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## **Professionalism and Commitment among Iranian EFL Teachers: Do Educational Context and Gender Make a Difference?**

**Fatemeh Fazlali**

*English Department, Farhangian University, Tehran, Iran*  
*fazlalif@cfu.ac.ir*

### **Abstract**

This study explored the status of professionalism and commitment among Iranian EFL Teachers. In doing so, 136 (86 private-and 50 public-sector) EFL teachers of different ages (25-55) from different schools and institutes in Tehran participated in this study. The participants completed the pertinent instruments (i.e., Teachers' Professionalism and Organizational Commitment Questionnaires). Moreover, out of 136 participants, 40 EFL teachers were interviewed. The results showed that both professionalism and commitment along with their subcategories were rationally high among EFL teachers. Furthermore, a positive correlation was found between EFL teachers' professionalism and commitment. Besides, the content analysis of interviews indicated that professional teachers were committed to their teaching and were sensitive to learners' needs. Likewise, committed teachers were actively looking for professional development opportunities. The results also showed that female EFL instructors had a higher level of professionalism and commitment than their male counterparts. Additionally, the results indicated that EFL instructors in language institutes had a higher level of professionalism and commitment than those in senior secondary schools. The findings can support EFL policymakers, supervisors, managers, and teacher trainers to grasp a better picture of professionalism and commitment in Iranian EFL educational contexts.

*Keywords: Commitment; Educational Context; EFL Teachers; Gender; Language Institutes; Professionalism; Senior Secondary Schools*

## 1. Introduction

Education is considered one of the central bedrocks in almost all realms. The educational system productivity of any country and nation is regarded as a vital aspect of any development (Sulastrri et al., 2020). In other words, a quality schooling and education system can pledge a nation's improvement by teaching quality human resources (Asmarani et al., 2021). Teachers and educators are considered as one of the fundamental aspects of a quality schooling and education system (Komila, 2019). Teacher education's essential aim is to develop specialists in teaching (Oancea, 2014). Thus, instructors must be equipped with adequate professional competency (Asmarani et al., 2021). As aptly Creasy (2015) asserted, professionalism is defined from various perspectives, and how professionalism can be developed is widely discussed. Parr (2004) described the concept of professionalism as the liability, level of proficiency, and accountability that an expert in any field must grasp. Likewise, Tatto and Menter (2019) elucidated that professionalism is linked with excellence, and ethical and moral work-related practices. Developing the workforce competently is considered one of the core educational exertions that are applied in every education program to foster learners' academic accomplishments (Furlong, 2013). Accordingly, educators are obliged to continually improve and boost their abilities to be equipped to provide the learners with the teaching they need for nowadays universal marketplace (Sorcinelli et al., 2006).

Another essential concept is teachers' commitment, defined as the intention and aim to stay in education (Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). As Chesnut and Cullen (2014) maintain, commitment to the education profession, like any other work-related commitment, is the inner bond that a person has with instruction, as a profession, as a role, and as an organization. Similarly, teachers' commitment is also described as a psychological bond or attachment to the teaching and instruction job, specifying the degree to which the educator appreciates and feels associated with the career (Berger & Lê Van, 2019).

Despite an extensive body of research concerning teachers' professionalism and commitment (e.g., Heinz, 2015; Hong et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2015; McKim et al., 2017; Rezai et al., 2022; Saberi & Sahragard, 2019; Sinclair, 2008; Wichadee, 2011), it seems only a few studies, if any, have investigated the status of teachers' professionalism and commitment in the context of Iran in consort with the potential role of EFL teachers' gender and educational contexts. In addition, if commitment and professionalism are significant to teachers and effective teaching, then they need to be scrutinized empirically. Owing to the prominence of teachers' professionalism and commitment, the present study aimed at inspecting the status of the teachers' professionalism and commitment in the context of Iran and also identifying the possible relationship between the



aforementioned variables along with exploring the role of gender and educational context. It is worth noting that this study had four main purposes as follows:

RQ1: What is the level of Iranian EFL teachers' professionalism and commitment?

