titles to provide a structured understanding of the various aspects of teachers' experiences. The qualitative analysis of these themes offers valuable insights into teachers' perspectives and viewpoints, enriched by direct quotes from their narratives.

Perceptions of Teacher Identity

During interviews with English teachers in private schools regarding their perceptions of the teaching profession, the majority of their responses reflected a positive outlook. Among the answers given by the teachers are the roles of being role models for the students, leaving a positive impression on them, and serving as their guiding light to lead them. Additionally, they highlighted the significance of imparting their knowledge and wisdom to the students, educating future generations for a more promising future, and assuming the role of not only an academic mentor but also a moral guide.

"Teaching is a very difficult but proud profession. It is a privilege to touch a child's life and leave a good mark on his life. I think being a teacher is being able to shed light on a child's future." (Teacher 4)

The teachers were asked what the concept of the ideal teacher means to them, and they expressed their views by drawing upon their experiences and reflecting on both positive and negative teacher examples. They stated that they determined the characteristics of an ideal teacher by either observing the qualities exhibited by their teachers or by considering the actions they should avoid based on negative experiences. For instance, they emphasized the importance of not engaging in favoritism as a negative characteristic, instead emphasizing the need to treat each student as an individual rather than as part of a collective group.

"I take examples from my own teachers and always attribute their positive qualities as my dream teacher." (Teacher 10)

The responses from the teachers revealed several common points that were shared among them. Firstly, they believed that an ideal teacher should assume a leadership role, guiding and inspiring their students. Secondly, they



highlighted the significance of providing support to their students, both academically and emotionally, thus morally. Thirdly, they stressed the importance of evaluating each student individually, recognizing their unique strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, they emphasized that ideal teachers should serve as role models, setting positive examples for their students to follow. Lastly, they acknowledged the necessity to be patient in dealing with the challenges and diverse needs of their students.

Change of Behaviors Through Experience

The teachers generally said that their behavior significantly changed as they acquired experience throughout their first year of teaching. They noted a gradual shift from the exhilaration and idealism they felt at the beginning of their teaching careers. The realities of the profession, including the workload, challenges in classroom management, and unexpected demands, tempered their initial enthusiasm. However, despite these initial setbacks, they also mentioned a minor gain in self-confidence as they navigated through various teaching scenarios and learned from their mistakes.

"When I first started teaching, I used to go to classes very excited, I lost my excitement, and it started to become monotonous." (Teacher 7)

"It always changes positively. Because every day you gain some experience, and you learn a little." (Teacher 2)

However, they also admit the existence of certain detrimental alterations. One example of such negative changes cited by the teachers was their inability to create an environment conducive to their desired teaching methods. This was attributed to factors such as restrictions imposed by the school administration, the inclusion of activities unsuitable for the students' level, or the presence of behavioral problems among the students, as well as lack of student motivation. The intention behind highlighting these negative circumstances was to emphasize that teachers in private schools are profoundly influenced by adverse conditions.

"...there is a feeling of inadequacy, I feel like I can't keep up with the students, I can't add enough to them." (Diary entry)

"...I had to ask my superior and receive approval when I wanted to do an activity for my students. It was very overwhelming..." (Teacher 8)

Causes of Burnout

The teachers were prompted to elaborate on occasions when they experienced exhaustion and disillusionment and were also asked about their coping strategies during such challenging times. In response, the teachers provided various factors that contributed to their feelings of fatigue and disillusionment. These factors encompassed instances of student disrespect, the demanding expectations imposed by the administration, the pressure arising from parents' expectations, the excessive workload, the need to seek permission from superiors for routine tasks, the considerable time and effort invested in material preparation, the development of lesson plans and curriculum, the additional administrative burden such as weekly phone calls to parents and, notably, the detrimental impact of accumulated fatigue and monotony experienced by more experienced educators. As an example, a teacher explained as follows:

"...For example, some of our experienced teachers make statements like this: You will gradually lose your excitement, you will get tired, how much is your salary anyway, you work more than your salary, you don't need to be so happy, shout to the students, or they won't listen to you... like these... they make us feel bad and unmotivated..." (Teacher 5).

Through the interviews, it became evident that English teachers working at private schools face various

expectations and challenges within their professional roles because of different elements of the same environment, such as students, parents, school administration and colleagues. Parents, for instance, expect that teachers should mirror their behavior at home, desiring a more disciplined and authoritative figure in the classroom rather than a nurturing and affectionate one. This expectation highlights a clear distinction between the teacher's role and that of a family member.

