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**COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN THE DIGITAL ERA: ENGLISH TEACHERS
AND COLLABORATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

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Trabalho de Conclusão do Curso de
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Orientador: Profa. Dra. Andréia Turolo da
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COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN THE DIGITAL ERA: ENGLISH TEACHERS AND COLLABORATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

João Pedro Henrique da Silva Santos¹

Abstract

Digital platforms have become fundamental spaces for English teachers to engage in communities of practice, fostering professional development, collaboration, and identity construction. This study investigates how social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok facilitate the construction of these communities by enabling educators to share resources, exchange methodologies, and engage in reflective practice. Through a systematic literature review, this research identifies key themes related to online teacher engagement, including professional networking, digital literacies, and knowledge co-construction. The findings indicate that while these platforms offer opportunities for collaboration and continuous learning, challenges such as algorithmic constraints, engagement disparities, and the predominance of informal interactions impact the effectiveness of these digital spaces. By analyzing the affordances and limitations of social media in teacher professional development, this study contributes to the broader understanding of how online communities shape pedagogical practices and teacher identity in a technologically mediated landscape.

Keywords

English teachers; social media, communities of practice, professional identity, digital collaboration, teacher development.

Resumo

As plataformas digitais tornaram-se espaços fundamentais para que professores de inglês participem de comunidades de prática, promovendo desenvolvimento profissional, colaboração e construção de identidade. Este estudo investiga como redes sociais como Instagram, Facebook e TikTok facilitam a formação dessas comunidades ao permitir que educadores compartilhem recursos, troquem metodologias e engajem-se em práticas reflexivas. Por meio de uma revisão sistemática da literatura, esta pesquisa identifica temas-chave relacionados ao engajamento dos professores em ambientes digitais, incluindo networking profissional, letramentos digitais e construção do conhecimento. Os resultados indicam que, embora essas plataformas ofereçam oportunidades para colaboração e aprendizagem contínua, desafios como restrições algorítmicas, disparidades de engajamento e a predominância de interações informais afetam a eficácia desses espaços digitais. Ao analisar as possibilidades e limitações das redes sociais no desenvolvimento profissional docente, este estudo contribui para uma compreensão mais ampla de como as comunidades online moldam as práticas pedagógicas e a identidade dos professores em um cenário tecnologicamente mediado.

Palavras-chave

Professores de inglês, redes sociais, comunidades de prática, identidade profissional, colaboração digital, desenvolvimento docente.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a teacher who is in constant contact with technology and is deeply integrated into social media networks, I constantly engage with various content creators who share their experiences, teaching approaches, and insights on English language instruction. These digital interactions influence my professional development, shaping my perspectives and inspiring me to apply new strategies in my own teaching context.

Engaging with online communities allows me to connect my reality to current educational trends, fostering a stronger relationship with my students and helping me stay attuned to their learning experiences. This type of connection has also been instrumental in my identity construction as a teacher, as it enables me to negotiate meaning with other educators, reflect on my practices, and continuously evolve within my profession.

Given the increasing role of digital platforms in teacher development, it is crucial to investigate how online communities of practice contribute to educators' professional growth. The ability to share resources, discuss methodologies, and collaborate in digital spaces has transformed the way teachers interact and support one another.

Social media networks, such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, have emerged as powerful tools for professional learning, enabling teachers to engage in meaningful discussions and refine their instructional practices. Understanding how these digital communities shape teacher identity and professional engagement is essential for enhancing teacher education and promoting more effective teaching methodologies.

This study seeks to address three questions: (i) in what ways do communities of practice contribute to the continuing professional development of English teachers? (ii) how do English teachers build communities of practice using social websites? and (iii) in what ways do these platforms afford or constrain access to meaningful content? By conducting a systematic literature review, this research aims to explore how digital communities support teacher collaboration, identity construction, and knowledge-sharing within online environments.

To achieve these objectives, this paper is structured in 5 sections. Section 1 introduces the paper. Section 2 presents the theoretical framework, discussing key concepts such as communities of practice, imagined communities, digital literacies, reflective practice,

approach analysis, and cyberculture. Section 3 details the methodology, outlining the selection criteria and analytical procedures for identifying relevant studies.

