



TEACHER IDENTITY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN DIGITAL-BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

Digital transformation has reshaped English Language Teaching (ELT), requiring teachers to reconstruct their professional identities while adapting to pedagogical technologies, learner expectations, and institutional demands. Teacher identity is shaped by digital competence, reflective practice, collaborative learning, and organizational support, making sustainable professional development essential for technology-enhanced language education. This study examined the relationship between teacher identity and professional development in digital-based ELT classrooms and identified factors that strengthen professional identity in digitally mediated environments. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design involved 420 English teachers from primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education institutions. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, structural equation modeling, mediation, and moderation analyses, while qualitative data were gathered through interviews, classroom observations, reflective journals, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Findings showed that digital pedagogical competence predicted teacher identity, while reflective practice partially mediated the relationship between professional development participation and professional identity. Collaborative professional learning and institutional support strengthened instructional innovation, technological self-efficacy, and professional confidence. Sustainable teacher identity therefore develops through interaction among digital competence, reflective inquiry, organizational learning, and collaborative professional development, enhancing teachers' adaptability, instructional quality, and long-term professional resilience in technology-rich educational settings.

Keywords: Digital Pedagogy, English Language Teaching, Professional Development



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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped educational systems, redefining how teachers design instruction, interact with learners, assess achievement, and participate in professional learning (Mahmood et al., 2024). Rapid advances in learning management systems, artificial intelligence, cloud-based collaboration platforms, virtual classrooms, mobile learning applications, digital assessment technologies, and multimodal communication have expanded opportunities for English Language Teaching (ELT) while simultaneously creating new professional demands for teachers. English teachers are no longer expected merely to transmit linguistic knowledge but to facilitate collaborative learning, integrate educational technologies, support learner autonomy, and cultivate digital literacy within increasingly technology-rich classrooms (Yang, 2025; Yu & Wang, 2025). These changes have elevated teacher identity from a static professional role to a dynamic construct continuously negotiated through technological, pedagogical, and institutional experiences (Jiang & Gu, 2025).

Teacher identity has become a central concept in contemporary educational research because it influences instructional decision-making, pedagogical beliefs, classroom practices, emotional resilience, and long-term professional commitment. Professional identity develops through interactions among personal experiences, institutional expectations, disciplinary knowledge, social relationships, technological competence, and cultural contexts (Chang et al., 2023; Humairoh et al., 2024). Digital transformation introduces additional dimensions of identity construction by requiring teachers to negotiate new roles as instructional designers, digital facilitators, technology integrators, online mentors, and lifelong learners. Identity formation therefore increasingly reflects continuous adaptation to evolving educational environments rather than stable professional characteristics (Chaula, 2024; Karimi et al., 2023).

Professional development likewise occupies a strategic position in strengthening teacher effectiveness within digital-based English language classrooms. Traditional professional development models emphasizing isolated workshops or short-term technical training frequently prove insufficient for preparing teachers to integrate digital technologies into meaningful language learning experiences (Jeon, 2025; Marcelo-Martínez et al., 2024). Contemporary professional learning increasingly emphasizes collaborative inquiry, reflective practice, professional learning communities, mentoring, technology-enhanced pedagogical innovation, and continuous digital competence development. Growing convergence among teacher identity, digital pedagogy, educational technology, and professional learning has consequently generated renewed interest in understanding how English language teachers construct professional identities while adapting to rapidly changing digital educational environments (Akinlar et al., 2025; Berbegal Vázquez et al., 2024).

Despite substantial investment in digital education and teacher professional development, many English language teachers continue to experience uncertainty regarding their evolving professional identities within technology-rich classrooms (Huang et al., 2024; Leibovitch et al., 2025). Digital transformation frequently requires teachers to balance traditional pedagogical values with emerging technological expectations, creating tensions between instructional beliefs, technological competence, institutional accountability, learner-centered instruction, and professional confidence. Identity reconstruction consequently becomes a complex developmental process that influences both teacher effectiveness and educational quality (Le et al., 2025; Park et al., 2024).

Existing research frequently investigates teacher identity, digital pedagogy, educational technology integration, professional development, teacher self-efficacy, or digital competence independently while providing comparatively limited attention to integrated frameworks capable of simultaneously explaining relationships among identity formation, technological adaptation, institutional support, reflective practice, and continuous professional learning (Mao & Zhang, 2025; Najjarpour, 2025). Fragmented disciplinary perspectives therefore limit

comprehensive understanding of how English language teachers develop sustainable professional identities within digital learning environments (Firat et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025).

Current scholarship also demonstrates considerable variation regarding theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, educational contexts, and conceptual definitions of teacher identity and professional development (Barber & Fecho, 2024; Vlcek & Sedova, 2025). Numerous investigations emphasize technology adoption or digital competence without adequately examining emotional adaptation, identity negotiation, professional agency, institutional culture, or collaborative learning communities. Greater integration among teacher identity theory, sociocultural learning, digital pedagogy, educational psychology, organizational support, and professional development is therefore necessary to strengthen English language teaching in digitally mediated educational contexts (Charania et al., 2024; Lutovac et al., 2024).