RQ2: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' professionalism and commitment?

RQ3: Is there any significant difference between male and female EFL teachers' professionalism and commitment?

RQ4: Is there any significant difference between professionalism and commitment of Iranian EFL teachers of high schools and those of private institutes?

## **2. Review of the Related Literature**

### *2.1. Professionalism*

It is believed that educator professionalism is to offer a benchmark for educators to determine the quality principles that an educator must have (Mohd Aizat & Kamarudin, 2020). The concept of professionalism has been defined from various perspectives. Parr (2004) explained the notion of professionalism as the responsibility, level of competency, and accountability that an expert in any field must possess. Professional work practice comprises specialized conduct such as reflecting on education responsibilities and a readiness to learn and progress constantly (O'Brien, 2016). It also involves active and practical participation supporting educator professionalism, including engaging in teaching reform or alteration, educator recognition, organization, and professional administration, like determining criteria or terms for functioning in the education or instruction career (O'Brien, 2016). For most instructors, the values can be comprehensive and delimited in the objectives and declarations of the institute's work (O'Sullivan & West-Burnham, 2011).

In the lack of professional improvement, educators' awareness might become outdated and keep them from offering their learners productive and pertinent resources. Accordingly, professional advancement must be fashioned throughout an instructor's occupation course. Professionalism must be continued for an educator to become a qualified instructor (Rokhyati, 2015). It is believed that educators' professional abilities are prerequisites for instructors, and contended that educators who have such professional abilities as class management, inquiring and elucidating maintain steadiness in their education, and are efficacious in their instruction (Wragg, 2003). Furthermore, Cruickshank et al. (2011) supposed that professional abilities support effective instructors to create

a proper instruction condition, offer explicit teaching, examine learners' improvement, offer feedback steadily and competently foster learning in their courses. [Moeinvaziri et al. \(2021\)](#) reckoned the subsequent professional abilities for educators: Contextual familiarity, general principles, academic knowledge, and instruction abilities such as communicational abilities, self-governing abilities, capability to design, skill to prepare for education development, and skill to formulate appropriate learning settings for children with different teaching requirements.

Different investigations have been done on teacher professionalism and professional success. For example, [Roosta and Bagheri \(2016\)](#) investigated the potential influence of teachers' gender on their level of professional success. The findings of their study designated that male instructors had a higher level of professional success than their female counterparts. Additionally, [Agbayahoun \(2016\)](#) concluded that the top-down educator development actions give EFL educators acquaintance educational input. [Agbayahoun \(2016\)](#) also stated that such activities have little influence on teachers' instruction and students' learning. Likewise, [Shoqair and Shaaban \(2013\)](#) investigated the most common professional development strategies for EFL educators. Furthermore, their study aimed to examine whether gender, academic levels, and specialty affect the adaptation of EFL educators' professional development strategies. The results displayed that using social networks, doing action research, and participating in educational e-forums were the most frequently used professional development strategies.

## *2.2. Commitment*

It is believed that successful educators need a high level of commitment ([Hoy, et al. 1991](#)). The concept of commitment is defined as the inclination to participate in constructive activities and tasks rather than feeling pointless ([Heinz, 2015](#)). [Chesnut and Cullen \(2014\)](#) argued that commitment to the education profession is the inner bond that a person has with instruction. Likewise, educators' commitment is also defined as a psychological bond or attachment to the teaching and instruction job, specifying the degree to which the educator appreciates and feels associated with the profession ([Berger & Lê Van, 2019](#)). It is noteworthy that commitment is regarded as the main constituent in any efficient civil service, and it's principally valued in service institutes including teaching establishments ([Firestone & Pannell, 1993](#)). The inconvenience that come across while scrutinizing, and monitoring the educators' work, along with, disagreements concerning anticipated consequences, create commitment fundamental in instructive organizations ([Firestone & Pannell, 1993](#)).