"Parents expect me to be like them; they want me to be like they are at home; they don't want too much love from them; they want the bad guy to be a teacher, not a family." (Teacher 1)

"Parents want the bad guy to be a teacher, not the family." (Teacher 9)

In addition, teachers find themselves constrained by the school administration as they must strictly adhere to the rules and regulations of the institution when interacting with students. This constraint often necessitates seeking permission for any deviations from established procedures. Moreover, the pressure to inflate grades is prevalent in private schools, potentially compromising the accuracy and fairness of the assessment process.

"...we can't do anything without imposing the rules of the school on the children or taking permission from the administration in any way... Grades also need to be inflated because it is a private school, parents get angry if their child gets a bad score, and the administration forces us to give them higher scores..." (Teacher 1)

"...parents put pressure on principals, and principals put pressure on us..." (Teacher 4)

"The main cause is the school's strict procedures. I feel like the principal and vice principals can complain about anything and everything." (Teacher 5)

In terms of student expectations, there is a prevailing desire for reduced emphasis on studying and homework. Instead, students seek opportunities for engaging in conversations, guidance, recreational activities, and even personal anecdotes from their teachers.

"...Every student wants us to talk more about our daily life in class instead of taking lessons seriously..." (Diary entry)

Colleague expectations also come into play, as teachers may face pressure to maintain a pleasant disposition, engage in gossip about students, and even provide English language instruction outside of their regular teaching responsibilities. They may also encounter requests to help facilitate exams for acquaintances or family members, thus extending their workload beyond the scope of their assigned duties. Furthermore, colleagues may express curiosity about the teacher's own English language proficiency and inquire about their language-learning experiences. Additionally, teachers are expected to always maintain a pleasant demeanor, irrespective of personal challenges or emotional fluctuations. Those who display sensitivity or emotional vulnerability are swiftly replaced or overshadowed by others.

"All teachers want to do is gossip about students. When I ask the teachers when I have a problem joining a student to the lesson, they fill in the information that will enter the private life of the student that is not related to the lesson. I think that some teachers were affected by this, and their attitudes towards the child changed..." (Diary entry)

While acknowledging the lack of a formal support system available to them during these overwhelming circumstances, the teachers expressed their reliance on informal networks. They sought advice from fellow teachers, even if they belonged to different academic disciplines, to gain insights into effective coping mechanisms. These

exchanges served as reminders of their passion for teaching and prompted recollections of positive experiences they shared with their students. Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of granting themselves some time for self-reflection and regaining their composure to overcome these challenges.

"I am the only English teacher in my school. When there is a situation related to my branch, I am alone and cannot consult anyone..." (Diary entry)

Clash Between Ideal Teacher Identity and Reality

The teachers were then asked about the extent to which they were able to embody and manifest their ideal teacher identities in their professional practice. The findings revealed a significant discrepancy between teachers' ideal teacher identities and their actual behaviors. Approximately half of the teachers admitted that they were unable to fully exhibit the behaviors associated with their ideal teacher identities. These teachers reported undergoing substantial transformations upon entering the teaching profession, adopting different teacher identities that deviated from their initial ideals. Consequently, they experienced difficulties in effectively demonstrating the behaviors they aspired to exhibit, attributing this challenge to various contextual variables. Notably, the teachers mentioned factors such as the school's educational level, the behaviors of the principal, and the conduct of the students as influential elements that contributed to the erosion of their ideal teacher identities.

"I had some problems with some problematic students who were mad at their classmates, teachers, parents, and life in general. They didn't want to be in class, listen to anyone, learn anything or be alive. Even though I reminded myself how much they, in fact, need help and not someone to scold them, it was sometimes difficult to reach out to them and maintain the classroom management at the same time." (Teacher 6)

Conversely, teachers who believed they were able to exemplify ideal teacher behaviors predominantly attributed their success to favorable student behavior. They asserted that the students' exemplary conduct, their perceived need for guidance, and the students' admiration for them as teachers were significant factors enabling them to align their practices with their ideal teacher identities.

"...I was very tolerant, for the sake of even one or two students..." (Teacher 1)

"I was working with the students from primary school. It was fun to be with them and seeing their eyes were on me all the time." (Teacher 2)

How to cope with Burnout

The educators emphasize the critical need to build patience while dealing with burnout. They acknowledge the need to use diverse coping techniques, such as breathing exercises, to restore inner peace. In recognition of the need to restore inner peace and well-being, teachers acknowledged the value of employing diverse coping techniques. Some teachers specifically mentioned the practice of breathing exercises as to cultivate a sense of calm and emotional balance. By engaging in deliberate and focused breathing, they sought to alleviate stress, regain perspective, and reconnect with their needs and priorities.