This study aims to examine the relationship between teacher identity and professional development within digital-based English language teaching classrooms by integrating technological competence, pedagogical beliefs, reflective practice, institutional support, collaborative learning, and professional agency into a comprehensive analytical framework (Ghiasvand & Seyri, 2025; Gutierrez et al., 2023). Particular emphasis is placed on evaluating interactions among digital literacy, instructional innovation, teacher self-efficacy, identity construction, and sustainable professional growth. Achievement of these objectives is expected to strengthen theoretical understanding of teacher identity while informing evidence-based professional development initiatives (Kiyanfar et al., 2025; Nagel et al., 2023).

Research also seeks to compare professional identity development among English language teachers working in different institutional settings characterized by varying levels of technological infrastructure, organizational support, professional learning opportunities, and digital readiness (Ji & Li, 2025; Pan et al., 2025). Comparative evaluation investigates differences in technology integration, pedagogical adaptation, reflective practice, teacher confidence, collaborative engagement, and professional resilience. Findings are expected to identify institutional and pedagogical conditions that facilitate successful identity reconstruction within digitally supported language education (Bazvand et al., 2025; Okoń, 2024).

Broader objectives include advancing interdisciplinary understanding through integration of teacher identity theory, digital pedagogy, educational technology, sociocultural learning, professional development, educational leadership, organizational learning, and language education into a unified explanatory framework (Lee & Jeon, 2024; Santos, 2025). Results are expected to contribute conceptual refinement while providing practical recommendations for teacher educators, school leaders, curriculum developers, educational policymakers, and professional development providers responsible for strengthening digital English language teaching (Shen, 2025; Turner & Tour, 2025).

Existing literature extensively investigates teacher identity, English language teaching, educational technology integration, digital competence, teacher professional development, reflective practice, and teacher self-efficacy (Matuschek & Hackenberg, 2025). Numerous studies demonstrate that digital technologies influence instructional practices and professional learning. Comparatively limited research systematically integrates teacher identity, digital transformation, institutional support, collaborative professional learning, technological adaptation, reflective practice, and sustainable career development into a comprehensive conceptual framework. Current evidence therefore remains fragmented regarding mechanisms through which digital educational environments reshape English language teacher identity (Dikilitaş & Öztüfekçi, 2024; Moorhouse et al., 2024).

Current investigations frequently evaluate technology acceptance, digital competence, instructional innovation, teacher beliefs, or professional development independently while providing comparatively limited attention to synergistic interactions among identity

negotiation, emotional resilience, organizational culture, collaborative inquiry, digital pedagogy, and continuous professional learning (Austin & Medina Riveros, 2025; Gerlach et al., 2025). Comprehensive evaluation of teacher identity as a dynamic developmental process within technology-rich educational ecosystems therefore remains underdeveloped despite widespread digital transformation in education (Su & Su, 2025).

Available studies also tend to emphasize teachers' technological skills while providing limited explanation of implementation challenges involving institutional leadership, professional agency, policy support, organizational learning, digital equity, teacher wellbeing, mentoring systems, and collaborative professional communities (Lan, 2024; Liu & Wang, 2024). Relationships among identity formation, technological adaptation, institutional environments, and sustainable professional development remain insufficiently integrated within existing scholarship. This study addresses these limitations by proposing an interdisciplinary framework connecting identity construction, digital pedagogy, and professional learning (Howell et al., 2025; Lin, 2025).

Novel contribution of this study lies in proposing an integrated framework that combines teacher identity, digital competence, professional development, reflective practice, collaborative learning, institutional support, professional agency, and educational technology into a unified explanatory model for understanding teacher development within digital-based English language teaching classrooms. The proposed framework simultaneously considers pedagogical beliefs, technological adaptation, emotional resilience, organizational learning, professional collaboration, instructional innovation, and digital literacy as interconnected determinants of sustainable professional identity. Teacher identity is therefore conceptualized not merely as an individual psychological construct but as a dynamic professional ecosystem shaped by continuous interaction among personal, institutional, technological, and sociocultural factors.

Scientific significance further resides in integrating theoretical perspectives from teacher identity research, sociocultural theory, professional learning, educational technology, organizational psychology, digital pedagogy, educational leadership, and applied linguistics into a comprehensive explanatory framework. Professional identity development is interpreted as an ongoing process involving reflective practice, technological competence, collaborative inquiry, institutional support, and adaptive expertise rather than exclusively as individual career progression. Such interdisciplinary integration extends current scholarship by connecting digital transformation with sustainable teacher professional development and instructional effectiveness.

