Reducing the rate of attrition among Chinese English teachers: the role of professional identity and self-efficacy

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ABSTRACT: Teachers in any academic setting face a variety of educational challenges and adversities, which may result in unpleasant consequences such as teacher attrition. To minimize the rate of teacher attrition, factors inhibiting this negative phenomenon should be widely recognized. With the related literature reviewed, several researchers have endeavored to locate the potential predictors of teacher attrition in mainstream education environments. Yet, few scholars have explored the predictors of this phenomenon in language education contexts. To fill this lacuna, this research delved into the role of professional identity and self-efficacy in predicting Chinese English teachers' attrition. In doing this, three valid scales were distributed among 442 English teachers. Correlational tests exhibited that self-efficacy and professional identity are negatively linked to teacher attrition. Multiple regression analysis also indicated that self-efficacy and professional identity can remarkably reduce the rate of attrition among Chinese English teachers. The findings may be informative and illuminating for language teachers and teacher educators.
Keywords: China, English teachers, Professional identity, Self-efficacy, Teacher attrition

Reducir la tasa de abandono entre los profesores de inglés chinos: El papel de la identidad profesional y la autoeficacia

RESUMEN: Los profesores en cualquier entorno académico se enfrentan a una variedad de desafíos y adversidades educativas, que pueden resultar en consecuencias desagradables como el abandono de la profesión docente. Para minimizar la tasa de abandono de los profesores, se deben reconocer ampliamente los factores que inhiben este fenómeno negativo. Como revela la revisión de la literatura relacionada, varios investigadores han tratado de localizar los posibles predictores del abandono de los profesores en los entornos educativos generales. Sin embargo, pocos académicos han explorado los predictores de este fenómeno en los contextos de la enseñanza de idiomas. Para llenar este vacío, esta investigación profundizó en el papel de la identidad profesional y la autoeficacia en la predicción del abandono de los profesores de inglés chinos. Para ello, se distribuyeron tres escalas válidas entre 442 profesores de inglés. Las pruebas correlacionales mostraron que la autoeficacia y la identidad profesional están negativamente relacionadas con el abandono de los profesores. El análisis de regresión múltiple también indicó que la autoeficacia y la identidad profesional pueden reducir notablemente la tasa de abandono entre los profesores de inglés chinos. Los hallazgos pueden ser informativos e iluminadores para los profesores y formadores de idiomas.

1. INTRODUCTION

Experienced and qualified teachers are widely seen as the cornerstone of successful education (Coombe, 2019; Fan & Wang, 2022; García-Martínez *et al.*, 2021; Han & Wang, 2021; Mehdizadeh *et al.*, 2023). Put differently, the success of the teaching and learning mechanism strictly depends on the efficiency of teachers (Derakhshan, Coombe, Arabmofrad, *et al.*, 2020; Fauth *et al.*, 2019). Because of this, retaining efficient teachers has always been a major concern for educational authorities (Robertson-Kraft & Zhang, 2018; Young, 2018). Yet, as clearly shown in previous investigations (Goldhaber & Theobald, 2022; Redding & Nguyen, 2020), an increasing number of teachers, including high-quality ones, are leaving their profession before retirement. This phenomenon, which negatively affects education quality, is called 'teacher attrition' or 'teacher turnover' (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020; Weldon, 2018). This term has been generally characterized as "the process of leaving the teaching profession for other career endeavors" (Wock, 2014, p. 8).