In addition, those individuals who are described as being committed typically have the capability to situate objectives for themselves and identify their



individual usefulness classification (Sinclair, 2008). Additionally, it seems that administrative commitment is wholly related to educational accomplishment (Leijen et al., 2021). To be precise, an educator's commitment level is strongly associated with students' level of academic achievement. Stressed and pressured educators do not hold a high commitment level toward instruction and efficiently instruct their learners (Moses et al., 2016). Accordingly, their commitment level might have an emotional impact on the learners' academic attainment. It is believed that the efficiency level of any teaching institution requests satisfactory administrative formation (Celep, 2000). Moreover, language educators need to function under beneficial situations to instruct their learners the language sufficiently, boost their academic accomplishment, and accomplish the organization's objectives (Celep, 2000). The achievement of any institute depends principally on the workforce's commitment level (Oberholster & Taylor, 1999). A low level of educator commitment diminishes learners' accomplishment, intensifies educator absenteeism, and amplifies instructor turnover to move from instruction to another career (Singh & Billingsley, 1989).

Celep (2000) categorized the commitment into four main domains. The first domain is commitment to school, which is regarded as educators' belief and recognition of the objectives and standards of the school, instructors' determinations for implementing those objectives and principles, and educators' intense longings to keep up participation in the school. The second domain of commitment is the commitment to teaching work, considered as educators' emotional state and practices in their everyday life toward their career and to be contented with instruction work and to fight more for performing the best in the institute and to be pleased of their institute (Celep, 2000). The third domain is the commitment to a teaching career, educators' viewpoints on their education career. The fourth and last domain is the commitment to a workgroup, the member of staff's sense of authenticity and association with other instructors within their institute (Randall & Cote, 1991). Numerous studies have been conducted on teacher commitment. For instance, Shoaib and Khalid (2017) investigated the possible role of gender on the level of teachers' commitment. Their investigation showed that female educators had a higher level of commitment than male teachers. In another study, Moses et al., (2016) investigated that potential association between teachers' gender and commitment to instruction and aim to enter a teaching career. The results of their investigation showed that there existed no significant associations between teachers' gender, their commitment to education, and the objective to enter the education career.

Despite the aforesaid studies, it can be argued that few, if any, cases of the relationship among teachers' professionalism and commitment have yet been investigated. Thus, this study was an attempt to fill this gap and examine the status of the teachers' professionalism and commitment in the context of Iran and also

identifying the possible relationship between the aforementioned variables along with exploring the role of gender and educational context.

### **3. Method**

#### *3.1. Design*

The present study was exploratory in nature due to the fact that the present study intended to scrutinize the status of EFL teachers' professionalism and commitment in the Iranian context. Furthermore, the current study was comparative due to the fact that it compared the potential difference between male and female teachers and public-and private-sector contexts with reference to their professionalism and commitment.

#### *3.2. Participants*

One hundred and thirty-six (86 private-and 50 public-sector) EFL teachers participated in the present study. Both female (n=74) and male (n=62) instructors took part in the present study. They taught English at different private institutes and senior secondary schools in Tehran. The EFL teachers were principally selected based on convenience sampling. The EFL teachers were native Persian speakers, and the participants' ages ranged from 25 to 55. Furthermore, out of 136 teachers, 40 of them were interviewed.

#### *3.3. Instruments*

The researcher made use of the following instruments:

##### *3.3.1. Teachers' Professionalism (TP) Questionnaire*

To assess the participants' professionalism, the Teachers' Professionalism (TP) Questionnaire by [Mohd Aizat](#) and [Kamarudin \(2020\)](#) was given. This instrument consists of 51 items on a six-point Likert scale. This questionnaire has four main components, i.e., teachers' characters (15 items), commitment to change and continual improvement (11 items), subject and pedagogical knowledge (13 items), and obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom (12 items). The participants were requested to fill this scale in about 35 minutes. According to [Mohd Aizat](#) and [Kamarudin \(2020\)](#), the reliability of the TP Questionnaire was 0.89. Additionally, in this study, the reliability of the TP Questionnaire was 0.94.

