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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Future thinking and its relationship to professional competence and cultural awareness among male and female history teachers at the preparatory stage

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates future thinking and professional competence among middle school history teachers, focusing on correlations with cultural awareness and the influence of gender and years of service. Key objectives include assessing future thinking and professional competence, exploring correlations between these factors and Cultural awareness, and examining differences based on gender and experience. The researcher developed scales for future thinking (30 items across five dimensions), professional competence (15 items), and cultural awareness (20 items), with a sample of 200 history teachers (80 male, 120 female) for the 2024-2025 academic year. Findings indicate that middle school history teachers exhibit forward-thinking, professional competence, and Cultural awareness, with no significant differences in correlations based on gender or years of service.

Keywords: Future thinking; professional competence; Cultural awareness; middle school teachers

1. Introduction

1.1. Research problem

The fundamental goal of education in the twenty-first century is to prepare individuals who are aware of the issues and problems of their societies. This requires them to possess high mental abilities and high-level golden mechanisms to be able to discuss, innovate, and express their opinion frankly and clearly when making decisions, and to acquire a sufficient amount of complex and intertwined knowledge, and skills that are characterized by comprehensiveness, breadth, and work and prepare them well to be able to solve the problems they encounter in a scientific manner. This is done by identifying hypotheses, testing the best of them, and making life decisions to reach the optimal solution [1].

Sound thinking among middle school teachers, especially in the history field, is linked to the outcomes of quality school education, which emphasizes moving away from traditional practices based on lecturing,

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and working on practicing and training thinking skills through modern teaching methods. However, the reality is that teachers still practice the traditional methods prevalent in educational institutions that have not attempted to break away from them.

The extent to which teachers are able or unable to deal with the problems they face has more to do with the way they address those problems than with their own abilities or potential. Each teacher has their own unique way of thinking and reflecting. On the other hand, futures thinking is an effective means of anticipating the unlimited opportunities and challenges that the future may hold. It also enables teachers to predict what's coming by analyzing their past experiences and understanding the current reality, which contributes to enhancing their professional competence and qualifies them to achieve specific goals that will lead them to success [2].

Recently, several complaints have emerged from schools due to the poor outcomes of the preparatory stage, while the Ministry of Education complains about the poor outcomes of university teacher preparation colleges, and that the poor level of academic achievement of students in the various educational stages was a result of the poor professional competence and qualification of the teacher, as the teacher's professional competence is linked to many other variables, including, for example, the teacher's level of Cultural awareness , as cultural awareness creates new goals, in addition to a feeling of satisfaction and self-esteem [3].

Despite the role that educational and teaching institutions are supposed to play in shaping and developing cultural awareness among teachers in light of contemporary global cultural challenges, some studies have shown a decline in cultural development and competence among teachers. Al-Rubai'at's study (2007) confirmed that there is a cultural impact left by television programs, whether direct or indirect, on some cultural values [4]. Hijazi (2009) also pointed out the need to focus on enhancing and developing cultural awareness among teachers in light of the current situation [5]. Based on the above, the research problem can be summarized in the following question:

- "What is the correlation between the specific dimensions of future thinking (anticipatory skills, predictive skills, visualization, planning, and decision-making) and professional competence and cultural awareness among history teachers at the preparatory stage?"

1.2. Research significances

1.2.1. Theoretical significance

The importance of this study lies in its presentation of a solid theoretical framework for its variables, in addition to its treatment of contemporary educational concepts that are of fundamental value in the educational field, especially among middle school teachers. The study also aims to clarify the interaction between the studied variables and the impact of this interaction on the learning environment, given its effective role in motivating students toward excellence and creativity. This study contributes to building a theoretical foundation based on the results of previous relevant local and international studies, enhancing its credibility and effectiveness. Future thinking, along with professional competence and Cultural awareness , is considered. One of the most important factors supporting teachers in determining their career path, whether in terms of advancement and success or in avoiding setbacks, is their ability to integrate and balance the teacher's personal aspects, positively impacting communication skills and perseverance. It is hoped that this study will contribute to enriching the theoretical knowledge of researchers, educators, and academics through its findings.