As put by Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), teacher attrition imposes various pedagogical and organizational costs on students and educational institutions. The pedagogical costs, which unfavorably influence students and their learning outcomes, happen when educational managers have to replace highly experienced and qualified instructors with novice ones (Ronfeldt *et al.*, 2013). Besides, the organizational costs, which adversely impact educational institutions and their efficiency, occur when educational administrators should spend a great deal of time and money on employing new instructors (Wushishi *et al.*, 2014). The high pedagogical and organizational costs tied to teacher attrition have prompted many researchers and practitioners (e.g., Crouch & Nguyen, 2021; Cui *et al.*, 2022; Fu *et al.*, 2022; Liu, 2021; Pivovarova & Powers, 2022; Zhu *et al.*, 2020, among others) to unravel the predictors of this undesirable phenomenon in academic contexts. In fact, a great deal of attention has been paid to the internal and external predictors of teacher attrition. Nevertheless, the important role that self-efficacy and professional identity may play in predicting teacher attrition has somehow been overlooked by previous inquiries. With this gap in mind, the current quantitative research plans to unmask the role of self-efficacy and professional identity in teacher attrition.

As a possible predictor of teacher attrition, self-efficacy pertains to one's assessment of his or her personal skills and capabilities (Bandura, 2012; Hughes *et al.*, 2011). Likewise, teacher self-efficacy refers to an individual teacher's appraisal of his or her instructional knowledge and abilities (Klassen *et al.*, 2014). Further, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017a) characterized teacher self-efficacy as "individual teachers' beliefs in their own ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to achieve given educational objectives" (p. 153). As pinpointed by Klassen and Chiu (2011), strong self-efficacy beliefs reduce teachers' turnover intention and encourage them to stay in their workplace. Besides, as Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2019) mentioned, self-efficacy beliefs also arouse teachers' professional interest and enthusiasm and make substantial changes in their work engagement.

Another factor that may anticipate teacher attrition in educational environments is

professional identity. Professional identity generally concerns how staff members perceive their job and their job-related duties (Bierema, 2010; Slay & Smith, 2011). Extending this definition to the teaching profession, Xu (2013) described teacher professional identity as teachers' viewpoints about the teaching profession and its associated responsibilities. From Derakhshan and Nazari's (2022a) perspective, the professional identity of teachers is a fluid, dynamic construct that may alter in response to different professional incidents. According to them, the emotional events that teachers experience throughout their professional life can cause significant changes in their professional identity. On the importance of this dynamic construct, Dunn and Downey (2018) stated that poor teacher identity development may drive instructors to leave their profession. Similarly, Ayar (2023) asserted that teachers with a poor professional identity are less likely to stay in the teaching profession.

Considering the invaluable role of teacher identity and teacher self-efficacy in instructional environments (Dunn & Downey, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019), several scholars (e.g., Derakhshan, Coombe, Zhaleh, *et al.*, 2020; Derakhshan *et al.*, 2023a; Divsar, 2023; Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019; Fathi *et al.*, 2023; Han & Wang, 2021; Kong, 2021; Le Huong, 2023; Sun *et al.*, 2022; Wang, 2022, to cite a few) have strived to disclose the consequences of these variables in general and language education settings. Furthermore, some inquiries (e.g., Eden, 2016; Miller, 2020; Muhangi, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017b; Wang *et al.*, 2015) have inspected the function of these constructs in teachers' attrition rates. Yet, the extent to which self-efficacy and professional identity can reduce language teachers' attrition has largely been ignored in previous studies. To respond to this gap, the present inquiry sets out to divulge the role of professional identity and self-efficacy in decreasing the rate of attrition among Chinese English teachers. In particular, this research attempts to answer two questions:

RQ1. Is there any association between Chinese English teachers' self-efficacy, professional identity, and attrition?

RQ2. How much variance in Chinese English teachers' attrition can be predicted by their professional identity and self-efficacy?