"I think you need to give yourself time to relieve stress. Sometimes we get really tired and think about quitting work with that tiredness. (Teacher 9)

Furthermore, teachers handle difficulties by reminding themselves on a regular basis of their essential purpose and

the initial motives that led them to pursue a teaching career, with a special focus on their students. Simultaneously, they recognize the need for continued self-improvement and constant learning in fighting burnout. Despite criticism and bad comments, they underline the need to pursue personal and professional development while remembering the objectives and concepts involved with being an exceptional teacher. The ideal teacher identity instills in teachers a feeling of purpose and significance in their work. It embodies their aim of making a difference in the lives of students, promoting their progress, and contributing to society. This feeling of purpose provides inspiration and perseverance during difficult times, assisting teachers in finding meaning in their profession and overcoming burnout.

"Ignore whoever tries to be harsh on you despite all your efforts. Have a clear conscience. Do your best. That means you're a great teacher." (Teacher 6)

"I always remind myself how I felt when I started this job, my principles, and my love for this profession. I try to reveal the idealistic teacher in me and get over the burnout in this way." (Teacher 10)

DISCUSSION

As the findings highlighted, various elements influence the formation of a teacher's professional identity, primarily arising from teachers' experiences and the elements in their environment. Their ideas about the perfect teacher, beliefs, and personal experiences create their identities and influence their teaching practices (Biesta et al., 2015; Pennington & Richards, 2016). The interaction of individual elements and environmental pressures, such as the school environment and administrative procedures, forms and constrains teachers' professional identities (Banegas et al., 2022; Connolly et al., 2018a). The socio-cultural setting in which teachers work influences their professional identities and their capacity to embody their ideal teacher roles. Teachers' sense of agency and professional autonomy might be impacted by the demands and expectations placed on them at private schools (Connolly et al., 2018a; Variyan, 2019). Teachers in private schools often need to strike a balance between the specified curriculum and their pedagogical views, necessitating adaptation and flexibility within the constraints of the private school setting (Biesta, 2015; Nazari et al., 2023).

Teachers in private schools have shed light on the challenges they face in navigating their professional identities, which can contribute to increased levels of burnout (Variyan, 2019). The teachers emphasized the critical need for building patience as a coping mechanism to effectively deal with burnout and the various stressors they encounter in their roles. This finding aligns with the importance highlighted by Pennington and Richards (2016) for teachers to regularly remind themselves of their essential purpose and the initial motives that led them to pursue a teaching career. By prioritizing their students and recognizing the positive impact they have on their lives, teachers can regain their motivation and sustain their desire to continue teaching despite experiencing burnout. The connection between the challenges faced by teachers in private schools and the importance of maintaining a sense of purpose and focus on student impact underscores the need for support systems and strategies to alleviate burnout and enhance teacher well-being.

Teachers in private schools face additional challenges related to the privileged structure of these institutions (Variyan, 2019). This necessitates a critical examination of their positionality and the influence of privilege on their teaching methods. Furthermore, the research recognizes the potential influence of these problems on the well-being and work satisfaction of teachers. Teachers, notably those in the private school sector, have been found to experience high levels of occupational stress, burnout, and emotional labor (Kokkinos, 2016; Nazari et al., 2023). It is critical to



address these concerns to support the professional growth and well-being of teachers in private schools. High levels of occupational stress, burnout, and emotional labor have been observed among teachers in private schools, underscoring the need to address these concerns (Kokkinos, 2016; Nazari et al., 2023).

The findings of this study not only emphasize the challenges faced by teachers in private schools but also highlight the crucial role of a supportive system in promoting their well-being and professional growth. Specifically, the study underscores the importance of a supportive system in terms of classroom management and addressing the various issues teachers may encounter (Güneş & Uysal, 2019). Creating an environment that fosters socialization within organizations and encourages participation in formal and informal support groups has been found to contribute to lower levels of burnout among teachers (Güneş & Uysal, 2019). By providing opportunities for teachers to connect, collaborate, and share experiences, such support systems can offer a sense of belonging, validation, and guidance, by helping teachers navigate the complexities of their profession more effectively.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, English teachers in private schools face numerous expectations and challenges within a complex educational environment. They must navigate the delicate balance between fulfilling parental expectations while maintaining their professional role, adhering to strict school regulations, managing student expectations for non-academic engagement, and responding to various demands from the colleagues. These complex dynamics require teachers to exhibit adaptability, professionalism, and the ability to manage competing priorities within the educational environment. The extent to which teachers can embody their ideal teacher identities is shaped by the interplay of variables such as school environment, administrative practices, student behavior, and the teachers' initial conceptions of an ideal teacher.

The significance of these findings calls for further investigation and support to bridge the gap between ideal teacher identities and practical constraints within the private school settings. Based on the research on this subject, it is possible to create an environment where teachers working in private schools can get support and improve themselves. By addressing the needs of teachers, it may be possible to help teachers realize their identities in more positive environments and to ensure that they do not experience burnout with the support they will receive. In addition, for the teacher to fulfil the objectives in the class, the administration can draw clear lines between the parents and the teacher by teaching the school's visions not only to the students and teachers but also to the parents. Thus, they can support the teachers in this regard, which would be helpful for teachers.

