



The Modern Teacher's Identity in Algeria: Integrating Ethics, Professionalism, and Digital Literacy in Higher Teacher Training Schools (ENS)

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Abstract

This study investigates the professional identity of contemporary teacher-trainees within Algerian Higher Teacher Training Colleges, specifically examining the intersection of professional ethics, career readiness, social media engagement, and digital marketing principles and how these competencies are integrated into the pedagogical training of Arabic language teachers via the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) module, employing a descriptive-analytical framework. This research argues for the elevation of ethical education as the bedrock of academic integrity, while simultaneously advocating for the strategic repurposing of digital marketing as a pedagogical instrument rather than a purely commercial one. The study culminates in a series of recommendations aimed at curriculum designers, urging a systemic bridge between traditional linguistic studies and the technological imperatives of the modern educational marketplace.

Keywords: ENS Algeria, Teacher Identity, Arabic Pedagogy, Professional Ethics, ESP

1. Introduction

The identity of the university teacher is no longer defined by disciplinary expertise or pedagogical hard skills. As (Marshall S. J., 2018) argues, understanding the complex and dynamic nature of professional identity is central to navigating the problems of institutional change. Within the Algerian higher education context, particularly in the Higher Teacher Training Schools (*Écoles Normales Supérieures* - ENS), this identity is undergoing a deep transformation. The transition from the rigid, encyclopedic models of the 1970s—which leaned heavily on rote memorization—to the modern Competency-Based Approach (CBA) has necessitated a fundamental shift in how educators perceive their roles (Ministry of National Education [MNE], 2009).

Today's educators need to operate in a shifting professional market that demands what (Tsalikova, I. K., & Pakhotina, N. V. (2019) describe as "supra-professional skills": the ability to adapt rapidly, innovate, and implement value-driven solutions. However, the modernization of teacher identity in Algeria faces a dual challenge. On one hand, there is a clear digital imperative; as the classroom moves into virtual spheres, professional identity must encompass digital literacy and the strategic management of one's professional cyber-footprint (Aisawi, 2020). On the other hand, this technological shift must be anchored in a

robust framework of professional ethics to prevent what Argyris (1990) terms "defensive routines"—organizational or individual resistances that hinder genuine progress to protect traditional prestige.

For all Algerian educational reforms aiming to align curricula with societal values and market demands, a critical gap remains in how pre-service teachers at the ENS internalize these changes. This article takes a look at the multifaceted identity of the modern Algerian teacher by examining the integration of digital literacy, professional ethics, and career adaptability. Specifically, it investigates how a multidimensional English for Specific Purposes (ESP) framework can bridge the gap between academic heritage and the demands of a digitized, globalized education system, moving pre-service teachers regarding a more fluid, technology-driven model of educational excellence.

2. Research Questions

This study focuses on investigating four interrelated research questions. First and foremost, it examines the perceptions of first-year Arabic language pre-service teachers at ENS Biskra regarding the crucial role that professional ethics play in shaping their digital teacher professional identity. Building upon this foundational aspect, the study explores how ready these pre-service teachers are to integrate digital branding and marketing principles into their future pedagogical practices specifically through the ESP module. In tandem with these pedagogical readiness factors, the inquiry shifts to analyze how participants utilize and perceive social media platforms as collaborative educational environments rather than purely personal spaces. Ultimately, the research culminates in assessing the overall level of career readiness among these ENS Biskra pre-service teachers as they navigate the evolving digital and communicative demands of the modern educational landscape.