1.2.2. Practical significance

This study helps reveal the relationship between future thinking, professional competence, and cultural awareness among middle school teachers. It also helps to utilize its findings in providing suggestions and recommendations to school administrations to develop guidance programs and hold training courses for middle school teachers to help them increase their professional competence and Cultural awareness , and increase their use of future thinking by developing their educational capabilities and potential.

It benefits them and helps them achieve their hopes and reach satisfaction and happiness in their school life and educational journey.

1.3. Research objectives

The current research aims to identify:

1. Future thinking among history teachers in middle school.
2. Professional competence among history teachers in middle school.
3. Cultural awareness among history teachers in middle school.
4. The correlation between future thinking and professional competence among history teachers in middle school, according to gender (male, female) and years of service (more than 10 years, less than 10 years).
5. The correlation between cultural awareness and future thinking among middle school teachers, according to gender (male, female) and years of service (more than 10 years, less than 10 years).
6. The difference in the relationship between professional competence and cultural awareness among middle school teachers, male and female, according to the variable of gender (male, female) and years of service (more than 10 years, less than 10 years).

1.4. Research hypotheses

In light of the research questions and objectives, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Future-oriented thinking is favourably associated with professional competence among history educators.
2. Future-oriented thinking is favourably associated with cultural awareness among history educators.
3. Cultural awareness among history teachers is favourably connected with professional competence.
4. Gender or years of service do not make a statistically significant difference in the correlation between the three variables (future thinking, professional competence, and cultural awareness).

1.5. Limitations of the study

- Human limits: The study is limited to secondary school teachers majored in History subject.
- Spatial limits: The study is limited to the General Directorate of Education of Al Qadisiyah province.
- Temporal limits: The study is limited to the academic year 2014-2025.
- Sample limits: The representativeness of the sample is restricted to one province only, Al Qadisiyah Province, which may reduce the generalizability of the results.

1.6. Definition of terms

1. Future Thinking: A set of skills that enable an individual to process his expectations for the future, determine his scenarios, and predict its changes in a conscious and effective manner [6].

- Operational definition: The total score obtained by the respondent from his answer to the future thinking skills scale that was constructed by the researcher.

2. Academic Efficacy: It is the ability to absorb personal and social values, beliefs, and perceptions from people, as well as from other civilizations, so that the person becomes aware of the cultural values that shape and define individuals as persons [7].

- Operational definition: The total score that the respondent obtains from his answer to the professional competence scale prepared by the researcher adopted in the current research.

3. Cultural awareness: The scope of a person's comprehension and understanding of his role in preserving his cultural heritage and original values, while protecting them from intruders so that they remain pure from any external influences [8].

- Operational definition: The total score that the respondent obtains from his answer to the cultural awareness scale that was constructed based on the scale [9].

2. Literature review

2.1. Tulving's mental time travel (1983)

Interest in future thinking from a cognitive perspective date back to the work of Tulving (1983), who proposed the "mental time journey" model, which is based on a tripartite temporal orientation: past, present, and future. According to this model, both the past and present are mental representations of relatively recent time periods and contribute to the formation of cognitive experiences that individuals use in their social interactions and understanding of the world around them. Tulving also noted that individuals possess the ability to recall past events associated with their personality traits, integrating these events into a unified timeframe that enables what he described as a "mental time journey." Tulving termed this phenomenon "episodic memory jump," which reflects an individual's ability to recall past events that contribute to enhancing their skills in making future decisions and planning subsequent actions. He emphasizes that human memory is inherently future-oriented, with past events directly influencing future behavior in various tasks and situations. Furthermore, the process of an individual remembering past experiences is linked to a state of self-competence in the present, allowing them to revisit those experiences and draw on them to deal with current events and plan for the future [10].

