

Saudi EFL Teacher Professional Identity and Emotions: Emotions Regulation Perspective

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Abstract

Research has shown that a strong teacher professional identity is an integral part of teaching as well as learning processes. Unlike the traditional view of who teachers are, nowadays conceptualization considers teachers not only as reservoirs of knowledge but individuals that inspire other individuals in unique ways. Teacher professional identity exhibits teachers' beliefs, emotions, and teaching philosophies. Among other aspects, teacher emotions are a strong indicator of teacher professional identity; therefore, unless teachers are better equipped with cognitive strategies to regulate their emotions and are more emotionally intelligent, achieving their teaching and non-teaching goals will remain a forlorn dream. The current paper encapsulated various aspects of teacher emotions and emotion regulation models and has sought to answer the following overarching research question: *How do emotions influence teacher professional identity and how do Saudi EFL teachers regulate their emotions?* Hence, the factors that lead to Saudi English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' emotional arousal and disturbances have been critically summarized. Finally, the applications of emotion regulation models in the Saudi EFL context have been highlighted. The theoretical conceptualizations presented in this paper have implications for EFL teachers, teacher trainers, and professional development specialists.

Keywords: Emotion regulations, Saudi EFL context, teacher emotions, teacher professional identity

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Introduction

The dominance of socio-constructionism has transformed the meaning of education and knowledge acquisition to a degree that fundamental beliefs about teaching and teachers have acquired new meanings (Nguyen, 2008). Traditionally, teacher was considered a source of knowledge and skills whose needs were determined by society accordingly. Nowadays teacher is seen as an individual who interacts with other individuals for transforming their lives not through filling their empty minds but enabling them to be who they want to be and are capable of. After realizing the role of teachers, educationalists demand that teachers should be understood, and all aspects of their individuality should be taken care of. In this regard, English as a Foreign language (EFL) teachers, unlike teachers of other subjects, have been widely discussed and researched, because teaching a foreign language is not only teaching certain skills and systems but changing students' beliefs and perceptions (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Therefore, studying the role of teacher emotions in the formulation of EFL teacher identity has been in the limelight for the last few decades (Barcelos, 2017). In this sense, the Saudi EFL context offers a unique opportunity for theorizing EFL teachers' emotions and emotion regulation for enhancing their teacher professional identity. The current study is answering the following overarching question:

How do emotions influence teacher professional identity and how do Saudi EFL teachers regulate their emotions?

Teacher professional identity and emotions

Over the past few decades, researchers' focus has shifted from the knowledge transformation aspects of teaching profession to cognitive and psycho-social aspects such as teacher emotions, agency, and self-efficacy (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson 2005). These factors are collectively termed as teacher professional identity which denotes how teachers view their selves as individual teachers and how the society looks at their roles and responsibilities as teachers (Sachs, 2005).

Great interest has been given to the influences of emotions on the teachers' professional identity formation (Barcelos, 2017; Darby, 2008; Shapiro, 2010; Zembylas, 2003). It is also argued that teacher emotions influence the making and remaking of professional identity. Considerable identity research focuses tremendously on how the teacher emotions are recognized and taken care of in order to define their true worth in identity formation. As emotions are inextricably associated with teachers' selves, Nias (1996) identifies that to make a collaborative sense of their personal and professional identity, teachers invest heavily in their emotional self as it is linked to their work. To describe the role of emotions in teaching, Zembylas (2003) offered two views of how emotions play a profound role in teaching. Firstly, he asserts that teachers' emotions are not something constructed as a result of personal disposition, but are formed in family, society, and school. Secondly, teacher's emotions cannot be categorized in public or private, such as reason and emotions; rather they are generated in the form a whole entity. The research on teacher emotions shows that their classroom performance is directly related to their emotions about the workplace, the students, and the profession itself (Akbari, Samar, Kiany & Tahernia, 2017). For example, ill-equipped and less motivated students put a significant stress on the time and emotions of the teachers (Webster & Mosoeta, 2001). Moreover, it is generally observed that teachers are burdened with academic and non-academic demands which are sometimes in conflict with their core

teaching responsibilities. Following this thread, Barkhuzein and Rothman (2006) noted that teaching is the most stressful occupation. Besides, Kinman (2008) validates that the stress level of the academicians is on the rise, as the image and status of teaching career are declining due to increased volumes of students, job dissatisfaction, and an increase in administrative functions. It is believed that the above-mentioned reasons are responsible for the teachers' stress and discomfort in Saudi EFL institutions owing to the fact that in recent years the economic decline has resulted in the lower number of teaching hours and, of course, an increased number of students per class. These reasons, among others, are behind some teacher attempt to leave the institution and join a context where there is less emotional burnout; as according to Bartram, Djurkovic, Casimir and Stanton (2012), there is a strong link between teacher emotional labor and their intention to leave the context or the profession.