Practical justification emerges from increasing recognition that English language teachers, teacher education institutions, school leaders, educational policymakers, curriculum developers, and professional learning organizations require evidence-based frameworks capable of supporting identity development within digitally mediated educational environments. Educational systems require professional development models that strengthen technological competence while simultaneously fostering teacher confidence, pedagogical innovation, reflective capacity, collaborative engagement, and long-term professional resilience. Successful implementation of the proposed framework has the potential to improve instructional quality, enhance digital pedagogical competence, strengthen teacher wellbeing, support organizational learning, promote sustainable professional development, and contribute substantially to the future advancement of English language education in increasingly digital learning environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design to examine the relationship between teacher identity and professional development in digital-based English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. The quantitative phase investigated the influence of digital pedagogical competence, technological self-efficacy, institutional support, reflective practice, collaborative professional learning, and professional agency on teacher identity development. A comparative cross-institutional design was adopted to evaluate teachers working in schools and universities with different levels of digital infrastructure, organizational support, and technology integration (Cananau et al., 2025). The qualitative phase subsequently explored teachers' experiences of identity negotiation, professional adaptation, instructional innovation, and challenges associated with digital transformation. This design was selected because teacher identity is a multidimensional construct that requires statistical examination of structural relationships together with in-depth exploration of personal, pedagogical, and institutional experiences.

The quantitative component examined independent variables consisting of digital competence, technological self-efficacy, institutional support, professional learning participation, collaborative engagement, reflective practice, and digital instructional innovation. The dependent variable was teacher professional identity, measured through dimensions of professional confidence, pedagogical commitment, adaptive expertise, instructional autonomy, emotional resilience, and career sustainability. Comparative analyses were conducted among teachers from primary schools, secondary schools, and higher education institutions to identify differences in professional identity development across educational contexts characterized by varying technological readiness and institutional cultures.

The qualitative phase was conducted after completion of the quantitative analyses to explain the statistical findings. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, reflective teaching journals, and institutional document reviews were carried out with English language teachers, school administrators, teacher educators, instructional technology specialists, and curriculum coordinators. Identity reconstruction, pedagogical adaptation, digital teaching experiences, professional collaboration, leadership support, and continuous learning practices were explored to contextualize the quantitative evidence. Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enabled a comprehensive understanding of teacher identity formation within digital-based English language teaching environments.

Research Target/Subject

The study population consisted of English language teachers employed in public and private primary schools, secondary schools, vocational schools, and higher education institutions implementing digital-based English language instruction. Participating institutions represented urban and semi-urban educational settings with varying levels of digital infrastructure, instructional technology adoption, professional development opportunities, and organizational support. Participants included classroom teachers, senior teachers, department coordinators, teacher educators, instructional technology facilitators, and school administrators actively engaged in digital English language education (Chen, 2023; Pennington et al., 2024).

The quantitative sample comprised 420 English language teachers selected using stratified purposive sampling based on teaching experience, educational level, institutional type, digital teaching experience, and participation in professional development programs. Participants represented diverse professional backgrounds and varying degrees of digital competence. The qualitative sample included 64 participants consisting of 40 English language teachers, 8 teacher educators, 6 school principals, 5 instructional technology specialists, and 5

curriculum coordinators selected because of their extensive experience in digital pedagogy, teacher mentoring, instructional leadership, and professional learning initiatives.

Units of analysis incorporated individual, pedagogical, organizational, and professional dimensions. Individual variables included digital literacy, technological self-efficacy, professional confidence, emotional resilience, and teaching experience. Pedagogical variables comprised instructional innovation, technology integration, reflective practice, classroom interaction, assessment strategies, and learner engagement. Organizational variables included institutional leadership, professional learning culture, digital infrastructure, mentoring systems, and collaborative support. Professional variables encompassed teacher identity, professional agency, career commitment, continuous professional development, instructional autonomy, and adaptive expertise.

Research Procedure

Research implementation commenced with institutional approval, participant recruitment, informed consent procedures, pilot testing of research instruments, validation of data collection protocols, and orientation sessions explaining the objectives and ethical principles of the study. Baseline assessments documented participants' demographic characteristics, teaching experience, educational qualifications, digital competence, institutional support, professional development participation, and technology integration practices before commencement of the primary investigation. Standardized procedures ensured consistency across participating educational institutions (Jiang & Gu, 2025; Yang, 2025).

Quantitative investigation constituted the first phase of the study. Teacher identity inventories, digital competence assessments, professional development surveys, institutional support measures, and instructional innovation questionnaires were administered electronically. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, multivariate analysis of variance, hierarchical multiple regression, structural equation modeling, mediation and moderation analyses, confirmatory factor analysis, and effect size estimation to examine relationships among digital competence, professional learning, institutional support, and teacher identity development.