2. Literature review

2.1. Teacher professional identity

The term professional identity generally relates to the way in which employees see their roles and responsibilities in the workplace (Pratt *et al.*, 2006). In the instructional context, this concept pertains to the perceptions that teachers hold about teaching and its relevant tasks (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). In Sun *et al.*'s (2022) words, a teacher's professional identity is "an individual teacher's optimistic attitude and a strong sense of commitment to the teaching profession, which is reflected in his or her desire to pursue this profession" (p. 2). According to Kao and Lin (2015), a teacher's professional identity is a complex and multifaceted construct that contains six key dimensions: "Self-expectation", "professional duties", "external influential factors", "pedagogy", "instructional skill and knowledge", and "citizenship behavior". The first facet, self-expectation, concerns teachers' self-assessment of the teaching career. The second dimension, professional duties, relates to teachers' per-

spectives towards the teaching tasks. The third aspect, external influential factors, embraces teachers' attitudes towards the school rules and regulations. The fourth aspect, which is called pedagogy, deals with teachers' relationships with students. As the fifth aspect, instructional skill and knowledge pertain to teachers' evaluation of their pedagogical competence and performance. As the last facet, citizenship behavior alludes to the extra time and energy teachers allocate to their occupations. As evidenced by previous inquiries, teachers' identity in the professional setting is closely tied to their self-esteem (Chen *et al.*, 2020; Derakhshan *et al.*, 2023b; Motallebzadeh & Kazemi, 2018), creativity (Huang *et al.*, 2019; Imamoglu *et al.*, 2023; Khany & Malekzadeh, 2015), and instructional quality (Derakhshan, Coombe, Arabmofrad, *et al.*, 2020; Keane *et al.*, 2023; Xiong & Xiong, 2017).

2.2. Teacher self-efficacy

In its broadest definition, self-efficacy includes "one's beliefs in his/her capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required producing given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). More specifically, teacher self-efficacy pertains to the personal beliefs and ideas an instructor holds about his or her capability to fulfill the job demands (Tschannen-Moran *et al.*, 1998). For Bandura (2006), teacher self-efficacy pertains to "individual teachers' beliefs in their own particular ability to think, plan, monitor, organize, and perform activities that are needed to achieve certain educational objectives" (p. 308). Considering this definition, Ruble *et al.* (2011) characterized this concept as teachers' judgments about their capacity to improve students' academic outcomes. As put by Wang *et al.* (2022), teachers who hold positive beliefs about their inner capabilities typically withstand educational difficulties and bounce back from unpleasant professional experiences. Such teachers commonly display a strong desire to remain in the teaching profession (Han, 2023; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Swanson, 2012) and are less prone to emotional exhaustion (Ding & Hong, 2023; Seifalian & Derakhshan, 2018; Xu & Jia, 2022) and job burnout (Chen, 2023; Fathi *et al.*, 2021; Zhu *et al.*, 2018).

2.3. Teacher attrition

The term 'attrition' generally refers to the departure of an employee from his or her profession due to personal or professional reasons (Hansen *et al.*, 1985). Likewise, teacher attrition pertains to teachers' withdrawal from the teaching profession for reasons other than retirement (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008). Miller and Chait (2008) characterized teacher attrition as "teachers leaving the classroom to take up other professional responsibilities, inside or outside of education, or to spend more time with their families" (p. 2). As put by Claeys *et al.* (2012), teachers' departure from their profession relies on various personal and contextual factors. Put differently, teachers commonly quit the teaching profession for a myriad of internal and external reasons. As revealed by previous investigations, teacher attrition typically occurs as a result of low self-efficacy (Sulis *et al.*, 2022; Wang & Hall, 2021), poor professional identity (Dunn & Downey, 2018; Parks, 2017), work-related stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Yang *et al.*, 2018), job dissatisfaction (Hong *et al.*, 2023; Li & Yao, 2022), and low income (García *et al.*, 2022; Liu, 2021).