To state that emotions constitute professional identity, the question 'what is a teacher?' is one of the constructing factors of a teacher's professional identity. In traditional sense, teaching is considered a "caring" rather than "high status" profession (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996, p. 9), and in some societies teaching is a prophetic profession which means that that the dissemination of knowledge is paramount to the divine service done to humanity. The society expects teachers to be "charged with positive emotions" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835) and committed to serving humanity. Similarly, Hargreaves (1994) asserts that the teaching profession is "human nurturance, connectedness, love and warmth" (p.175), since teachers always aspire to help their students. So, caring and inspiring are parts of teacher identity. Nevertheless, Tateo (2012) claims that caring is not only to inspire and motivate inside the classroom, but it also exists outside the classroom situations. Thus, teaching is a complex phenomenon that cannot be easily understood because it takes several intertwined dimensions to define a teacher's professional identity.

Although teaching profession is viewed indispensable to student growth, in the nowadays knowledge societies around the globe where all outcomes are measurable according to a certain standard, the teacher's emotions, no matter how prominent they are in the teaching and learning process, they are considered worthless (Constanti & Gibbs, 2004). Thus, if the teacher emotions such as commitment, desire to motivate, intent to enlighten, happiness, job satisfaction, etc., are not taken care of, the teacher professional identity will diminish and, in turn, the students learning will bear the brunt. This concern is also voiced by the European Commission (2007) that the current system of teacher assessment lacks the acknowledgment of teachers' emotional and empathic skills are responsible for a weakened teacher professional identity.

Teacher professional identity tensions

After foreground how teacher emotions have a significant toll on his performance and identity development, teacher identity development tensions are worth discussing. Tateo (2012) delineates teachers' professional identity dilemma in five types of tensions. The first type of tension is between the mainstream teachers' responsibilities and the actual everyday experience. Teachers safeguard their clients' future through positive emotions and attitudes and if negative emotions are generated, they project themselves on colleagues, family, and other targets. But when these negative emotions are directed towards the students, the society cannot afford this heavy toll. When teachers face problems, they feel burnout and vulnerability and these problems are always as a result of being threatened by school administration, parents, and society at large.

The second type of tension is between the different teacher perceptions of his/her professional identity, i.e., his role based on his training and qualification as well as his actual role. Teaching is not only the transmission of knowledge, but it provides for the students' emotional capabilities and individual empowerment. As Beijjaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2000) describe it,

In our post-modern societies teachers increasingly face moral, social, and emotional dilemmas, such as: How can we educate students for uncertainty? How can we educate students with multicultural and different social backgrounds? How should we cope with consequences of a society in which social control has been replaced by strong processes of individualization? How do we deal with deviant student behavior? How should we judge and discuss other sources of information and technologies that are available to students now? How can we diagnose and help students to overcome problems as a result of divorce, sexual abuse, etc.? (p. 751)

According to the modern student-centered and socio-constructionist model of teaching, teachers' focus is more on learning and less on teaching. Thus, a teacher professional identity is molded according to the new role assumed in the light of educational changes and the emergence of new trends and ideas.

The third type of professional identity development tension is between the established teaching practices and the new pedagogical approaches and this tension arises as a result of reflection process. As Loughran (2006) states that in the post-modern growing complexity of teaching we need easier solutions for teaching and learning that can easily become part of the teaching convention, reflection tells that what worked last time may not work next time. Only reflection can resolve the tension between the actual professional practices and the ideal professional competence. Here it is argued that reflection should be part of the teacher professional development courses and should focus on the situated teaching practices (Mercer, 2017). The fourth type of tension is between the reflective self of a teacher which is also a caring self and institutional self that comes into being as a result of the institutional policies and standards. In other words, the reflective self comes at a professional cost in the sense that caring as a 'non-work' does not have any economic benefits (Forrester, 2005). This idea resonates with the teacher appraisal system in many EFL institutes where the innovation in classroom can result in low scores (Shah, Hussain & Naseef, 2013). The fifth tension regarding the teacher professional identity is between "reality-as-it-is" and "reality-to-be". When there are educational or societal changes, they put a heavy toll on teachers in the form of societal expectations. According to the post-constructivist teaching approach, teachers are expected to make students autonomous learners in order to train them in acquiring key competencies rather than rote-learning. In light of the increased demands from the teachers, there is an increased need of describing teacher quality. According to Tateo (2012),