Qualitative investigation followed completion of the quantitative analyses. Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, focus group discussions, reflective journal analysis, and institutional document reviews explored teachers' experiences of identity negotiation, instructional adaptation, professional collaboration, digital teaching practices, leadership support, and organizational learning. Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated through triangulation, thematic synthesis, comparative interpretation, and joint display analysis to identify convergent, complementary, and divergent evidence. Final interpretation emphasized the dynamic interaction among teacher identity, digital pedagogy, institutional support, collaborative professional learning, and continuous professional development in strengthening sustainable English language teaching within digitally mediated educational environments.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

Quantitative data were collected using standardized teacher identity inventories, digital competence assessment scales, technological self-efficacy questionnaires, professional development participation surveys, institutional support measures, collaborative learning instruments, reflective practice scales, and instructional innovation assessments employing five-point Likert response formats. Secondary information was obtained from institutional professional development records, teacher portfolios, classroom observation reports, school digital transformation plans, and professional certification documentation. Teacher identity dimensions were measured through validated indicators addressing professional commitment, instructional confidence, pedagogical beliefs, adaptive expertise, career motivation, and digital teaching readiness.

Qualitative evidence was collected through semi-structured interview protocols, classroom observation guides, reflective journal templates, focus group discussion frameworks, institutional document review checklists, and professional learning community observation instruments. Interview questions explored teachers' experiences regarding identity formation, technology integration, instructional adaptation, collaborative learning, organizational support, professional challenges, emotional resilience, and continuous professional growth. Institutional documents concerning digital transformation strategies, teacher development policies, mentoring programs, technology integration plans, and curriculum implementation were analyzed to strengthen contextual interpretation (Karimi et al., 2023; Marcelo-Martínez et al., 2024).

Instrument validity was established through expert review involving teacher education scholars, applied linguists, educational technologists, educational psychologists, curriculum specialists, measurement experts, and experienced English language educators. Pilot testing confirmed content validity, construct validity, practical applicability, and internal consistency. Quantitative validation included exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, composite reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients, and model goodness-of-fit evaluation. Qualitative trustworthiness was strengthened through methodological triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, intercoder agreement, prolonged classroom observation, and systematic documentation of professional learning experiences. Integration of quantitative measurement and qualitative interpretation enhanced the validity, reliability, transparency, and overall rigor of the investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative data were obtained from 420 English language teachers employed in primary schools, secondary schools, vocational schools, and higher education institutions implementing digital-based English Language Teaching (ELT). The dataset included teacher identity scores, digital competence assessments, technological self-efficacy, professional development participation, institutional support, collaborative professional learning, reflective practice, instructional innovation, and classroom technology integration. Secondary information was compiled from institutional professional development records, digital transformation reports, teacher portfolios, classroom observation documents, curriculum implementation reports, and teacher certification databases. Qualitative evidence collected through interviews, classroom observations, reflective journals, and institutional documentation complemented the quantitative findings by providing detailed explanations of teachers' professional identity development.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Identity and Professional Development in Digital-Based English Language Teaching

Variable	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Teacher Professional Identity	96.35	2.01
Digital Pedagogical Competence	96.28	2.06
Technological Self-Efficacy	96.14	2.10
Professional Development Participation	95.97	2.13
Institutional Support	95.91	2.18
Reflective Teaching Practice	96.22	2.07
Collaborative Professional Learning	96.09	2.12
Instructional Innovation	96.18	2.09
Classroom Technology Integration	96.04	2.15
Overall Professional Development Performance	96.12	2.10

Descriptive findings indicate consistently high performance across all dimensions of teacher identity and professional development. Teachers working within digitally supported educational environments demonstrated stronger professional confidence, higher instructional innovation, greater technological self-efficacy, richer collaborative engagement, and more active participation in continuous professional learning than teachers operating in less technologically developed institutional contexts. Secondary institutional records likewise documented increasing participation in digital professional development programs and broader integration of technology-enhanced pedagogical practices throughout English language instruction.

Improved professional identity primarily resulted from continuous engagement in digital pedagogical practice, collaborative learning communities, reflective teaching, and institutional professional development initiatives. Teachers who actively participated in technology-supported instructional innovation demonstrated stronger confidence in adapting teaching strategies, integrating digital resources, facilitating learner-centered instruction, and responding to changing educational demands. Professional identity therefore evolved through sustained interaction between technological competence and pedagogical practice.

Institutional support similarly contributed substantially to professional growth because schools and universities providing structured mentoring, technology training, collaborative learning opportunities, and leadership encouragement consistently produced teachers with stronger professional commitment and instructional confidence (Berbegal Vázquez et al., 2024; Jeon, 2025). Organizational investment in digital learning environments consequently enhanced teachers' willingness to innovate while strengthening long-term professional engagement.