##### *3.3.2. Organizational Commitment Questionnaire*



To assess the participants' commitment, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by [Celep \(2000\)](#) was given. It comprises 28 five-point Likert scale items. This scale measures four components, i.e., commitment to school (9 items), commitment to teaching work (7 items), commitment to teaching occupation (6 items), and commitment to workgroup (6 items). The educators were requested to fill out this questionnaire in about 20 minutes. [Celep \(2000\)](#) reported that the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire had a high-reliability index. In addition, in this study, the reliability of this scale was 0.85.

### *3.3.3. Semi-Structured Interview*

To identify EFL teachers' insights with reference to the potential link between teachers' professionalism and commitment, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 40 EFL teachers. In this study, the interviews were conducted in English. Each interview took about 10 minutes. The interview questions were expert viewed for validity purposes.

### *3.4. Procedure*

This study was conducted in Tehran during the academic year 2022-2023. At the outset, the participants were principally selected based on accessibility and their informed consent to participate in the study was gained. Then, the essential enlightenment was provided by the researcher. After that, the two questionnaires of the study, i.e., the Teachers' Professionalism (TP) Questionnaire by [Mohd Aizat and Kamarudin \(2020\)](#), and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by [Celep \(2000\)](#), were distributed among the EFL teachers. The participants completed the aforementioned questionnaires in about 55 minutes. Lastly, out of 136 EFL teachers that participated in the study, 40 teachers were interviewed by the researcher. The interviews were in English, and each interview took about 10 minutes.

### *3.5. Data Analyses*

In this study, concerning the first question, frequency analyses were applied. Concerning the second question, a Pearson correlation was used. Concerning the third and fourth questions, Independent samples t-tests were run. Concerning the qualitative data, the recurring themes of the EFL teachers' responses were identified and their frequencies and percentages were reported.

## **4. Results**

### *4.1. Research Question One*

To answer the first question (i.e., "What is the level of Iranian EFL teachers'

professionalism and commitment?"), descriptive statistics were applied (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Professionalism and Commitment*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Professionalism	136	2.75	4.90	3.5020	.45094
Commitment	136	2.64	5.00	3.6442	.45923

As is shown in Table 1, 136 teachers took part in this study. As indicated in Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of EFL educators' professionalism were 3.50 and 0.45, respectively. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of EFL educators' commitment were 3.64 and 0.45, respectively. The total score was basically computed in the range of 1 to 5 (Mean=2.5). Therefore, the teachers' level of professionalism and commitment was moderate to high. The findings reveal that the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with most of the items. As stated earlier, the Teachers' Professionalism (TP) Questionnaire had four subcategories, whose descriptive statistics are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Teachers' Professionalism (TP) Questionnaire's Subcategories*

Factors	Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers' characters	15 items	136	2.27	5.00	3.482	.650
Commitment to change and continual improvement	11 items	136	1.64	5.00	3.580	.722
Subject and pedagogical knowledge	13 items	136	2.00	5.00	3.457	.668
Obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom	12 items	136	2.25	4.92	3.502	.741

The mean and standard deviation of the Teachers' Characters (15 items) were 3.48 and 0.65, respectively, while those of the Commitment to Change and Continual Improvement (11 items) were 3.58 and 0.72. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of the Subject and Pedagogical Knowledge (13 items) were 3.45 and 0.66, respectively, while those of the Obligations and Working Relationships beyond the Classroom (12 items) were 3.50 and 0.74. The findings revealed that all the aforementioned subcategories enjoyed moderate to high means. Based on the results, Commitment to change and continual improvement had the highest mean scores (M=3.58), while Subject and pedagogical knowledge had the lowest mean scores (M=3.45).