Teacher's quality should be an overall concept that comprises not only knowledge and skills, but also personal qualities - such as respect, care, courage, empathy, and personal values, attitudes, identity, beliefs, etc.– making quite evident the tight link between quality and TPI. The way in which these characteristics are implicitly or

explicitly included in indicators of teacher quality reflects dominant social, cultural, economic, and educational views and concerns about teachers' quality. (p. 348)

To further the discussion of teacher emotion and teacher identity, the teacher qualification could be categorized into two main standards. The first standard includes qualification, teacher preparation programs, degrees, teacher course work, teacher experience, and teacher self-reflection; whereas the second standard encompasses emotional characteristics necessary for teaching. However, to put in one sentence, "You teach by who you are" (ICET, 2008). Thus, the teacher professional identity is a complex and dynamic construct that is subject to different competing interpretations, and emotion plays a paramount role in its making and remaking.

Moreover, the teacher's vulnerability is not due to the lack of subject matter knowledge or pedagogical skills but due to loss of self as a result of educational or societal changes (Woods, 1996). As the policies change and teacher professional identity is put to test, teacher training and professional development can come to the teachers' rescue, as Tateo (2012) puts it, "only with adequate support by researchers and trainers they are able to reconstruct self-understandings, leading to improvements in student achievement, instructional practices, and positive changes leading to emotions of pride and excitement" (p.349).

However, for fostering a positive learning environment for their learners and pleasant teaching classrooms, teachers need to monitor and regulate their emotions on a regular basis (Gates, 2000). Due to an increased demand of contemporary classrooms, the 'social and emotional learning' (SEL) has gained relevance in the teaching profession (Mercer, 2017). Teaching is inherently a social activity, necessitating teachers to build a sound relationship not only with students but among students as well. To this end, teachers are required to find their own emotions and those of their learners by reading their behaviors and facial expressions (Denham & Brown, 2010). Having strong emotional intelligence facilitates the learning process as well as the improve the teacher's wellbeing because research has shown that highly emotionally intelligent people are better able to cope with the multiple issues of the current and emerging classrooms (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010) and consequently teachers experience less emotional stress and high job satisfaction. Nevertheless, despite the colossal importance of the teachers' social and emotional learning, it has not been part of the teacher training, either pre-service or in-service (Mercer, 2017).

Interest in studying teachers, especially second language teachers, has burgeoned in mainstream and teacher education. Theorists and researchers in the field of applied linguistics have realized that teacher variables warrant due consideration because "teachers make many decisions affecting the lives of students" (Woolfolk & McCune-Nicolich, 1984, p. 432). Among teacher variables, teacher emotions and emotional experiences have attracted a great deal of interest (e.g., Aragao, 2011; Méndez López & Fabela Cárdenas, 2014). This heightened interest shows that teacher emotions play a significant role in all teaching propositions including but not limited to student learning outcomes (Cross & Hong, 2012). At the same time, emotion regulation is considered a natural corollary of studying emotions in educational domains.

Emotion regulation

Recent theorization on emotions conceptualizes them as “processes involving multiple components arising from experiential, behavioral, and physiological systems” (Sutton & Harper, 2009, p. 390). To regularize these processes consciously or unconsciously is termed as emotion regulation (Sutton & Harper, 2009). In the realm of psychology, it is believed that emotion regulation plays a pivotal role in maintaining good health and performance (Cicchetti, Ackerman, & Izard, 1995). In academia, teacher emotion regulation is central to all academic undertakings (Mercer, 2017).

Despite having an apparently shared notion, emotion regulation is defined differently by different individuals. Emotion regulation, according to Thompson (1994) is “the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions, especially their intensive and temporal features, to accomplish one’s goals” (p.27). This definition entails that for achieving a specific goal in a specific context requires modifications to and maintenance of emotions. Moreover, it is evident from this definition that emotions are found in a raw form and it takes cognitive effort to reshape emotions to a particular situation. Hence, emotion regulation is dependent on a two-pronged approach involving internally acquired skills and external factors. In education, internal factors are teachers’ beliefs and perceptions regarding teaching and learning, whereas external factors are learners’ learning styles, emotional states, educational background and motivational levels.