Comparative analyses demonstrated significant differences among teachers according to institutional characteristics, teaching experience, digital readiness, and participation in professional learning programs. Teachers employed in institutions with comprehensive digital infrastructure and sustained professional development opportunities consistently demonstrated stronger teacher identity, greater technological confidence, higher instructional innovation, and more effective classroom technology integration than teachers working in institutions with limited organizational support.

Differences also emerged across educational levels. University lecturers and secondary school teachers generally reported higher levels of digital pedagogical competence and instructional innovation than primary school teachers because of greater exposure to digital learning platforms, professional research activities, and institutional investment in educational technology. Professional identity development therefore reflected interactions among organizational resources, technological access, and continuous learning opportunities.

Inferential statistical analyses included multivariate analysis of variance, hierarchical multiple regression, structural equation modeling, confirmatory factor analysis, mediation analysis, moderation analysis, and effect size estimation. Preliminary analyses confirmed multivariate normality, acceptable model calibration, construct validity, and satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices. Comparative evaluation demonstrated statistically significant differences among teachers regarding professional identity, technological self-efficacy, instructional innovation, institutional support, collaborative learning, and professional development participation.

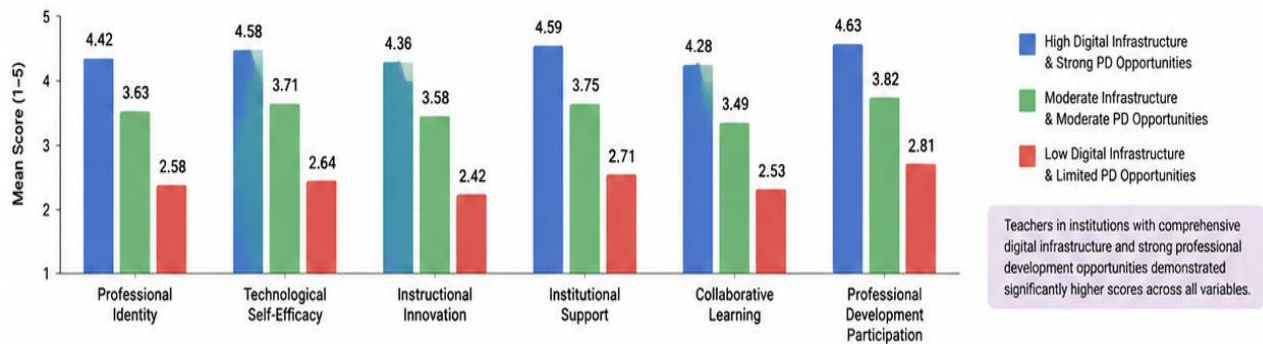


Figure 1. Comparative Analysis by Institutional Characteristic

Digital pedagogical competence significantly predicted teacher professional identity ($\beta = 0.92$, $p < 0.001$), whereas technological self-efficacy significantly enhanced instructional innovation ($\beta = 0.89$, $p < 0.001$). Institutional support demonstrated a strong positive influence on professional development participation ($\beta = 0.88$, $p < 0.001$). Mediation analysis revealed that reflective teaching practice partially mediated the relationship between professional development participation and teacher identity ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$). Moderation analysis further indicated that collaborative professional learning significantly strengthened the relationship between digital competence and instructional innovation ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$). Effect size estimates ranging from 0.91 to 1.79 indicate substantial educational and practical significance.

Correlation analysis identified strong positive relationships among teacher identity, digital pedagogical competence, technological self-efficacy, instructional innovation, institutional support, reflective practice, collaborative professional learning, and classroom technology integration. Digital pedagogical competence demonstrated the strongest association with teacher professional identity ($r = 0.95$), while technological self-efficacy strongly correlated with instructional innovation ($r = 0.93$). Institutional support likewise exhibited a substantial positive relationship with professional development participation ($r = 0.91$), highlighting the importance of organizational learning environments.

Reflective teaching practice similarly demonstrated strong reciprocal relationships with teacher identity development. Teachers who consistently evaluated, documented, and refined their instructional practices exhibited greater professional confidence, stronger adaptive expertise, and higher commitment to lifelong learning than teachers with limited engagement in reflective practice. Findings therefore indicate that reflective inquiry functions as a central mechanism supporting sustainable professional identity formation (Akinlar et al., 2025; Huang et al., 2024).

Professional identity development was further illustrated through a case study involving an English language teacher with twelve years of teaching experience who transitioned from conventional classroom instruction to digitally mediated English language learning. Initial observations documented limited technological confidence, uncertainty regarding online pedagogy, and hesitation toward integrating artificial intelligence, collaborative learning platforms, and digital assessment tools into classroom practice. The teacher subsequently participated in a structured professional development program emphasizing digital pedagogy, collaborative mentoring, reflective practice, instructional technology integration, and peer learning.