2.4. Previous research on the role of professional identity and self-efficacy in teacher attrition

With the importance of professional identity and self-efficacy in mind, some educational researchers (e.g., Deng *et al.*, 2021; Dunn & Downey, 2018; Eden, 2016; Høigaard *et al.*, 2012; Miller, 2020; Muhangi, 2017; Parks, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016) have studied their potential influences on teacher attrition. Høigaard *et al.* (2012), for instance, evaluated the impact of university instructors' self-efficacy on their intention to leave the teaching profession. For this purpose, two questionnaires were distributed to 750 university lecturers. The findings uncovered that instructors' self-efficacy beliefs have an adverse impact on their decision to quit the teaching vocation. Likewise, Eden (2016) delved into the function of self-efficacy in teachers' willingness to quit their profession. To accomplish this, the "Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)" and the "Intention to Quit Questionnaire (IQQ)" were administered to a group of beginning teachers. The results divulged that beginning teachers' sense of efficacy can negatively predict their desire to quit the teaching profession. Similarly, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016) inspected the role of instructors' self-efficacy in their desire to leave the teaching vocation. To achieve this purpose, 523 teachers were recruited from different high schools in Norway. Then, two reliable measures were distributed among participants. The outcomes indicated that strong self-efficacy perceptions can reduce teachers' desire to leave their vocation. In the same way, Miller (2020) examined the function of school teachers' self-efficacy in decreasing their rate of attrition. To do so, 201 school teachers were invited to complete two validated scales. The findings showed that the positive beliefs teachers hold about their abilities can serve an important role in reducing their attrition rate. Besides, to unmask the consequences of teacher professional identity, Parks (2017) scrutinized the influence of this variable on language teachers' attrition. They discovered that constructing a strong professional identity empowers language teachers to resist teaching difficulties and stay in their vocation. By the same token, Dunn and Downey (2018) tested the impact of teachers' identities on their job attrition. They found that teachers with poor professional identities are more prone to job attrition. Notwithstanding these research attempts, whether professional identity and self-efficacy can reduce the rate of attrition among language teachers is open to debate. To solve this debate, the current inquiry attempted to unveil the role of these two variables in Chinese English teachers' attrition. In a recent investigation, Deng *et al.* (2021) examined whether teachers' occupational identity can influence their turnover intention. For this purpose, two self-report surveys were administered to a large sample of teachers recruited from seven different regions of China. The findings revealed a negative linkage between teachers' occupational identity and their turnover intention. Furthermore, the results indicated that professional identity has a direct impact on Chinese teachers' turnover intention, inspiring them to pursue the teaching profession.

3. Mᴇᴛʜᴏᴅ

3.1. Participants

A total of 442 teachers belonging to both genders (female = 386, male = 56) served as the participants of this inquiry. The participants were all English teachers instructing English

as a foreign language to middle school and high school students. They ranged in their age from 28 to 59 years old (Mean = 34, SD = 3.82). Their teaching experience was between 5 and 25 years (Mean = 13). Concerning the academic degree, 114 teachers (26%) obtained a bachelor's degree, 237 teachers (54%) obtained a master's degree, and the rest (20%) had a doctorate degree. Participants were made aware of the main objectives of the inquiry and took part in the research process of their own volition.

3.2.1. Teacher attrition questionnaire (TAQ)

Participants' intentions to quit their profession were assessed using the "Teacher Attrition Questionnaire (TAQ)" (Becker & Billings, 1993). The questionnaire includes 4 items: "*It is likely I will actively look for a new job in the next year*" (1)*,* "*I often think about quitting teaching*" (2)*,* "*It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave teaching*" (3)*,* and "*There's not too much to be gained by sticking with teaching indefinitely*" (4). These items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Very strongly disagree" (1) to "Very strongly agree" (7). The reliability of this measure was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, which indicated a high reliability index of 0.89.

3.2.2. Teacher identity questionnaire (TIQ)

To examine participants' professional identity, the "Teacher Identity Questionnaire (TIQ)" (Xiong & Xiong, 2017) was utilized. It encompasses 33 items designed to assess teachers' identity in professional environments. The following are two instances of TIQ items: "*I feel pleased when hearing or seeing words praising the occupation of teacher*" (item 4) and "*I think high of students' development of ability and learning strategies since they are the teaching subjects*" (item 13). The TIQ uses a 5-point Likert scale varying from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Cronbach's alpha results demonstrated that this measure had an acceptable reliability index (α = 0.83).