From constructivist perspectives, emotion regulation is “the ability to respond to the ongoing demands of experience with the range of emotions in a manner that is socially tolerable and sufficiently flexible to permit spontaneous reaction as well as the ability to delay spontaneous reactions as needed” (Cole, Michel, & Teti, 1994, p. 74). Like Thompson’s (1994) definition, this one also focuses on the interplay of internal and external processes for emotion regulation, however, this definition regards the process of emotion regulation process as a socio-cultural activity (Vygotsky, 1998). Although emotion is an entirely personal construct, its regulation is influenced by socio-cultural factors which differ from context to context. For instance, in EFL teaching teachers recreate and remodel their emotions according to different contexts.

Gross (1998b) believes that emotion regulation is “the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (p. 275). This definition presents rather a simplistic view of emotions being regulated by individuals but highlights human agency in controlling and regulating emotions. This view corroborates the notion that emotion regulation is not an avoidance strategy; rather it is the ability to cope with different situations differently, as Koole (2009) states that emotion regulation refers to

the set of processes whereby people seek to redirect the spontaneous flow of their emotions. In a broad sense, emotion regulation refers to the set of processes whereby people manage all their emotionally charged states, including specific emotions, moods, and stress. Emotion regulation determines how easily people can leave a given emotional state. It can thus be distinguished from emotional sensitivity, which determines how easily people can enter an emotional state. (p.29)

Koole (2009) distinguishes emotional sensitivity and emotion regulations, the former being an essential attribute whereas the latter is considered a negative cognitive ability that may deter the accomplishment of a task.

The above theorization of emotions generally refers to any education or non-educational undertakings. However, the notions outlined in them are applicable to education as well.

Models of emotion regulations

Various theoretical and psycho-social models of emotion regulation have discussed how emotions manifest and how they are regulated and appropriated for achieving desired goals and purposes. A hot/cool system model was presented by post-positivist social researchers (Metcalf & Mischel, 1999; Mischel & Ayduk, 2004). This emotion regulation model is also termed as the “willpower” model. This two-system model contains hot and cool inner points to explain the human emotions regulation framework. The cool, “know” system (Metcalf & Mischel, 1999) is “cognitive, complex, slow, contemplative, and emotionally neutral. It consists of a network of informational cool nodes that “are elaborately connect-ed to each other, and which generate rational, reflective, and strategic behavior” (Sutton & Harper, 2009, p. 391). Cool nodes of emotions are activated when the situation demands to be proactive rather than reactive approach and response. On the other hand, a hot emotional state is “is specialized for quick emotional processing and responding on the basis of unconditional or conditional trigger features” (Metcalf & Mischel, 1999, p. 4). The hot system, as opposed to the cool system, is activated for processing quick and simple emotions in a given situation. This hot system is nurtured during the early stages of life in childhood and mostly dominates the cool system. The hot system is negatively related to age; that is, it is more vigorous in childhood and less activated in adulthood. This complicated dual system has been extended to the field of teaching by Sutton and Harper (2009). According to their hot/cool model, when confronted with emotion tribulations emotionally intelligent teachers successfully regulate their emotions by changing the hot nodes to cool nodes. This change of emotions is achieved by ignoring the stimulus, distracting themselves, or reformulating the meanings of the stimulus. Ignoring the stimulus requires the teacher to ignore students’ minor misbehavior in order not to disrupt the teaching-learning process. Distracting refers to teachers trying not to laugh at students’ culturally inappropriate jokes or comment and continue the lesson uninterrupted. Reformulating the stimulus means refusing to take students’ misbehavior personally. In contrast, less emotionally intelligent teachers face difficulties in coping with emotional arousal and hence fail to achieve the intended teaching goals. Nevertheless, emotion regulation is a complex process and is mainly dependent on teaching context and students’ socio-cultural background (Sutton & Harper, 2009). That is, a teacher may be successful in emotion regulation in one context but failure in another context. Therefore, according to this model, teaching experience could help in managing emotions effectively. More experienced teachers are aware of the instances inside and outside the classroom that trigger emotional arousal and are able to anticipate what happens in a specific situation with a specific group of learners.