As stated earlier, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire had four subcategories, whose descriptive statistics are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**  
*Descriptive Statistics of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire's Subcategories*

Factors	Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Commitment to School	9 items	136	2.22	5.00	3.585	.688
Commitment to Teaching Work	7 items	136	2.57	5.00	3.814	.560
Commitment to Teaching Occupation	6 items	136	1.17	5.00	3.768	.778
Commitment to Work Group (colleagues)	6 items	136	.83	5.00	3.424	.875

The mean and standard deviation of the Commitment to School (nine items) were 3.58 and 0.68, respectively, while those of the Commitment to Teaching Work (seven items) were 3.81 and 0.56. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of the Commitment to Teaching Occupation (six items) were 3.76 and 0.77, respectively, while those of the Commitment to Work Group (colleagues) (six items) were 3.42 and 0.87. The findings revealed that all the subcategories enjoyed moderate to high means. Based on the results, Commitment to Teaching Work had the highest mean scores (M=3.81), while Commitment to Work Group (colleagues) had the lowest mean scores (M=3.42).

#### 4.2. Research Question Two

To explore the second question (i.e., “Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers’ professionalism and commitment?”), a Pearson correlation was run, whose results are outlined in Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4**  
*Descriptive Statistics for EFL Teachers’ Professionalism and Commitment*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Commitment	3.644	.459	136
Professionalism	3.502	.450	136

The mean and standard deviation of the EFL teachers’ commitment were 3.64 and 0.45, respectively, whereas those of the EFL teachers’ professionalism were 3.50 and 0.45, respectively.

**Table 5**  
*The Relationship between EFL Teachers’ Professionalism and Commitment*

Professionalism	Pearson Correlation	Commitment
		.486**

Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	136

As is seen in Table 5, there was a significant positive relationship between EFL teachers' professionalism and commitment ( $r=0.486$ ,  $p=0.000$ ,  $n=136$ ).

As stated earlier, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 40 EFL teachers to identify their perception of the potential relationship between teachers' professionalism and commitment. After content analysis, the results are tabulated (Table 6).

**Table 6**

*EFL Teachers' Common Patterns of Answers to the Interview Question*

No.	Pattern	Frequency	Percentage
1	Professionalism and commitment are related	40	100
2	Commitment is a part of professionalism	35	87.5
3	Professional teachers are committed to their teaching and are sensitive to learners' needs	30	75
4	Professional teachers are dedicated to instruction as a lifelong profession	25	62.5
5	Committed teachers are actively looking for professional development opportunities	25	62.5
6	Committed teachers engage in action research to enrich their private practice	20	50

As indicated in Table 6, all the respondents (100%) state that professionalism and commitment are related. Likewise, 87.5% of the interviewees believe that commitment is a part of professionalism. Similarly, 75% of the interviewees believe that professional teachers are committed to their teaching and are sensitive to learners' needs. Additionally, 62.5% of the respondents state that professional teachers are dedicated to instruction as a lifelong profession. Moreover, they argue that committed teachers are actively looking for professional development opportunities. In the same way, 50% of the participants believe that committed teachers engage in action research to enrich their private practice

#### 4.3. Research Question Three

To explore the third question (i.e., Is there any significant difference between male and female EFL teachers' professionalism and commitment?), independent Samples t-tests were run whose results are outlined in Tables 7 and 8.

**Table 7**

*Group Statistics of Male and Female Teachers*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Professionalism	Female	74	3.625	.533	.062



Commitment	Male	62	3.354	.262	.033
	Female	74	3.825	.446	.051
	Male	62	3.427	.374	.047

As indicated in Table 7 above, the mean and standard deviation of the female teachers’ professionalism were 3.62 and 0.53, respectively, while those of the males were 3.35 and 0.26. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of the female teachers’ commitment were 3.82 and 0.44, respectively, while those of the male ones were 3.42 and 0.37.

**Table 8**  
*Independent Samples Test on the Means of Male and Female Teachers*

	t-test for Equality of Means				
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Professionalism	3.647	134	.000	.271	.074
Commitment	5.571	134	.000	.398	.071

As shown in Table 8, the difference between the two mean scores turned out to be significant for both professionalism ( $t=3.64, p=0.00<0.05$ ) and commitment ( $t=5.57, p=0.00<0.05$ ), which implies that male and female teachers differed significantly concerning their professionalism and commitment. In other words, female educators had a higher level of both professionalism and commitment than their male counterparts.