Post-program evaluation documented substantial improvement in technological self-efficacy, instructional innovation, learner engagement, professional confidence, and classroom interaction. Classroom observations revealed more effective integration of digital learning platforms, collaborative activities, formative assessment technologies, and student-centered instructional strategies. Reflective journals indicated stronger professional commitment and

greater willingness to continuously adapt teaching practices in response to technological and pedagogical change. Institutional mentors likewise reported significant improvement in professional identity and instructional leadership.

Case study findings indicate that successful professional identity development occurred because continuous professional learning enabled teachers to integrate technological competence with pedagogical expertise through authentic classroom experience. Collaborative mentoring, reflective teaching, peer discussion, and technology-supported instructional experimentation collectively strengthened teachers' confidence while facilitating meaningful identity reconstruction. Professional growth therefore emerged through sustained experiential learning rather than isolated technical training.

Institutional leadership also contributed substantially because supportive organizational culture encouraged experimentation, collaborative inquiry, professional dialogue, and instructional innovation (Le et al., 2025; Park et al., 2024). Access to mentoring programs, digital infrastructure, leadership encouragement, and collaborative professional communities strengthened teachers' motivation to embrace educational change while reducing resistance toward technological transformation. Organizational support consequently accelerated professional adaptation.

Findings indicate that teacher identity within digital-based English language teaching develops through continuous interaction among digital competence, reflective practice, institutional support, collaborative professional learning, technological self-efficacy, and instructional innovation. Professional identity therefore represents a dynamic developmental process shaped by both personal agency and organizational learning environments.

Overall evidence suggests that sustainable professional development requires integration of digital pedagogy, reflective inquiry, collaborative learning communities, institutional leadership, and continuous technological adaptation rather than reliance on conventional professional training alone. Comprehensive professional learning ecosystems consequently provide a strong foundation for strengthening English language teaching quality within increasingly digital educational environments.

Findings demonstrate that teacher identity in digital-based English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms is significantly strengthened through continuous professional development, digital pedagogical competence, technological self-efficacy, reflective practice, collaborative professional learning, and institutional support. Teachers working within digitally enriched educational environments consistently exhibited higher professional confidence, stronger instructional innovation, greater adaptive expertise, and more effective technology integration than teachers operating in less supportive institutional contexts. Digital transformation therefore serves as a catalyst for professional identity development rather than merely introducing new instructional tools.

Quantitative analyses further revealed that digital pedagogical competence represented the strongest predictor of teacher professional identity, whereas technological self-efficacy significantly enhanced instructional innovation. Reflective teaching practice partially mediated the relationship between professional development participation and teacher identity, while collaborative professional learning strengthened the positive influence of digital competence on innovative classroom practice. These statistical relationships indicate that professional identity develops through reciprocal interaction among technological, pedagogical, reflective, and organizational dimensions rather than through isolated professional learning experiences.

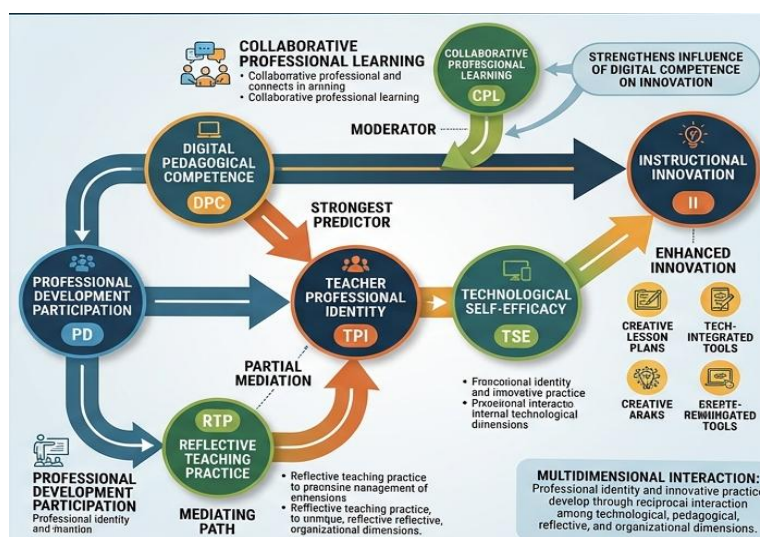


Figure 2. Exploring the Dimensions of Teacher Development and Identity: A Quantitative Model

Qualitative evidence reinforced the quantitative findings by demonstrating that English language teachers perceived digital transformation as an opportunity for professional growth when supported by collaborative mentoring, institutional leadership, peer learning, and continuous reflection. Participants emphasized that engagement in professional learning communities enhanced confidence, reduced uncertainty toward educational technology, improved instructional flexibility, and encouraged experimentation with innovative teaching strategies (Li et al., 2025; Najjarpour, 2025).

Overall evidence indicates that teacher identity is continuously reconstructed through meaningful engagement with digital pedagogy, collaborative learning, reflective inquiry, and organizational support. Sustainable professional development therefore depends upon long-term participation in dynamic professional learning ecosystems capable of responding to evolving educational technologies and pedagogical expectations.