Baumeister and colleagues presented the Resource or Strength model for emotion regulations (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Schmeichel & Baumesiter, 2004). According to this model, emotion regulation “takes energy or inner resources but that self-regulatory strength is a limited resource” (Sutton & Harper, 2009, p. 392). In other words,

individuals have limited emotion regulatory resources, and the more they are utilized the more individual's capacity is depleted. The notion of the exhaustion of emotion regulatory resources have attracted criticism; however, self-motivational strategies can revitalize teachers' eroded emotion regulatory powers (Muraven & Slessareva, 2003). In this regard, "teachers who are sufficiently motivated may be able to overcome their depleted self-control resources and successfully regulate their emotions even in taxing situations" (Sutton & Harper, 2009, p. 392).

Gross (1998b) put forward a more elaborate and complex model of emotion regulation which is called the Process Model of emotion regulation. According to this model, there are five cognitive processes involved in emotion regulation: situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. In the five-process model, the first four processes are preventive in nature; that is, they are applied before the emotional reaction is fully aroused, whereas only the fifth one, response modulation, pertains to the adjustment of emotional reaction after it is activated (Gross & Munoz, 1995). To put it simply, emotion regulation is a trajectory wherein "a particular situation is selected, modified, attended to, appraised, and yields a particular set of emotional responses" (Gross, 2014, p. 8). Cognitive change is the next process of emotion regulation in this model which denotes "modifying how one appraises a situation so as to alter its emotional significance, either by changing how one thinks about the situation or about one's capacity to manage the demand it poses" (Gross, 2014, p. 10). The arousal of emotions at the cognitive stage undergoes three possible courses: enhancing, declining, or transforming the nature of such emotions (Gross, 2002). Strategies such as resorting to self-talk to console oneself are employed in this process. However, once the emotional arousal has happened the response modulation process is readily available at play; unlike the first four a priori processes, this one is posteriori (Gross, 1998b). according to Gross and Thompson's (2007) response modulation process "refers to influencing physiological, experiential, or behavioral responding as directly as possible" (p.15). For instance, hiding one's frustration and angst after failing in an exam is response modulation arousal (Gross, 2002).

In the EFL domain, Akbari et al. (2017) found the appropriateness of the process model. They termed the five processes as "1) Teaching Context Preference or Avoidance, 2) Teaching Context Adjustments, 3) Attention Direction, 4) Reappraisal Strategies, and 5) Reactive Strategies" (p.319). Teaching context preference or avoidance which corresponds to situation selection in the Gross model was represented by teachers choosing their students by their language proficiency level, age, and gender. The teachers also chose their teaching contexts: private or public, urban or rural, and small or big classes. They preferred a context where they had less possibility of coming into contact with a stressful situation and negative feelings. The second coping strategy the EFL teachers employed was teaching context adjustment which corresponds to situation modification in Gross (1998) model. Teachers being aware of the context were prepared to experience situations that would provoke negative emotions and therefore took preemptive measures ahead of time and were ready to adjust their emotions to their benefit. This is evidence that EFL teachers instead of acting passively became agents of change and acted proactively to achieve their teaching goals. However, at times the teachers were unable to choose the teaching context or to modify it. In this case, they applied some cognitive strategies to prevent negative emotions from doing harm to them and their students. This stage is called attention direction which is attention deployment in Gross (1998) model. For example, if student

misbehavior would cause arousal of unpleasant emotion, the teachers would reframe their perspectives and emotions. In addition to the above strategies, the EFL teachers also employed attention direction which is attention deployment in Gross (1998) model. As opposed to the first four preventive and antecedent-focused strategies, reactive strategies, response modulation in Gross (1998) model, were also employed.

From an emotional labor perspective, Hochschild (1983) put forward an emotion regulation model that can be applied in the educational arena. Emotional labor denotes “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7). According to Yin & Lee (2012), the concept of emotional labor refers to hiding, creating, recreating, and managing emotions and feelings aligned to teaching professional norms and values. Furthermore, Isenbarger & Zembylas (2006) contend that the Hochschild (1983) model can be incorporated in the teaching profession in three ways: (a) since teachers come in direct contact with students, emotional arousal is frequent, (b) teaching demands teachers to generate emotions such as joy and anger based on the situation, and (c) teacher emotions are influenced by socio-cultural and institutional factors. Therefore, teachers are required to employ emotion regulation strategies; otherwise, teacher burnout is inevitable (Copp, 1998). The notion of burnout was proposed by sociopsychologist Maslach (Maslach & Leiter, 2005). Burnout, according to this three-dimensional model, consists of three intertwined components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Extending these dimensions to teaching, Bibou-Nakou, Stogiannidou, and Kiosseoglou (1999) proposed that teachers get emotionally exhausted with demotivated and careless students; get depersonalized and indifferent while facing negative attitude of others including students and co-workers; experience lessened personal accomplishment and self-worth when their performance and competence are downgraded. In the field of EFL teaching, Ghanizadeh and Royaei (2015) confirmed the above conceptualizations of emotion regulation, emotional labor, and burnout.