2.2. McClelland's Human Motivation Theory (1985)

According to David C. McClelland, human motivation is "a recurrent interest in a state or goal situation as measured by imagination, which drives, directs, and selects an individual's behavior." Through his work with Henry Murray in the 1940s, he focused on three specific motives: the need for achievement (N Ach), the need for affiliation (N Aff), and the need for power (N Pow). His work from the late 1940s through the 1960s focused on the need for achievement. From the late 1960s through the 1990s, the need for achievement emerged as a focal point of his research. The need for achievement is an unconscious drive to perform better toward a level of excellence. People with a strong need for achievement measure themselves against specific goals. They prefer moderate risk, prefer solitary activities, and entertainment that involves getting a score, such as bowling, and prefer professions that contain individual performance data, such as sales. The need for power is an unconscious drive to influence others, and people with a strong N Pow often assert themselves by taking leadership positions and committing aggressive acts. They often suffer from high

blood pressure, prefer competitive sports between people, such as football, as they like to acquire things that indicate the prestige of others, and prefer professions through which they can help or influence others, such as teachers or leaders. The need for affiliation is an unconscious drive to be part of warm and close relationships, such as friendships. People with a strong need for affiliation: choose to spend time with close friends or significant others, use letter writing or calling friends or family, prefer to work in groups, and are sensitive to the reactions of others. They prefer collaborative activities and occupations in which they work closely with others, such as elementary school teachers and counselors, along with separate motivations. McClelland emphasized the relative motivational pattern of an individual. He claimed that each person has a certain level of motivation, but the relative dominance varies. The motivational pattern of a person is indicative of professional performance. For example, a high level of (N Ach), a low level of (N A ff), and a moderate level of N Pow is characteristic of success [11].

2.3. Campinha-Bacote's cultural awareness model (2002)

Campinha (2002) Cultural Awareness Perspective: Cultural awareness is the consistent self-examination to explore one's own cultural and professional background. This process involves recognizing biases, prejudices, and assumptions about individuals who are different from oneself. Sometimes, without being aware of the influence of his cultural and professional background, a person imposes his beliefs, values, and behavioral patterns on individuals of another culture [12]. The areas of cultural awareness according to Caminha are three areas:

- Personal biases: The tendency of an individual to interpret phenomena according to his own cultural standards, such as color, body shape, mate choice, and concepts of fairness. He may tend to perceive others as he perceives himself, and believe that his group is the best of all groups. Personal biases may be rooted in the individual's mind and he is not directly aware of their existence, so they require in-depth examination.
- Stereotypes are the attribution of certain characteristics to others from a certain class or group as a result of preconceived ideas that the individual attributes certain characteristics to everyone, and reflects expectations and beliefs about the characteristics of the individuals of that group, through the individual's illogical interpretation or complete disregard and unwillingness to change the individual's behavior towards a stereotyped group of people and preventing people from a group of stereotyped groups from acceptance or success in activities or fields and the individual creates stereotypes about others from other cultures based on preconceived ideas.
- Prejudices and Assumptions: An individual makes prejudgments and forms an opinion before becoming aware of the relevant facts on the subject, and a positive or negative evaluation of another person based on his or her membership in the prevailing group.

Moreover, recent international research has underscored the importance of these characteristics. Wang & Kim (2021) emphasised that developing future-oriented thinking skills, especially anticipatory and predictive abilities, markedly improves teachers' adaptation to swift educational reforms [13]. Johnson (2022) investigated professional competence within multicultural environments and determined that cultural awareness mediates the formation of teachers' professional identity [14]. Alghamdi & Smith (2023) discovered that incorporating cultural awareness training into teacher education programs enhanced decision-making and classroom management tactics [15]. Moreover, Torres et al. (2024) emphasised the necessity of correlating future-oriented thinking with professional competency to equip educators for unforeseen problems in globalised educational environments [16].

The international findings enhance the theoretical framework of the current study and place it within a wider global context, emphasising the necessity to investigate the relationship among future thinking, professional competence, and cultural awareness in the Iraqi educational setting.