Future research should delve deeper into understanding the specific factors that influence the extent to which teachers can embody their desired teacher identities and explore strategies to bridge the gap between these ideals and the practical challenges they face. Given the complexity of their responsibilities, teachers need to exhibit adaptability and effective prioritization, considering the demands of parents, school regulations, student expectations, and colleague interactions. It is crucial for studies to focus on comprehending and addressing the factors that impact teachers' identity construction within the private school settings. Additionally, fostering open communication and collaboration among teachers, parents, and school administration can contribute to a supportive and conducive environment for teacher identity development. Comparative studies that investigate the experiences of teachers in different types of private schools can shed light on the influence of school culture and resources on teacher identity and practice. Furthermore, conducting longitudinal studies on teachers' professional trajectories in private schools can provide valuable insights

into the long-term effects of contextual variables on their career growth and overall job satisfaction. By expanding our understanding of professional dynamics in private school settings, researchers can contribute to the development of effective policies and interventions that support novice teachers at the beginning of their complex teaching careers.

Acknowledgements

This study was conducted as an assignment for the 'Qualitative Studies in ELT' course given by Dr. Müge Karakaş, in the master's program of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Müge Karakaş for her guidance and expertise, which were instrumental in the successful completion of this study.

REFERENCES

- Altan, M. Z. (1998). A call for change and pedagogy: a critical analysis of teacher education in Turkey. *European Journal of Education*, 33(4), 407-417.
- Ball, S. J. (2003). The Teacher's Soul and the Terror of Performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), 215-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093022000043065>
- Banegas, D. L., Pinner, R. S., & Larrondo, I. D. (2022). Funds of professional identity in language teacher education: A longitudinal study on student-teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 56(2), 445-473. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3060>
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2015). How does a competent teacher become a good teacher? On judgement, wisdom and virtuosity in teaching and teacher education. In R. Heilbronn & L. Foreman-Peck (Eds), *Philosophical perspectives on the future of teacher education* (pp. 3-22). Wiley Blackwell.
- Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 624-640. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325>
- Biggerstaff, D., & Thompson, A. R. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A qualitative methodology of choice in healthcare research. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 5(3), 214-224.
- Connolly, M., & Hughes-Stanton, J. (2020). The professional role and identity of teachers in the private and state education sectors. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 41(5), 717-732. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2020.1764333>
- Connolly, M., Hadfield, M., Barnes, Y., & Snook, J. (2018a). The accommodation of contested identities: The impact of participation in a practice-based master's programme on beginning teachers' professional identity and sense of agency. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 71, 241-250. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.01.010>
- Connolly, M., Milton, E., Davies, A. J., & Barrance, R. (2018b). Turning Heads: The Impact of Political Reform on the Professional Role, Identity and Recruitment of Head Teachers in Wales. *British Educational Research Journal*, 44(4), 608-625. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3450>
- Güneş, Ç., & Uysal, H. H. (2019). The relationship between teacher burnout and organizational socialization among English language teachers. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 15(1), 339-361.
- Hefferon, K., & Gil-Rodriguez, E. (2011). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. *The Psychologist*, 24(10), 756-759.
- Jersild, T. (1955). *When teachers face themselves*. Teachers College Press. <https://archive.org/details/whenteachersface0000jers>
- Kokkinos, C. M. (2016). Job stressors, personality, and burnout in primary school teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86(1), 24-44.



- Nazari, M., Seyri, H., & Karimpour, S. (2023). Novice language teacher emotion labour and identity construction: A community of practice perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 127, 104-110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104110>
- Pennington, M. C., & Richards, J. C. (2016). Teacher identity in language teaching: Integrating personal, contextual, and professional factors. *RELC Journal*, 47, 5-23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688216631219>.
- Pravita, A. R, Kuswandono, P. (2021). Exploring English Novice Teachers' Identity Transformation Influenced by Community of Practice. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 9(1), 429-442. <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v9i1.1865>
- Schutz, P. A., Hong, J., & Francis, D. C. (Eds.). (2018). *Research on Teacher Identity: Mapping Challenges and Innovations*. Springer Publishing.
- Stahl, N. A., & King, J. R. (2020). Expanding Approaches for Research: Understanding and Using Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 44(1), 35-37.
- Tong, A., Sainsbury, P., & Craig, J. (2007). Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups, *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 19(6), 349-357, <https://doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/mzm042>
- Variyan, G. (2019). Missionaries or Mercenaries? How Teachers in Elite Private Schools Embrace Privilege. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 40(8), 1204-1218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2019.1659753>