3. Literature Review

Current research in the Algerian context reveals a persistent discrepancy between theoretical training and its functional classroom application. For instance, (Zohra B. F., 2022) observed that while pre-service teachers at ENS Constantine possess high general digital literacy, they often struggle to integrate these tools effectively within a structured pedagogical framework. Similarly, (Ryma B. , 2025) emphasizes the necessity of moving away from General English paradigms toward specialized ESP curricula to bridge the professional gap within higher education. Despite these institutional shifts, (Fersaoui I. , 2022) highlights a notable absence of practical assessment training, leaving graduates underprepared for the multifaceted realities of the modern classroom. On a global scale, the re-conceptualization of teacher identity in the post-pandemic, AI-driven era has moved beyond basic pedagogical competence to encompass what has been termed "Digital Teacher Professionalism" (Krumsvik, 2023). According to recent international frameworks, a modern educator's identity is intrinsically linked to their capacity to manage a professional digital ecosystem while maintaining rigorous ethical boundaries (UNESCO, 2024). This aligns with the argument that digital spaces are no longer peripheral to teaching, but are primary sites where professional credibility and pedagogical authority are negotiated cyber ethics within the ever-expanding realm of cyberspace. As cyber technologies reshape human consciousness, interaction, and modes of living, they simultaneously introduce profound ethical challenges and moral dilemmas (Das, 2020).

Furthermore, the integration of professional branding and digital marketing principles within higher education—often viewed with skepticism in traditional vocational models—is increasingly recognized as a vital component of career adaptability. As Williams (2025) demonstrated in a global study on teacher training, encouraging pre-service teachers to

develop an "educational brand" fosters critical agency and prepares them to navigate a competitive global educational marketplace. Within the domain of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), modern curricula are shifting from mere linguistic training to acting as vehicles for global academic citizenship and professional empowerment (Brown, 2023).

Therefore, the challenges observed in the Algerian ENS context regarding the (Digital Application Gap) are not isolated; rather, they reflect a broader international tension between legacy curriculum structures and the fast-evolving demands of the 21st-century digital work environment. Traditional pedagogical reliance on Behaviorism for classroom discipline and Constructivism for cognitive understanding is no longer sufficient to meet the rigorous demands of the modern educational market. Within the Algerian ENS system, the ESP module must transcend its marginal status to serve as a strategic bridge, particularly for Arabic language pre-service teachers, ensuring that their deep vocational grounding is fully matched by the technical and digital fluency required to navigate a globalized classroom.

4.Materials and Methods

This study uses a quantitative descriptive-analytical approach to explore the professional identity of future teachers. The study took place at the Higher Teacher Training College (*École Normale Supérieure* - ENS) of Biskra, Algeria. Graduates of the Algerian ENS system are legally guaranteed jobs in public schools immediately after graduation (Executive Decree No. 16-176), This secure career path creates a specific mindset among students regarding their professional future.

This study uses a descriptive approach to explore the professional identity of future Arabic language teachers at the Higher Teacher Training College (ENS) of Biskra, Algeria. A purposive sample of 100 first-year student-teachers (N = 100) enrolled in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) module participated in the study.

Data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) titled "The Modern Teacher's Professional Identity Scale." To ensure honesty, participation was completely anonymous and optional, and surveys were collected in sealed envelopes at the end of the lecture.

The questionnaire is divided into four main sections: Section A: Professional Ethics (focusing on digital academic honesty).Section B: Digital Marketing (focusing on digital content creation skills for teaching).Section C: Social Media Engagement (focusing on using social media for educational networking).Section D: Career Readiness (focusing on confidence in using modern tools like AI).The collected data were analyzed by calculating the Mean (M) score for each section to understand the students' overall attitudes.

5.Results and Discussion

The analysis of the survey data provides a clear picture of how these 100 future teachers view their modern professional roles. Table 1 shows the mean scores for each competency dimension.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Teacher-Trainees' Competencies (N = 100)¹

Competency Dimension		Mean (M)
Professional Ethics		4.25
Social Media Engagement		3.90
Career Readiness		3.10
Digital Marketing		2.80

Source: Elaborated by the author based on survey data (2026).