Section 4 presents the findings, mapping the literature and identifying key themes related to teacher engagement in digital spaces. Finally, Section 5 provides the conclusion, summarizing the main insights, acknowledging the study's limitations, and suggesting directions for future research. Through this structure, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of how digital platforms influence teacher development and foster professional collaboration.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in the interconnected concepts of communities of practice, imagined communities, digital literacies, reflective practice, approach analysis, and cyberculture. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens to analyze the continuous professional development of English teachers in digital environments, emphasizing collaboration, identity construction, and the transformative potential of technology.

2.1. Communities of practice

Etienne Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice serves as a cornerstone for understanding social learning. Wenger describes these communities as spaces where individuals engage in mutual practices, develop shared meanings, and collaboratively build competencies. These communities are dynamic, characterized by emergent structures and ongoing identity negotiation, which make them highly adaptable to the evolving needs of participants.

In the context of English teachers, digital communities of practice (e.g., on TikTok) allow educators to share resources, methodologies, and experiences, fostering professional growth. Wenger (2000) categorizes these as social learning systems, where participants not only develop technical skills but also engage in reflective practices that reshape their professional identities.

2.2. Imagined Communities and Identity Construction

The concept of imagined communities, introduced by Benedict Anderson (1991) and adapted by Pavlenko and Norton (2007), emphasizes the role of imagination in fostering a sense of belonging. Anderson initially used the term to describe nations as socially

constructed groups connected through shared narratives, even among individuals who never meet. Pavlenko and Norton extended this idea to language learning, suggesting that learners and teachers envision themselves as part of aspirational communities, shaping their motivations and professional identities.

Both the notion of imagined communities, as discussed by Anderson (1991) and later expanded by Pavlenko and Norton (2007), and Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice emphasize the social nature of learning and identity formation. While imagined communities highlight how individuals construct a sense of belonging through shared symbols and discourses, communities of practice underscore the role of participation, negotiation of meaning, and shared repertoires in the development of professional and cultural identities. Together, these frameworks provide a theoretical basis for examining how learning and identity are dynamically shaped within social and cultural contexts.

2.3. Digital Literacies

Marcelo Buzato's (2006) work on digital literacies underscores the critical role of technology in education. Buzato defines digital literacy as a set of social practices involving the use of digital tools for creating, sharing, and transforming knowledge. He argues that digital literacies go beyond technical skills, encompassing the ability to critically engage with technology and adapt it to specific social contexts.

In expanding this perspective, Buzato (2006) emphasizes that digital literacies involve a continuous negotiation between technological possibilities and the sociocultural contexts in which they are applied. This means that educators are not only users of digital tools but also active participants in shaping the meanings and practices associated with them. By framing digital literacy as a socially situated practice, Buzato (2006) highlights its potential to promote critical awareness and transformative engagement, reinforcing its centrality in discussions about teacher education and professional development.

2.4. Approach Analysis and Reflective Practice

José Carlos Paes de Almeida Filho (2000) emphasizes the role of approach analysis as a pathway to self-knowledge and pedagogical transformation. By critically examining their teaching approaches, educators uncover the underlying beliefs and principles shaping their practices. This reflective process fosters the development of more effective methodologies and contributes to the construction of a professional identity.

Paulo Freire (1996) complements this perspective by advocating for dialogue and

critical reflection as central to transformative teaching. Freire's notion of education as a dialogical process aligns with the collaborative nature of digital communities, where teachers reflect on and adapt their practices based on shared experiences and feedback.

2.5. Cyberculture and Collective Intelligence

Pierre Lévy's (1999) concept of cyberculture introduces the idea of cyberspace as a place for collaboration, interaction, and the construction of collective knowledge. Lévy (1999) highlights the transformative potential of digital technologies in creating environments where individuals engage in intelligence collective, a process through which communities combine their knowledge and creativity to solve problems and innovate.