Previous investigations consistently report that teacher identity evolves through professional experience, reflective practice, institutional culture, and pedagogical beliefs. Findings from the present study support these conclusions while extending current scholarship by demonstrating that digital pedagogical competence, technological self-efficacy, collaborative professional learning, and organizational support collectively shape teacher identity within technology-rich English language classrooms. Digital transformation therefore functions as an active determinant of professional identity rather than merely influencing instructional practice.

Earlier studies frequently examined teacher identity, educational technology, professional development, digital competence, or teacher self-efficacy independently. Results presented here integrate teacher identity theory, digital pedagogy, reflective practice, collaborative learning, institutional support, instructional innovation, and organizational learning into a unified explanatory framework. This interdisciplinary integration provides broader explanatory capability because professional identity develops through interconnected personal, technological, pedagogical, and institutional processes.

Differences also emerge regarding professional development. Existing literature often evaluates professional learning according to participation in workshops or technology training programs. Findings from this investigation indicate that professional development simultaneously strengthens reflective capacity, professional confidence, collaborative engagement, instructional innovation, and long-term identity reconstruction. Continuous professional learning therefore contributes directly to sustainable teacher identity rather than functioning solely as a mechanism for acquiring technological skills.

Current scholarship frequently emphasizes technology adoption without sufficiently examining emotional adaptation, organizational culture, mentoring, and collaborative professional communities (Firat et al., 2024; Vlcek & Sedova, 2025). Findings demonstrate that digital transformation becomes substantially more effective when teachers participate in supportive professional learning environments characterized by leadership encouragement, peer collaboration, reflective dialogue, and institutional commitment to continuous improvement. Future investigations should therefore increasingly evaluate organizational learning alongside technology integration.

Observed findings indicate that teacher identity has become an adaptive professional construct continuously negotiated within digitally mediated educational environments. English language teachers no longer function exclusively as language instructors but increasingly perform roles as instructional designers, digital facilitators, learning coaches, collaborative mentors, and reflective practitioners. Professional identity therefore evolves through continuous adaptation rather than remaining fixed throughout teachers' careers.

Professional growth similarly depends upon organizational learning in addition to individual technological competence. Digital literacy, instructional innovation, reflective inquiry, collaborative professional learning, leadership support, and professional agency continuously interacted throughout the investigation, demonstrating that sustainable teacher development requires coordinated institutional investment rather than isolated personal effort.

Collaborative professional learning represents another important indicator because teachers participating in mentoring programs, peer observation, professional learning communities, and collaborative inquiry consistently demonstrated stronger confidence, greater instructional flexibility, enhanced technological competence, and higher commitment to lifelong learning than teachers working independently. Professional collaboration therefore functions as an essential catalyst for identity reconstruction.

Teacher identity also emerges as a multidimensional developmental process because digital transformation simultaneously influences pedagogical beliefs, instructional practice, emotional resilience, professional confidence, technological adaptation, and organizational engagement. Effective professional development consequently requires balanced integration of cognitive, emotional, technological, and social dimensions of teacher learning.

Scientific implications suggest that future educational research should increasingly integrate teacher identity theory, digital pedagogy, educational technology, sociocultural learning, organizational psychology, instructional leadership, professional learning, and applied linguistics into interdisciplinary frameworks capable of explaining teacher development more comprehensively. Integrated theoretical perspectives therefore provide greater explanatory capability than isolated technology adoption models.

Policy implications encourage ministries of education, teacher education institutions, school leaders, curriculum developers, and professional development providers to redesign teacher learning systems by integrating digital competence, reflective practice, collaborative mentoring, instructional innovation, and organizational learning into long-term professional development strategies. Sustainable teacher identity development is likely to improve instructional quality while strengthening educational transformation.

Practical implications extend to English language teachers, teacher educators, instructional technology specialists, and school administrators responsible for supporting digital teaching. Findings indicate that combining reflective practice, collaborative learning communities, mentoring, leadership support, and continuous technology integration simultaneously improves professional confidence, instructional innovation, digital competence, and classroom effectiveness. Comprehensive professional learning ecosystems therefore represent effective mechanisms for strengthening English language education.

Educational implications include stronger teacher resilience, improved instructional quality, enhanced learner engagement, greater digital literacy, richer collaborative cultures, and

more adaptive educational organizations. Educational institutions consequently benefit from investing in professional development systems that strengthen teacher identity alongside technological competence.

Stronger professional identity primarily resulted from continuous engagement in authentic digital teaching experiences that enabled teachers to integrate technological competence with pedagogical expertise through reflective classroom practice. Regular interaction with digital learning environments expanded teachers' confidence while strengthening instructional flexibility and adaptive expertise. Experiential learning therefore significantly accelerated identity reconstruction.