3.2.3. Teacher self-efficacy scale (TSES)

Participants' appraisal of their professional skills and abilities was examined through the "Teacher Self-efficacy Scale (TSES)" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The TSES consists of three interrelated factors: "*Efficacy for Instructional Strategies*", "*Efficacy for Classroom Management*", and "*Efficacy for Student Engagement*". Each factor comprises eight items measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The following are three examples of these items: "*To what extent can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught*" (item 7), "*How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy*" (item 11), and "*How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing*" (item 21). A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.90 was reported for this measure.

3.3. Data-gathering procedure

Initially, to comply with the ethical principles of research, participants were invited to sign the consent letter. Then, three reliable measures of self-efficacy, professional identity, and

job attrition were virtually administered to those who signed the consent letter. Following that, some explanations were offered to participants regarding the completion of questionnaires. Participants answered the questionnaires and submitted them within nine days.

3.4. Data analysis

As the first step, the participants' answers were fully scrutinized with the view of detecting and eliminating outliers. As a result, the answers that differed significantly from other responses were fully removed. Then, in the second step, the interrelationships of constructs were tested using Pearson product-moment. As the next step of analysis, the role of self-efficacy and professional identity in decreasing teacher attrition was evaluated through multiple regression analysis. Following that, using IBM SPSS Amos, a regression model was designed to portray the predictive role of self-efficacy and professional identity. Finally, a number of goodness-of-fit indices were tested to check the accuracy and validity of the proposed model.

4. Results

To address the first research question about the potential connection between variables, Pearson product-moment coefficient was utilized. The outcomes of the correlation test demonstrated a significant and negative association ($r = -.36$, $n = 442$, $P < .000$) between English teachers' self-efficacy and attrition. The results also revealed a negative correlation ($r = -.14$, $n = 442$, $P < .002$) between English teachers' professional identity and attrition. Additionally, a desirable relationship ($r = .67$, $n = 442$, $P < .000$) was found between English teachers' self-efficacy and professional identity (Table 1).

Table 1. *Correlations among Teacher Attrition, Teacher Professional Identity, and Teacher Self-efficacy*

|		Teacher Attrition	Teacher Professional Identity	Teacher Self-efficacy
Pearson Correlation	Teacher Attrition	1	-.148**	-.36**
	Teacher Professional Identity	-.148**	1	.677**
	Teacher Self-efficacy	-.36**	.677**	1
Sig. (1-tailed)	Teacher Attrition		.002	.000
	Teacher Professional Identity	.002		.000
	Teacher Self-efficacy	.000	.000	
N	Teacher Attrition	442	442	442
	Teacher Professional Identity	442	442	442
	Teacher Self-efficacy	442	442	442

Then, to answer the second research question about the role of English teachers' self-efficacy and professional identity in their attrition, multiple regression analysis was performed.

Table 2 displays the findings of the multiple regression analysis.

Table 2. *The Prediction Power of Teacher Professional Identity and Teacher Self-efficacy*

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Teacher Attrition	↔	Teacher Professional Identity	-.691	.026	-3.289	.001
Teacher Self-efficacy	↔	Teacher Professional Identity	.693	.026	9.601	.000
Teacher Self-efficacy	↔	Teacher Attrition	-.596	.030	-1.621	.001