Lévy's (1999) notion of *collective intelligence* also points to the emergence of new forms of sociability, in which knowledge is no longer confined to individuals but becomes the product of shared interactions. In this view, digital technologies create dynamic spaces where collaboration and knowledge exchange are not limited by time or physical boundaries. Such environments expand the possibilities for innovation and learning, highlighting the cultural and educational impact of cyberculture.

2.6. Integration of Concepts

This theoretical framework integrates Wenger's (1998) communities of practice, Anderson's (1991) and Pavlenko and Norton's (2007) imagined communities, Buzato's (2006) digital literacies, Almeida Filho's (2000) approach analysis, Freire's (1996) reflective practice, and Lévy's (1999) cyberculture. Together, these perspectives illuminate how professional learning and identity formation are understood within socially and culturally mediated contexts.

The combination of these theoretical perspectives highlights the interplay between collaboration, identity negotiation, and technological mediation in contemporary education. Wenger's communities of practice stress participation and shared repertoires; Anderson and Pavlenko & Norton bring the notion of belonging through imagined communities; Buzato and Lévy emphasize the transformative role of digital literacies and cyberculture; Freire underscores critical reflection; and Almeida Filho adds the dimension of self-awareness through approach analysis. Taken together, these frameworks provide a multidimensional lens to examine how teaching practices are shaped and continuously redefined in interaction with broader social, cultural, and technological forces.

This framework thus establishes a comprehensive basis for analyzing processes of

professional learning and identity formation, considering both the social dynamics of collaboration and the critical role of digital technologies in educational contexts.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this paper is to understand (i) in what ways a community of practice contributes to the continuing English teachers' development; (ii) how English teachers build communities of practice using social websites; and (iii) in what ways those platforms afford or constraint accessing meaningful contents.

To achieve these aims, this study adopts a qualitative, bibliographical, and descriptive approach, structured as a literature review. The analysis was guided by Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which provides a framework for identifying and discussing recurrent patterns across the selected studies. This approach allowed the organization of the data into thematic categories, such as teacher collaboration, professional identity construction, social media engagement, and online communities of practice, and enabled the comparison of findings to identify convergences, divergences, and contributions relevant to the research questions.

For this, I proposed to identify, select, and analyze papers which explore the ways English teachers use social media platforms and how the interactions with other participants of the same community in digital environments affect their continuous professional development, their identity construction and sense of collaboration in a transformative technological society.

Aiming to build a Systematic Literature Review, for this research methodology, four online databases were selected to explore existing academic studies that address the intersection of English teachers' professional development, social media interactions and the construction of communities of practice. The online databases used in this research are Portal de Periódicos da CAPES, Elsevier, JSTOR and ERIC. These platforms provide access to peer-reviewed articles and inspection proceedings to ensure the reliability of the present work.

The first step of the systematic review was to establish the parameters of the search for articles. The set of keywords that were employed in the process to find relevant works related to the theme consisted of a combination of keywords, such as: English teachers; Social media; Communities of practice; ESL professional development; EFL teachers; Digital collaboration; and Telecollaboration. Moreover, cross-combinations were also applied

to refine the research process, such as: “English teachers” AND “Social Media”; “English teachers” AND “Communities of practice”, and so for. To maintain relevance and focus, the following criteria were applied:

1. Peer-reviewed articles.
2. Published within 2014 and 2024.
3. Published in English.
4. Full text available with open access.
3. Focus on English teachers or EFL educators.
4. Discuss the use of social media for professional collaboration or development.
5. Address the concept of communities of practice.

After choosing the databases, the keywords to be searched and the criteria to choose the articles, the next step was to select the articles following three steps:

1. Initial Search: Articles were identified through database platforms using the specified set of keywords.
2. Abstract Review: Abstracts of retrieved articles were screened to determine their alignment with the study’s objectives.
3. Full-Text Review: Articles meeting the criteria were downloaded and analyzed in detail in table 1 to extract relevant data.

Next, the criteria above were applied and the articles selected fully contemplated all of the criteria set for this work. The search process began with the keywords “English teacher” and “social media” in the selected databases. The first database consulted was Portal de Periódicos da CAPES, which returned 408 results after applying the defined criteria. The same search was then conducted on Elsevier (31 results), JSTOR (75 results), and ERIC (102 results). From these, 9 works matched all criteria proposed.