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Research method

Due to the nature of the research, the descriptive correlational approach was used, as it is one of the most appropriate scientific research methods for the current research objectives.

3.2. Research population

Based on the study problem and its objectives, the target community was determined to consist of all history teachers, male and female, in the preparatory stage in the education of Al-Qadisiyah Governorate in Iraq, numbering (1100), including (700) male teachers and (400) female teachers, according to the statistics of the Education Directorate for the academic year 2024-2025.

3.3. Research sample of the study

The research sample was selected from middle school teachers, male and female, specializing in history, with a number of (200) teachers, with the number of males being (80) and the number of females being (120). They were selected using a random stratified method from the research community.

3.4. Research instruments

In order to achieve the research objectives, it was necessary to have three scales to measure future thinking, professional competence, and cultural awareness among the research sample. By referring to the literature and previous studies and some scales related to the variables, in addition to the studies and scientific dissertations that the researcher was able to obtain, as follows:

3.4.1. Description of the scale

Due to the lack of a tool that represents the research sample, the researcher built a scale of future thinking, which consisted of 30 items (positions) distributed among the five skills, which are, in sequence (expectation skill, prediction skill, mental visualization skill, planning skill, decision-making skill). Each situation is followed by three alternatives: alternative (A), which represents the high level and is given 3 points; alternative (B), which represents the medium (moderate) level and is given 2 points; and alternative (C), which represents the low level and is given 1 point. The respondent must choose the alternative that applies to him and represents his response pattern. Thus, the total score of the scale ranges between 30-90 points.

3.4.2. Validity of the scale items

The researcher presented the item of the future thinking scale consisting of (30) item to a number of arbitrators in the College of Education, Al-Qadisiyah University, whose number was (10) arbitrators, to show the validity of the item. The percentage of agreement reached 86%, as they were all kept and were not deleted, only modified.

3.5. Statistical analysis of the items

3.5.1. Items discrimination

Discrimination refers to the statistical analysis of item to discriminate each item. The research sample numbered (200) middle school teachers. The sample was divided into two groups: the upper group, representing (27%), and the lower group, representing (27%). The sample of the upper and lower groups

amounted to (108), for each group (54). The t-test was used to discriminate between the two groups, where the t-value reached (1.96), at a significance level of (0.05), and with a degree of freedom of (398). It was found that all items of the scale had high discriminatory powers.

3.5.2. Internal consistency (correlation between each domain and the total scale score)

The internal consistency of the scale was calculated by calculating the correlation coefficients between the total score of the future thinking scale and the score of each domain of the scale. The following **Table 1**. shows the correlation coefficients between the total score of the scale and the score of each dimension.

Table 1. Correlation coefficients of the items of each domain with the total score of the items of the future thinking scale.

Domain No.	Domain Name	No. of Items	Correlation Coefficients
1	Expectation Skill	4	0.553, 0.122, 0.367, 0.476
2	Prediction Skill	6	0.387, 0.270, 0.342, 0.416, 0.259, 0.410
3	Mental Imagery Skill	8	0.624, 0.517, 0.442, 0.597, 0.587, 0.509, 0.551, 0.621
4	Planning Skill	6	0.439, 0.421, 0.126, 0.234, 0.238, 0.459
5	Decision-Making Skill	6	0.260, 0.415, 0.221, 0.288, 0.618, 0.550

3.6. Psychometric properties of the future thinking scale

3.6.1. Face validity

To verify the validity of the scale, the Arabic version—consisting of 30 items—was presented to 10 expert reviewers from among the specialists at Al-Qadisiyah University. Their evaluations indicated a high level of agreement, with 95% or more consensus on the quality of the items across all domains.

3.6.2. Construct validity

This type of validity was verified by discriminatory power and internal consistency.