As presented in Table 2, self-efficacy (β = -.596, p < 0.05) and professional identity (β = -.691, p < 0.05) negatively predicted teacher attrition. Multiple regression analysis indicated that professional identity predicted about 70% of changes in Chinese English teachers' attrition. Regression analysis also suggested that self-efficacy approximately predicted 60% of changes in Chinese English teachers' attrition. The prediction power of these constructs and their components is illustrated in the following figure (Figure 1).
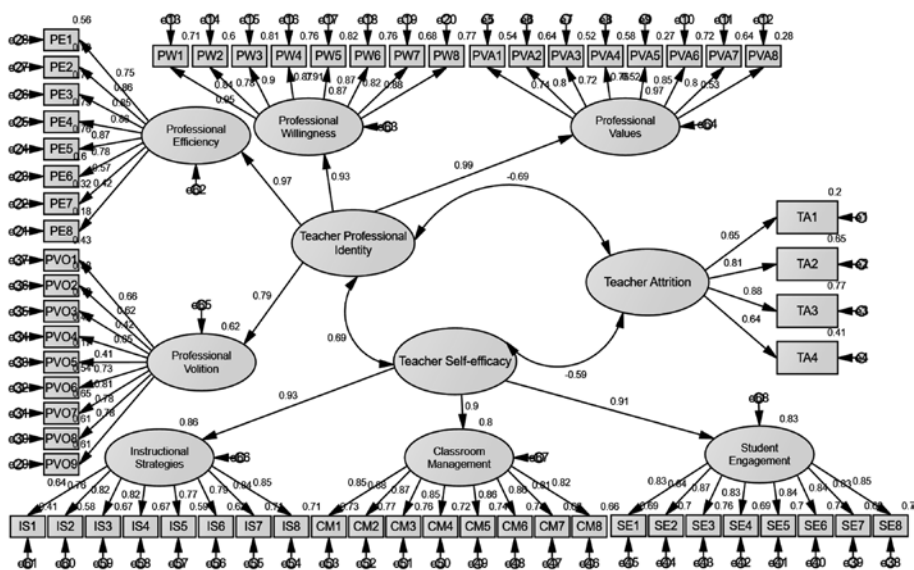
Figure 1. *The Measurement Model*

Afterwards, various goodness-of-fit indices, namely "Minimum Discrepancy Function by Degrees of Freedom (CMIN-DF)", "Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)", "Comparative Fit Index (CFI)", "Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (PNFI)", "Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI)", and "Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)" were assessed to inspect the validity of the measurement model. Table 3 demonstrates the outcomes of examining the aforementioned indices.

Table 4. *Model fit indices*

Criteria		Terrible	Acceptable	Excellent	Evaluation
			Threshold		
CMIN	6075.377				
DF	1759				
CMIN/DF	3.454	> 5	> 3	> 1	Satisfactory
RMSEA	.075	> 0.08	< 0.08	< 0.06	Satisfactory
GFI	.928	> 0.8	> 0.9	> 0.95	Satisfactory
CFI	.921	> 0.8	> 0.9	> 0.95	Satisfactory
PNFI	.744		> 0.5		Satisfactory
TLI	.921	> 0.8	> 0.9	> 0.95	Satisfactory

As indicated in the above table, all fit indices (TLI, CFI, CMIN-DF, RMSEA, PNFI, and GFI) were within the acceptable range. This approved the validity of the measurement model and its accordance with the collected data.

5. DISCUSSION

This empirical inquiry was conducted to test the possible connections between Chinese English teachers' self-efficacy, professional identity, and attrition. Simply said, this investigation sought to find out whether Chinese English teachers' attrition is tied to their professional identity and sense of efficacy. The Pearson product-moment correlation disclosed that professional identity and self-efficacy are negatively correlated with English teachers' attrition. This parametric test also revealed that English teachers' professional identity is closely tied to their sense of efficacy. The finding of this inquiry about the negative association between English teachers' self-efficacy and job attrition might be justified by the fact that teachers who positively assess their professional abilities are more inclined to continue their profession (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Swanson, 2012). This finding corroborates the study of Høigaard *et al.* (2012), who discovered that there is a strong, negative connection between university instructors' self-efficacy and turnover intention. This also accords with Eden's (2016) results, which divulged that teachers' sense of efficacy is negatively associated with their job attrition. Furthermore, the study outcome on the negative connection between English teachers' professional identity and job attrition may also be rationalized by the fact that teachers who develop strong professional identities are less likely to quit the teaching vocation. This outcome verifies Parks's (2017) observations, which signified a negative relationship between teachers' professional identity and their intention to leave teaching. This is also in agreement with the findings of Dunn and Downey (2018), who displayed that instructors' turnover intention is negatively connected to their professional identity. Additionally, the results of this study regarding the strong connection between English teachers' self-efficacy and professional identity back up the findings of some earlier investigations (Chen *et al.*, 2020; Motallebzadeh & Kazemi, 2018).