*4.4. Research Question Four*

To scrutinize the fourth question (i.e., Is there any significant difference between professionalism and commitment of Iranian EFL teachers of senior secondary schools and those of private institutes?), independent Samples t-tests were run whose results are outlined in Tables 9 and 10.

**Table 9**  
*Group Statistics of Senior Secondary School and Private Institute Teachers*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Error	
				Deviation	Mean
Professionalism	Private Institute	86	3.652	.485	.052
	Senior Secondary School	50	3.242	.208	.029
Commitment	Private Institute	86	3.760	.452	.048
	Senior Secondary School	50	3.443	.400	.056

As specified in Table 9 above, the mean and standard deviation of the private institute teachers' professionalism were 3.65 and 0.48, respectively, while those of the senior secondary school ones were 3.24 and 0.20. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of the private institute teachers' commitment were 3.76 and 0.45, respectively, while those of the senior secondary school ones were 3.44 and 0.40.

**Table 10**

*Independent Samples Test on the Means of Senior Secondary School and Private Institute Teachers*

	t-test for Equality of Means				
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Professionalism	5.672	134	.000	.410	.072
Commitment	4.106	134	.000	.317	.077

As shown in Table 10, the difference between the two mean scores turned out to be significant for both professionalism ( $t=5.67$ ,  $p=0.00<0.05$ ), and commitment ( $t=4.10$ ,  $p=0.00<0.05$ ), which implies that EFL teachers of senior secondary schools and those of private institutes differed significantly concerning their professionalism and commitment. In other words, private institute teachers had a higher level of professionalism and commitment than their senior secondary school counterparts.

## 5. Discussion

This study explored the status of teachers' professionalism and commitment in Iranian EFL settings. The findings showed that the mean score of professionalism ( $M=3.50$ ) among Iranian EFL teachers was higher than the average score ( $M=2.5$ ). Moreover, the findings also revealed that all the subcategories of professionalism enjoyed moderate to high means. Consequently, Iranian EFL teachers' level of professionalism was moderate to high. That is, the level of professionalism among educators was practically high, and most EFL educators were found professional in their career. One plausible elucidation for the high level of professionalism among EFL educators in the context of Iran might be due to the fact that EFL instructors have nurtured the crucial knowledge, abilities, and assertiveness to handle activities, requirements, and tasks related to their instruction (Khodamoradi & Maghsoudi, 2020). Furthermore, another explanation for the high professionalism level among Iranian EFL educators maybe that the EFL teachers in the context of Iran believe in their competencies to establish and implement education tasks and activities. Consequently, they obtain more auspicious performance.



Likewise, another justification for the high professionalism level among Iranian EFL teachers might be EFL instructors who were competent professionally and may have been recognized more by other teaching stakeholders. That is, EFL educators might have enjoyed being recognized as quality instructors in their teaching environments (Aziz et al., 2014). This stimulated organizational acceptance and situation might have performed as a strong encouragement for them to improve their professionalism and consequently empower them to be more promising performers. The results are in agreement with those of Kaboodvand (2013), Khojastehmehr and Takrimi (2009), and Rezai et al., (2022), who argued that EFL educators in the Iranian context have a high level of professional competence and professionalism. In addition, the findings showed that the mean score of the commitment ( $M=3.64$ ) among Iranian EFL educators was higher than the average score ( $M=2.5$ ). Furthermore, it was found that all the subcategories of commitment enjoyed moderate to high means. Thus, Iranian EFL teachers' level of commitment was moderate to high. That is, the commitment level among Iranian EFL instructors was practically high and most EFL educators were found committed to their careers.