3.6.3. Scale reliability

The researcher calculated the reliability by re-administering the test with a time interval of four weeks on the survey sample (50) male and female teachers. The reliability coefficient value was (0.71), prediction skill (0.73), mental visualization skill (0.72), planning skill (0.75), decision-making skill (0.74), which are significant values at the level (0.05), which indicates appropriate reliability of the scale and calls for confidence in the results that can be reached. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the sub-domains and the total score of the scale, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value was (0.69), prediction skill (0.71), mental visualization skill (0.70), planning skill (0.68), decision-making skill (0.71), and for the total score (0.73), which indicates appropriate reliability of the scale.

3.6.4. The final version of the scale

The scale in its final form consists of (30) item on a three-point scale: (high, medium, low), and the respondent to the scale places a mark in front of the item that matches his answer in the research sample.

3.7. Professional competence scale

Due to the lack of a scale that represents the research sample of teachers, the researcher prepared a scale of professional competence based on previous studies and theoretical frameworks. The scale consisted of (15) items with five alternatives corresponding to it according to the Likert scale, which are "always applies to me,

often applies to me, sometimes applies to me, does not apply to me, does not apply to me at all", and the scale scores ranged between (15, 75).

3.8. The statistical analysis of the items

3.8.1. Discrimination of items

The grades of the professional competence scale items obtained by the researcher from the sample individuals' answers were arranged in ascending order, with a percentage of (27%) for the upper group, and a percentage of (27%) called the lower group, as the individuals of each group reached (54), as the total number of questionnaires reached (108), and the tabular value was (1.96) at the level of (0.05) and with a degree of freedom of (106), as it was shown that all the scale items have high discriminatory powers.

3.8.2. Item-total correlation analysis

The significance of the validity of the scale's construction was calculated by calculating the correlation of the item with the total score, in the research sample consisting of (200) male and female teachers. **Table 2** shows the value of the correlation coefficients.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient values with the total score of the professional competence scale

No. of Items	Correlation Coefficient	No. of Items	Correlation Coefficient
1	0.605	9	0.571
2	0.508	10	0.521
3	0.556	11	0.793
4	0.494	12	0.551
5	0.735	13	0.681
6	0.499	14	0.387
7	0.509	15	0.270

3.9. Validity

3.9.1. Face validity

To ensure the validity of the scale and the extent of its suitability to the items it was designed to measure, the researcher used the following method: He presented the scale to (10) arbitrators, and the researcher asked the arbitrators to give the appropriate opinion on the scale for the current research, and 80% of them agreed on it, and no item was deleted, only modified.

3.9.2. Scale reliability

A. Test-Retest Reliability Method

The researcher applied the scale to the study sample consisting of (50) male and female teachers from the original study community, and again to the above-mentioned sample after a period of two weeks from the first application. The test reliability coefficient was calculated between the scores of the examinees in the two applications, and it reached (88%), which indicates the reliability of the scale, and this value is considered acceptable for the purpose of the study.

B. Internal Consistency (Cronbach's Alpha)

The consistency of the professional competence scale was calculated by extracting internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. Here, when the internal consistency of the scale items was calculated, Cronbach's

alpha coefficient reached (0.90%), making this research instrument valid, stable, and applicable for the purpose of this study.

C. The final form of the scale

After the researcher confirmed the reliability and validity of the professional competence scale items, the number of scale items became (15) items, and the scale alternatives consisted of "(always applies to me, often applies to me, sometimes applies to me, does not apply to me, does not apply to me at all)".

3.10. Cultural awareness scale

The cultural awareness scale was constructed according to Campinha's (1999) model of cultural awareness, as follows:

A. Preparing the scale's items in their initial form: (20) items were initially prepared in the form of declarative statements to measure cultural awareness, distributed equally across three areas as defined by Campinha (1999). Five answer options were placed in front of each item according to the Likert method, namely (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never).

B. Logical analysis of the items: The scale items were presented in their initial form to a group of (10) expert judges specializing in educational and psychological sciences. The judges agreed on the items at a rate of (80%), and modifications were made to arrive at the final form of the scale.