In addition to the aforementioned purpose, this inquiry also endeavored to pinpoint the role of self-efficacy and professional identity in decreasing English teachers' job attrition. Multiple regression analysis exhibited that professional identity and sense of efficacy can

serve a crucial role in reducing English teachers' job attrition. This suggests that how English teachers perceive the teaching profession and their professional competencies has a direct impact on their attrition rate. A possible explanation for the predictive power of self-efficacy is that the positive beliefs of teachers about their instructional capacities prompt them to stay in their profession (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019). Besides, the predictive role of professional identity can be explained by the fact that teachers' positive attitudes towards the teaching profession inspire them to pursue their profession. The finding of the current research regarding the function of self-efficacy in reducing teacher attrition is similar to Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2016) observations, which indicated that teachers' sense of efficacy can considerably reduce their attrition rate. This finding also fits with Miller's (2020) outcomes, which revealed that teachers' self-efficacy perceptions have a significant influence on their turnover and attrition intention. Finally, the result of this study concerning the role of professional identity in diminishing teacher attrition is consistent with Parks's (2017) findings, which demonstrated that a strong professional identity results in reduced teacher attrition. This also lends support to Dunn and Downey's (2018) results, which disclosed that professional identity can minimize the rate of teacher attrition.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This inquiry was carried out with a view to pinpointing the possible connections between Chinese English teachers' self-efficacy, professional identity, and attrition. It also sought to discover the role of self-efficacy and professional identity in Chinese English teachers' attrition. The results of the Pearson product-moment coefficient and multiple regression analysis disclosed that the attrition of English teachers largely depends on their professional identity and sense of efficacy. Simply said, English teachers' professional identity and self-efficacy can greatly influence their decision to quit their profession. In other words, English teachers' identity and sense of efficacy can encourage them to stay in their profession. An important implication of these findings is that teacher educators can play some role in decreasing teacher attrition by assisting teachers to construct a positive professional identity. Teacher educators can also help teachers develop a strong sense of efficacy, which notably reduces the rate of teacher attrition. These results may also suggest some courses of action for language teachers. With respect to the present study outcomes, a reasonable approach to prevent teacher attrition is improving teachers' self-efficacy. Considering this, language teachers are expected to strengthen their sense of efficacy by enhancing their teaching capabilities. Given the negative influence of professional identity on teacher attrition, language teachers are also expected to attend different professional development programs to reconstruct their identity. A better professional identity will strengthen their decision to remain in the teaching profession.

Despite its beneficial implications, this research includes some important limitations, which need to be addressed in future inquiries. The first limitation of this research lies in the fact that only self-report inventories were used to measure participants' sense of efficacy, professional identity, and attrition intention. To achieve a deeper assessment of these variables (Derakhshan *et al.*, 2023), future investigations should make use of other instruments like diary writing, structured or semi-structured interviews, and observation. The second limitation is related to the moderating role of contextual factors which was neglected in this

investigation. For more reliable outcomes, future studies must evaluate the role of teachers' age, gender, and teaching experience in their attrition intention. The last limitation is that a relatively small sample was recruited for this research. With a small sample size, findings might not be transferable to relevant research contexts. Accordingly, future scholars need to select a larger sample for their research.

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