Professional Ethics ($M = 4.25$) received the highest score, proving that student-teachers strongly value ethical behavior in digital learning environments. Social Media Engagement ($M = 3.90$) also scored high, showing that students are ready and willing to use social media for professional networking and educational purposes. However, Career Readiness ($M = 3.10$) is very close to the neutral point, indicating that students feel uncertain and less confident about integrating advanced tools like Artificial Intelligence (AI) into their future classrooms. Finally, Digital Marketing ($M = 2.80$) received the lowest score. This highlights a specific gap; students currently lack the motivation or skills to use digital presentation and content creation tools to modernize Arabic language teaching. The results show a clear mix of high awareness and technical gaps among the students.

6. Discussion

The study shows that Algerian teacher-trainees have a very strong commitment to professional ethics ($M = 4.25$). This high score proves that a strong moral compass is still the foundation of their professional identity. Most of the 100 participants fully agreed on this point. This ethical grounding matches the findings of (Al-Azraq A. R., (2000) and (Aisawi A. , 2020), who noted that success in the Algerian context is often driven by a desire for social respect and professional excellence. However, while these scores show a strong traditional teacher persona (Hawamdeh B. A., (2009), ethics alone are not enough in today's digital world. The data show that while trainees are morally ready to teach, they lack the technical skills to lead. This technical weakness is very clear in Digital Marketing, which received the lowest score ($M = 2.80$). The results show a big drop when trainees are asked to use English (ESP) to promote educational content. This can be explained by the Stability vs. Innovation Paradox. Because Executive Decree No. 16-176² guarantees public school jobs for all ENS graduates in Algeria, students do not feel the need to market their skills or compete. Unlike the private sector, this guaranteed employment might lower their motivation for digital entrepreneurship and professional self-branding. Additionally, moving into the academic environment of ENS Biskra causes a cognitive shock for many trainees. Although students spend a lot of time on social media ($M = 3.90$), especially Facebook, they struggle with academic thinking. As Gasser et al. (2012) explained, this is not because students do not try.

¹ M represents the **Arithmetic Mean**, which is calculated by summing all the participants' scores for a specific variable and dividing the total by the number of participants ($N = 100$). The scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale.

² Executive Decree No. 16-176. (2016). Defining the status and missions of the Higher Teacher Training Schools (ENS). *Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne*.

Instead, they often mistake online popularity for teaching quality. In Biskra, trainees often prefer visually attractive online materials over scientifically correct ones. Relying too much on social media echo chambers can hurt the independent critical thinking needed for good classroom management. Finally, the moderate score in Career Readiness ($M = 3.10$) shows a gap between university theory and the real needs of the 21st-century job market. (Basturkmen, 2010) argues that ESP modules should connect university learning with the professional world. However, our findings show that trainees still feel "instructional anxiety" about using AI and advanced digital tools. To protect Algeria's educational independence, the ENS curriculum must change. Training should empower students psychologically (Hawamdeh B. A., 2009), ensuring their official status as teachers is backed by real technical skills in a digital classroom.

7. Recommendations

The curriculum must shift from teaching general grammar to focusing on professional growth. In order to achieve this, it should incorporate specialized terminology for international teaching standards and professional networking. Furthermore, encouraging collaboration between language teachers and technology specialists is crucial; this, in turn, will help teacher-trainees learn how to use digital tools effectively to share cultural heritage and teaching materials. Moving beyond basic social media use, trainees need to learn how to create high-quality educational videos and materials, as well as how to leverage platforms like LinkedIn for professional e-branding. Alongside these technical skills, however, the curriculum must tightly integrate core ethical principles, specifically academic integrity, data privacy, and the responsible use of AI in education.

8. Conclusion

Knowing how to teach is the foundation of education, but it is no longer enough. Today, an Algerian teacher needs technical skills, and strong ethics. The findings from ENS Biskra show that job stability is good, but it must come with curriculum updates that fix the Digital Application Gap. By combining ethical education with digital marketing tools, ENS can prepare a new generation of teachers. These graduates will not just pass on facts, but will serve as ethical, digitally skilled global ambassadors for their culture.

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