One conceivable justification might be that the self-assurance that Iranian EFL instructors have towards their capability to be fruitful in education practices significantly impacts their commitment to the instruction career. Another explanation might be that teachers in Iran have a high level of curriculum delivery capability, classroom organization, work-life stability, and classroom organization matters, which as pointed out by McKim, et al. (2017) directly influence their commitment to teaching. As asserted by Hoy et al., (1991), effective educators need a high commitment level to instruction. This proposes that a high accomplishment level of students necessitates committed instructors who contribute successfully. There is no uncertainty that a high attainment level of learners is strongly associated with high commitment level to instruction.

Prior investigation displays that commitment to instruction is associated with various educator-level variables. It is noteworthy that educators with higher self-efficacy and self-accountability tend to be more passionately committed to their careers (Klassen & Chiu, 2011). Besides, real and social efficacy inspiration for education is linked with a commitment to education (Watt & Richardson, 2007). The results are supported by those of Chan (2006), who reported that in-service instructors had a high level of commitment. Furthermore, the results of a Pearson correlation indicated that there was a positive association between EFL teachers' professionalism and commitment. It specifies that, irrespective the educational contexts, when EFL teachers' professionalism increases, their commitment to teaching increases as well. One rational explanation might be the fact that by becoming professional the teachers join a historical practice community with a wide-ranging determination to which one has to be committed (Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016).

As pointed out by [Kanno and Stuart \(2011\)](#), L2 instruction commitments comprise the education role and the instruction self, which essentially includes generating a comprehensible uniqueness from the personal and the professional. It is believed that lower levels of teachers' commitment influences the efficiency of institutes and brings about educators being less fruitful in their professional presentation or abandoning their career in severe cases ([Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016](#)).

Additionally, [Van Amelsvoot et al., \(2000\)](#) asserted that the education career is disheartened and experiencing downgrading job fulfillment and diminished commitment. This condition that will have an emotional impact on the instruction quality and the competence of educators contribute throughout time. [Malik et al., \(2010\)](#) confirmed that educators who do not have the proper organizational commitment level and job satisfaction could not appropriately implement their professional accountabilities and deliver the appropriate information to their learners. The results are supported by [Habibi and Ganjali \(2021\)](#), who concluded that teachers' professional identity and commitment are positively related.

The results of the interview confirmed the findings of the second question as all the respondents (100%) stated that professionalism and commitment are related. Besides, 87.5% of them argued that commitment is a part of professionalism. Also, 75% of the interviewees believed that professional teachers are committed to their teaching and are sensitive to learners' needs. Likewise, 62.5% of the interviewees believed that professional teachers are dedicated to instruction as a lifelong profession. Furthermore, more than half of them (62.5%) proposed that committed teachers are actively looking for professional development opportunities. About half of them (50%) believed that committed teachers engage in action research to enrich their private practice. Additionally, the results of the Independent samples t-test revealed that male and female EFL teachers differed concerning their professionalism and commitment. That is, the professionalism and commitment of female teachers were found to be higher than those of their male counterparts. Female instructors had higher professionalism and commitment than male teachers.

One justification might be the fact that instruction is essentially regarded as a woman's mission and duty, in her God-given personality and her appropriate position in society ([Kelleher, 2011](#)). Similarly, the high levels of female teachers' professionalism and commitment might be due to the fact that female teachers are more enthusiastic about participating in any further training than their male counterparts ([Kovács, 2018](#)). According to [Usha and Sasikumar \(2007\)](#), job security fundamentally influences female teachers' commitment and professionalism. Another reason for the results in this regard might be that ordinarily female individuals have more loving assertiveness towards students and are more motivated to accept instruction careers as compared to male ones.



In addition, [Sood](#) and [Anand](#) (2010) concluded that male individuals give importance to money, whereas female individuals give significance to the teaching career itself. Additionally, female teachers are more flexible, realistic, close to human nature, and down to the earth. Furthermore, female teachers are believed to be inventive, experimental, and caring-natured. Moreover, female individuals are more self-denying and have intrinsic motives to become a member of educational occupations ([Bogler & Somech](#), 2004). Concerning the role of gender in teachers' professionalism, the results agree with those of [Bettinger and Long](#) (2005) and [Hoffman and Oreopoulos](#) (2009). For instance, [Bayhan](#) (2011) reported that female teachers' professionalism was higher than males. However, the findings are not in line with those of [Dordinejad and Porghoveh](#) (2014), who reported no significant difference between female and male educators concerning their professional success and efficacy. Likewise, the results in this respect are not in agreement with those of [Roosta and Bagheri](#) (2016), who concluded that the professional success of male EFL teachers was higher than those of their female teachers.