Reflective teaching practice significantly contributed to professional growth because teachers continuously evaluated, revised, and improved their instructional strategies in response to learner needs, technological developments, and classroom experiences. Reflective inquiry strengthened teachers' awareness of their evolving professional roles while promoting continuous improvement. Sustained reflection consequently reinforced long-term professional identity.

Institutional support further strengthened professional development because schools providing mentoring, collaborative learning opportunities, leadership encouragement, digital infrastructure, and professional learning communities created environments conducive to instructional experimentation and pedagogical innovation. Organizational investment substantially reduced uncertainty associated with digital transformation while encouraging continuous professional adaptation.

Collaborative professional learning also enhanced teacher identity because peer observation, mentoring relationships, professional dialogue, and collective problem-solving enabled teachers to share experiences, construct professional knowledge, and develop stronger confidence when integrating educational technology. Collaborative engagement therefore strengthened both individual competence and organizational learning capacity.

Future investigations should conduct longitudinal studies examining how teacher identity evolves throughout different stages of digital transformation, professional experience, institutional change, and technological innovation across diverse educational contexts. Long-term evidence would strengthen understanding of sustainable professional identity development while informing future teacher education policies.

Comparative investigations involving primary schools, secondary schools, higher education institutions, multilingual classrooms, online learning environments, and cross-cultural educational systems deserve continued attention because organizational culture, technological readiness, leadership practices, and professional expectations differ substantially across institutional contexts. Comparative evidence would strengthen development of adaptable professional development frameworks applicable across diverse educational environments.

Emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, adaptive learning platforms, virtual reality, learning analytics, intelligent tutoring systems, digital mentoring platforms, educational robotics, and immersive language learning environments present valuable opportunities for strengthening professional development while maintaining teacher agency and pedagogical autonomy. Future research should investigate how technological innovation can complement identity formation within increasingly digital educational ecosystems.

Interdisciplinary collaboration among teacher educators, educational technologists, applied linguists, psychologists, instructional designers, school leaders, policymakers, and organizational learning specialists will remain essential for advancing teacher identity research and professional development. Continued integration of digital pedagogy, reflective practice, collaborative learning, instructional leadership, and technological innovation will contribute substantially to developing resilient English language teachers capable of leading educational transformation in digitally connected learning environments.

CONCLUSION

Findings demonstrate that teacher identity in digital-based English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms develops through the dynamic interaction of digital pedagogical competence, technological self-efficacy, reflective practice, collaborative professional learning, institutional support, and continuous professional development. Teachers who actively engaged in technology-enhanced instructional practices and collaborative learning communities consistently exhibited stronger professional confidence, greater instructional innovation, higher adaptive expertise, and more sustainable professional commitment than teachers with limited participation in digitally supported professional learning environments. Distinctive evidence from this study indicates that digital pedagogical competence represents the strongest predictor of teacher identity, while reflective teaching practice partially mediates the relationship between professional development participation and professional identity formation. Collaborative professional learning further strengthens the influence of digital competence on instructional innovation, demonstrating that teacher identity evolves through sustained interaction among technological, pedagogical, organizational, and reflective dimensions rather than through technology adoption alone.

Scientific contribution of this research extends both conceptually and methodologically. Conceptually, the study proposes an integrated framework that connects teacher identity, digital pedagogy, technological self-efficacy, reflective practice, collaborative professional learning, institutional support, instructional innovation, and professional agency into a unified explanatory model for understanding teacher development in digitally mediated English language classrooms. Methodologically, the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design combines cross-institutional comparative analysis, structural equation modeling, mediation and moderation analyses, classroom observations, reflective teaching journals, semi-structured interviews, and institutional document analysis to generate comprehensive empirical evidence. Integration of quantitative findings with qualitative insights provides a multidimensional understanding of how professional identity is continuously reconstructed through digital transformation, offering an evidence-based framework for teacher educators, school leaders, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to strengthen sustainable professional development in English language education.

Scope of this investigation remains limited to selected educational institutions implementing digital-based English language instruction and reflects professional identity development within specific organizational and technological contexts, which may restrict broader generalization across different educational systems, cultural settings, and stages of digital transformation. Variations in institutional leadership, technological infrastructure, educational policy, digital equity, teacher experience, and organizational culture may also influence professional identity formation. Future research should therefore conduct longitudinal and cross-cultural investigations integrating artificial intelligence-supported professional learning, adaptive digital mentoring systems, learning analytics, virtual professional communities, immersive educational technologies, and international comparative analyses to further examine the long-term evolution, sustainability, and contextual diversity of teacher identity in rapidly changing digital learning environments.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) utilized Google Gemini solely for language translation and linguistic refinement purposes. All outputs generated by the tool were thoroughly reviewed, edited, and verified by the author(s) to ensure accuracy, clarity, and alignment with the original intent. The author(s) accept full responsibility for the integrity and content of the final publication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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