3.11. The statistical analysis of the items

A. Discrimination of items

The degrees of the cultural awareness scale items that the researcher obtained from the sample individuals' answers were arranged in ascending order, with a percentage of (27%) for the upper group, and a percentage of (27%) called the lower group, as the number of each group reached (54), as the total number of the questionnaires reached (108), and the tabular value was (1.96) at the level of (0.05) and with a degree of freedom of (106), as it was shown that all the scale items have high discriminatory powers.

B. Calculating the correlation between each item and the total scale score

The corrected correlation coefficient was calculated between the items of each field and the total score to which it belongs. The following **Table 3** shows a summary of the correlation coefficients:

Table 3. Correlation coefficients between each item and the total score of the cultural awareness scale

Item No.	Item Description	Correlation Coefficient	Item No.	Item Description	Correlation Coefficient
1	Personal Biases	0.513	11	Stereotypes	0.681
2		0.502	12		0.643
3		0.352	13		0.612
4		0.639	14		0.725
5		0.592	15		0.647
6		0.670	16	Prejudgments	0.703
7		0.695	17		0.681
8		0.560	18		0.552
9		0.598	19		0.660
10		0.632	20		0.468

C. Face validity

The scale items were presented to (10) judges, and agreement on the scale items was (80%), and no item was deleted, only modification, as the scale is considered to have a good degree of apparent validity.

D. Scale reliability

- **Test-Retest Reliability Method**

The cultural awareness scale was applied in its final form to the study sample, which numbered (50), from the original study community, and again to the above-mentioned sample after a period of two weeks from the first application. The reliability coefficient of the test was calculated between the scores of the examinees in the two applications, as the reliability coefficients reached: personal biases (0.86), stereotypes (0.92) and prejudices (0.75). Also, the values of Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were extracted, which reached (0.90) for personal biases and (0.91) for stereotypes, and its value was (0.87) for prejudices, and all of them indicate good reliability coefficients for the components of the cultural awareness scale.

- **The final form of the scale**

After the researcher confirmed the stability and validity of the cultural awareness scale items, the scale became composed of (20) items distributed over three areas that measure cultural awareness according to five alternatives, which are (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never), and the hypothetical average reached (60).

4. Results and discussion

1. To identify the future thinking of middle school history teachers, arithmetic means and standard deviations were used, as shown in **Table 4.**

Table 4. One-sample t-test for the future thinking scale

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Hypothetical Mean	t (Calculated)	t (Tabulated)	Significance
Total Score	63.04	14.075	60	3.070	1.96	Significant

Table 4 shows that the level of future thinking among middle school teachers was high. The researcher attributes this to the importance of future thinking for teachers. Having a good level of future thinking enhances their diverse abilities, which contributes to increasing their ability to face various challenges in a creative way and increasing their self-confidence. This is consistent with reality, as we find that the majority of teachers, both male and female, have special skills in achieving the desired results, even in the worst circumstances that the educational process sometimes goes through. The majority of them have a tremendous ability to inspire students to do their best.

2. To determine the level of professional competence among middle school history teachers, arithmetic means and standard deviations were used. It is clear that teachers are professionally competent, as shown in **Table 5**, as follows:

Table 5. One-way analysis of variance for the professional competence scale

Variable	Mean	SD Dev.	Hypothetical Mean	T-calculated	T-Tabulated	Significance
Total Score	52.87	11.822	45	6.646	1.96	Significant

The score on middle school history teachers' professional competence reflects a good level of mastery in the pedagogical and cognitive aspects of teaching the subject. This indicates their ability to plan lessons effectively and use diverse teaching strategies appropriate to the learners' age group. It also demonstrates their possession of assessment skills that contribute to improving students' academic performance. This

competence enhances the quality of the educational process and positively impacts student achievement, and this can be attributed to their experience or to the training and professional development programs they have received.