Discussion

After reviewing teacher emotions, their profound relation to teacher professional, identity, and emotion regulation models, this section elaborates on what emotional strains Saudi EFL teachers experience and how emotion regulation conceptualizations may ameliorate teachers' emotional states. Unlike other EFL contexts around the globe, the Saudi EFL context is unique in many ways which present challenges to the EFL teachers who hail from various educational and socio-cultural backgrounds (Ahmad, Latada, Wahab, Shah & Khan, 2018)). Literature reveals that Saudi EFL teachers face a plethora of challenges which are social, pedagogical, cultural, and academic (Alharbi, 2015; Al-Seghayer, 2014; Shah, Hussain & Naseef, 2013). One of the foremost challenges that activate teachers' emotional disturbances is demotivated students (Alrabia, 2016). Most EFL students study the English language for attaining a certain academic grade rather than for the fulfillment of intrinsic motives and attainment of altruistic goals. This leads to a herd of demotivated students who, in turn, gives rise to a large number of repeater students in every single class. Therefore, many demotivated and repeater students put a huge strain on teachers who struggle to modify their behavior, teaching methods, and classroom management strategies. Another significant source of teacher emotional disturbance is classroom management (Alkathery, 2014). Research indicates that Saudi EFL students tend to use mobile phones and L1 quite often during instructions which drain teachers' emotional resource. Unless teachers have

adequate emotional intelligence skills and emotion regulation strategies a valuable portion of instruction time is wasted in managing student disruptive behaviors. A possible cause of demotivated EFL students and their disruptive behaviors is their belief about the role of the English language in the Saudi Society (Al-Seghayer, 2014). Research indicates that English is seen as a language of infidels and a vehicle of Western agendas in the Islamic conservative society (Elyas & Picard, 2018). Although the initiation of the current socio-cultural trends, such as Vision 2030, has helped in broadening people's vision about learning the language, the negative belief about the language is embedded in the society's unconscious which comes to prominence at certain sociological encounters. In this atmosphere of disbelief and uncertainty, EFL teachers have to consider a lot of factors during instructions. One such factor is the students' cultural sensitivities. Being a language spoken in Western countries, the English language is loaded with cultural artifacts of the speakers and teaching it without them is a challenge for EFL teachers in conservative societies where people value the preservation of their socio-cultural values and norms. The avoidance of culturally sensitive encounters (Al-Asmari, 2016) in their classrooms, EFL teachers struggle which results in emotional exhaustion. Such instances result in attenuated teacher agency which is normally needed for effective language teaching. Numerous studies have shown that teachers in Saudi EFL context are less agentive than their counterparts in other EFL contexts (e.g. Ahmad et al., 2018). This is due to teachers' strict adherence to pacing guide restrictions and following administrative rules and policies which sometimes run counter to the norms of good language teaching. The above-mentioned factors not only drain teacher emotional reservoirs but also impede the students' learning process. Therefore, unless Saudi EFL teachers consciously monitor their emotions and regulate them properly, teaching and learning process will be less than perfect. It is up to the EFL teachers to choose and adapt an emotion regulation models described in the current study since it has been shown that one-size-fits emotion regulation models rarely work. As a final analysis, professional EFL teacher education and professional development may include teacher emotion regulation (Mercer, 2017; Tateo, 2012).

Conclusion

In this paper, EFL teacher identity has been discussed in relation to teacher emotions and emotion regulations. Several emotion regulation models and their applicability in the Saudi EFL context have been presented. It was seen that the Saudi EFL teaching profession is fraught with emotional disturbances due to certain socio-cultural, academic, and administrative factors. EFL teachers bear the brunt of emotional burnout. Therefore, to achieve their teaching goals, Saudi EFL teachers can lessen their perturbation and emotional upset by applying emotional regulation models outlined in this paper. As the study of EFL teacher emotions and emotions regulation is in the early phases in Saudi Arabia, empirical research is needed to investigate teachers' perceptions and their lived experiences in the classroom as well as in professional development encounters in relation to their emotions and emotion regulation strategies.

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