Concerning the difference between female and male teachers' commitment, the findings are consistent with those of [Ingersoll et al.](#), (1997), and [Shoaib and Khalid](#) (2017). They concluded that female teachers had higher commitment levels and positive outlooks to the instruction compared to the male counterparts. Moreover, the findings are supported by those of [Guarino et al.](#), (2006), who reported that female educators had higher commitment levels, and intention to enter the teaching career compared to the male educators.

Additionally, the results of the Independent samples t-test showed EFL teachers of senior secondary schools and those of private institutes differed concerning their professionalism and commitment. That is the professionalism and commitment of private institute EFL teachers were found to be higher than those of their senior secondary school counterparts. One potential explanation might be the fact that institute instructors are more eager and attentive in their careers ([Soodmand Afshar & Hamzavi](#), 2017). They have closer friendships with their EFL learners and have more diversity in their educational techniques. In addition, language institute educators are more up-to-date, punctual, and disciplined. Furthermore, teachers in Iranian institutes are better equipped for their instruction and have different strategies ([Soodmand Afshar & Hamzavi](#), 2017).

Educational context is regarded as a factor that is vital in forming professionalism and commitment toward a teaching career ([Flores & Day](#), 2006). Educators are individuals living, and employed in particular environments: settings with social, historical and educational qualities that affect instruction, learning, and professionalism along with their commitment ([Hargreaves](#), 2000). The findings of this study might be justified by [Soodmand Afshar](#) and [Hamzavi's](#)

(2017) argument that senior secondary school instructors are not paid adequate consideration, both mentally and financially, might be immediately deciphered into their [professionalism] and commitment to teaching. Another justification might be that there is somewhat good management and supervising of the language institute educators, which is almost lacking in senior secondary schools (Soodmand Afshar & Hamzavi, 2017). The results are in harmony with those of Roosta and Bagheri (2016), and Soodmand Afshar and Hamzavi (2017). They concluded that educational contexts have a significant role in differentiating EFL educators' level of commitment and professionalism.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study intended to examine the status of professionalism and commitment in different EFL educational settings of Iranian. The levels of professionalism and commitment among Iranian EFL teachers were practically high. Additionally, there was a significant association between EFL teachers' professionalism and commitment. Furthermore, female EFL educators had a higher level of commitment and professionalism than male EFL instructors. Finally, language institute EFL instructors had a higher level of commitment and professionalism than senior secondary school EFL instructors. Based on the findings, EFL policymakers, supervisors, institute managers, and teacher trainers are accordingly recommended to pay significant consideration to EFL instructors' commitment and professionalism and provide additional investigation-based activities and programs to support them and recognize the prominence of their commitment and professionalism that might, consequently, bring about better learning by their learners. Moreover, it is of great importance that in conducting any programs, EFL teachers' perspectives and needs should be taken into account to be more fruitful. That is, due to the context-specific nature of teacher education (Borg, 2006), an understanding of the features that support effective instruction would be of high practical value. Also, senior secondary school and male EFL educators in the Iranian context should be made conscious of and stimulated to concentrate more on their commitment and professionalism. They are suggested to reflect upon their commitment and professionalism to make more improvements in their career. Considering the constraints of the scales in consort with semi-structured interviews, additional investigations are recommended to undertake observation to scrutinize what EFL instructors do in different educational contexts. To sum it up, the findings provided novel and valuable information concerning the status of EFL teachers' commitment and professionalism, along with the role of gender and educational contexts in this regard in the context of Iran.

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