3. To identify the level of cultural awareness among history teachers in the preparatory stage, arithmetic means and standard deviations were used. Preparatory teachers are known to be culturally aware, as shown in **Table 6**, as follows:

Table 6. One-way ANOVA analysis for the cultural awareness scale

Variable	Mean	SD Dev.	Hypothetical Mean	T-calculated	T-Tabulated	Significance
Total Score	63.63	18.065	60	4.689	1.96	Significant

The cultural awareness of middle school history teachers indicates their deep understanding of the cultural, social, and civilizational diversity that characterizes societies. This awareness is reflected in their ability to connect historical material to contemporary reality and reinforce values, customs, and principles among students, as these are important determinants of cultural identity. It also demonstrates their understanding of the importance of cultural heritage, values, and beliefs in building the identity of a good citizen, a goal sought by educational curricula in every society. They use this understanding to enrich the educational process. This awareness is an important factor in developing learners' critical thinking skills, which contributes to preparing them as active citizens in a multicultural society.

4. To determine the significance of differences in the correlation between future thinking and professional competence among history teachers in the preparatory stage, depending on the variables: (gender, years of service). The researchers used the Z-test to compare the calculated correlation coefficients between future thinking and professional competence, and the results were as shown in **Table 7**.

Table 7. Z-test results to determine the significance of differences in correlation coefficients between future thinking and professional competence among secondary school teachers according to gender and years of service

Variable 1	Variable 2	Subgroup	No.	Calculated Correlation	Standard Score	Z (Calculated)	Z (Tabulated)	Significance Level	Statistical Significance
Future Thinking	Professional Competence	Male	80	0.353	0.161	0.437	1.960	0.05	Not Significant
		Female	120	0.103	0.308				
		More than 10 years	100	0.306	0.308	0.215	1.960	0.05	Not Significant
		Less than 10 years	100	0.321	0.124				

This result indicates that the correlation between future thinking and professional competence among middle school teachers does not differ according to the teacher's gender or years of service.

Furthermore, there was no difference between gender and years of service among middle school history teachers in terms of future thinking and professional competence. These characteristics do not significantly affect their level of competence or future vision. This means that teachers, whether with long or short experience, possess a similar level of ability to plan and develop themselves and their careers. This result reflects consistency in the quality of academic and professional training, and may be due to uniform training opportunities or common professional standards applied to all teachers without discrimination.

5. To determine the significance of differences in the correlation between future thinking and cultural awareness among history teachers in the preparatory stage, depending on the variables: (gender and years of service). To achieve this goal, the Z-test was used to compare the calculated correlation coefficients between future thinking and cultural awareness. The results were as shown in **Table 8**.

Table 8. Z-test results to determine the significance of differences in correlation coefficients between future thinking and cultural awareness among secondary school teachers according to gender and years of service

Variable 1	Variable 2	Subgroup	No.	Calculated Correlation	Standard Score	Z (Calculated)	Z (Tabulated)	Significance Level	Statistical Significance
Future Thinking	Professional Competence	Male	80			0.447	1,96		Not Significant
		Female	120	0.342	0,587				
		More than 10 years	100	0.398	0,304	0.225	1.96		Not Significant
		Less than 10 years	100	0.362	0,208				

This result indicates that the correlation between future thinking and cultural awareness among middle school teachers does not differ based on gender or years of service. Although the findings indicate no significant differences in the correlations based on gender or years of service, this phenomenon requires further reflection. One possible explanation is that teachers in Al-Qadisiyah province share relatively similar educational backgrounds, as many of them graduated from the same teacher preparation institutions. In addition, uniform training experiences and continuous professional development programs provided by the Ministry of Education may have contributed to reducing gender or seniority gaps. Another factor could be the prevailing school culture, which promotes standardized practices and expectations across teachers regardless of their demographic differences. These factors may have created a level of homogeneity that explains the absence of significant statistical differences. The researcher also indicates that there is no difference between gender and years of service among middle school history teachers in terms of future thinking and cultural awareness. This indicates that both genders, regardless of years of service and experience, possess similar levels of future vision and cultural openness. This indicates that future thinking and cultural awareness are not affected by personal factors such as gender or professional factors such as years of service. Rather, they may be related to other factors such as a unified academic background, openness to modern educational developments, and elements of a shared culture. This result also reflects a common awareness among teachers of the importance of preparing for future changes and respecting cultural diversity.

6. To determine the significance of differences in the correlation between professional competence and cultural awareness among history teachers in the preparatory stage, depending on the variables: (gender and years of service). To achieve this goal, the Z-test was used to compare the calculated correlation coefficients between professional competence and cultural awareness. The results were as shown in **Table 9**.

Table 9. Z-test results to determine the significance of differences in correlation coefficients between professional competence and cultural awareness among secondary school teachers according to gender and years of service

Variable 1	Variable 2	Subgroup	No.	Calculated Correlation	Standard Score	Z (Calculated)	Z (Tabulated)	Significance Level	Statistical Significance
Future Thinking	Professional Competence	Male		0.111	0,411	0.437	0,212		Not Significant
		Female	120	0.254	0,528				

	More than 10 years	100	0.316	0,318	0.215	1,96	Not Significant
	Less than 10 years	100	0.241	0,276			

Figure The results indicate that the correlation between professional competence and cultural awareness among history teachers at the intermediate level does not differ according to the teacher's gender or years of service. Furthermore, the researcher indicates that there is no difference between gender and years of service among intermediate level history teachers in terms of professional competence and cultural awareness. This indicates that the performance of teachers, both those with long and short experience, is similar in terms of professional skills and cultural awareness. This reflects the homogeneity of the formation and training received by teachers and the effectiveness of curricula and educational institutions in establishing unified quality standards. It also indicates that factors such as gender and experience do not necessarily influence these aspects, reinforcing the principle of equality in competence and awareness within the educational environment.

Despite these results, it is important to note that the group was not very representative, which is a weakness of the study. The people who took part could only be from Al-Qadisiyah province, so the data may not fully show how history teachers in other areas feel. So, to make the results more useful for other studies, the sample should be expanded to include teachers from more than one region and type of school.

6. Conclusion

1. Middle school history teachers possess future thinking.
2. Middle school history teachers possess professional competence.
3. Middle school history teachers possess cultural awareness.
4. The correlation between future thinking and professional competence among middle school teachers does not differ based on gender or years of service.
5. The correlation between future thinking and cultural awareness among middle school teachers does not differ based on gender or years of service.
6. The correlation between professional competence and cultural awareness among middle school teachers does not differ based on gender or years of service.

7. Recommendations

Based on the results of the current research, some educational recommendations can be made, the implementation of which is expected to contribute to improving the educational process in society. These recommendations include:

1. Adopting modern teaching methods that enhance skills and strengthen teachers' intellectual motivation, giving them ample space in the educational process.
2. Developing and focusing on intellectual motivation and future-thinking skills from a practical perspective by developing programs, fostering interest in the future among teachers, planning for it, and making sound decisions to achieve their goal-oriented objectives.
3. Training teachers to use modern teaching methods and strategies that enhance their professional competence.

4. Designing training programs and verifying their effectiveness in enhancing certain professional aspects of history teachers.
5. Encouraging officials at the Ministry of Education to encourage teachers to attend cultural events and seminars.
6. Activating the activities unit within the school and improving its performance by updating cultural programs and activities.
7. It is advised that the Ministry of Education and relevant educational authorities incorporate future-oriented thinking, professional competence, and cultural awareness into national educational policies and teacher preparation frameworks. This can be accomplished by requiring professional development programs, allocating funds for cultural awareness projects, and integrating anticipatory and decision-making abilities into teacher training courses. These structural methods will guarantee that enhancements are enduring and broadly executed throughout the educational industry.

8. Suggestions for further studies

In light of the research findings, the researcher proposes the following studies:

1. Conduct a study similar to the current study on middle school students.
2. Conduct a study examining the relationship between future thinking skills and other variables not addressed by the current study, such as learning styles, cognitive styles, and mental capacity.
3. Conduct a study examining the relationship between professional competence and other variables not addressed by the current study, such as intelligence, thinking styles, critical thinking, and cognitive preference.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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