After that, the keywords “Communities of practice” AND “EFL teacher professional development” were used. This search yielded 73 results on Portal de Periódicos da CAPES, 151 on Elsevier, 5 on JSTOR, and 278 on ERIC. From these, 4 works were chosen for analysis.

Next, the search terms “Online communities” and “Educators” were applied. This produced 18 results on Portal de Periódicos da CAPES, 108 on Elsevier, 18 on JSTOR, and 63 on ERIC. From these, 6 works were selected for analysis.

Finally, The search terms “English teachers” AND “Telecollaboration” were applied. It produced 19 results on Portal de periódicos da CAPES, 12 results on Elsevier, 1 result on JSTOR and 149 results on ERIC. 7 studies were selected for analysis. Overall, After being screened and analyzed, the selected articles that fully met the established criteria for this study are represented in table 2.

In sum, 10 articles were selected to be analyzed and The lack of works selected which fit in the criteria set for the present study showed how much importance is given when studying analyzing the use of social media as means of online collaboration between English teachers around the world. Considering the criteria applied, the results showed works which focused more on the students’ perspective and how social media affects their learning processes. Moreover, many studies appeared when using other key words, many of which were not chosen to be analysed because they were not related to an online context.

4. FINDINGS

The analysis of the selected articles started by building a table in which was possible to define patterns regarding how English teachers engage in digital spaces using them as tools for professional development, identity construction and communities of practice. By examining (i) key themes, (ii) methodologies, and (iii) findings & limitations, the table provides insights on the role of Social Media Platforms in promoting teacher collaboration, identity construction and knowledge sharing. This table may be seen in Table 1.

4.1 Key research themes

The most recurrent theme was Teacher Collaboration, identified in six studies (Richter et al., 2022; Woodford et al., 2022; Ghamrawi et al., 2022; Aguilar et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Bostancioglu et al., 2018). These works explore how teachers connect, share resources, and engage in professional learning through social media and online communities of practice.

Richter et al. (2022) highlight Instagram’s role in fostering networking and emotional support, while Woodford et al. (2022) demonstrate how Facebook groups enable professional learning, even through passive participation. These studies reinforce the value of social media and online communities as spaces for collaboration, with teachers benefiting from both active and passive engagement.

Another key theme was Professional Identity Construction, examined in four studies (Woodford et al., 2022; Henry E. et al., 2024; Ulla et al., 2024; Marisa et al., 2024). These

works discuss how digital spaces shape teachers' self-perception and professional engagement. Marisa et al. (2024) specifically link digital literacy to professional confidence, showing that educators with higher proficiency are more likely to engage in online learning.

The role of Social Media and Virtual/Online Communities of Practice was emphasized in five studies each, highlighting their function in teacher engagement, collaboration, identity construction, and knowledge-sharing (Richter et al., 2022; Woodford et al., 2022; Henry E. et al., 2024; Ulla et al., 2024; Aguilar et al., 2021; Ghamrawi et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021; Bostancioglu et al., 2018). These studies show how platforms like Instagram and Facebook support professional networking, resource-sharing, and discussions.

TikTok, as explored in Henry E. et al. (2024) and Ulla et al. (2024), offers a distinct space where educators balance professional and personal identities while reaching broader audiences. Aguilar et al. (2021) examine how social media usage evolved during the pandemic, transitioning from informal networking to structured professional learning.

Teacher Development was another major focus, emphasizing digital spaces as tools for continuous learning. Ghamrawi et al. (2022) and Bostancioglu et al. (2018) highlight how online communities support professional growth, enabling teachers to exchange teaching methodologies, receive peer support, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. However, engagement levels vary, with core members benefiting more than peripheral participants, underscoring the importance of active involvement.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) was explored in three studies (Marisa et al., 2024; Li et al., 2021; Aguilar et al., 2021), linking digital competence to teaching effectiveness and professional identity development in EFL contexts.

Additional themes include Informal Learning (Woodford et al., 2022; Henry E. et al., 2024) and Emotional Vulnerability (Henry E. et al., 2024), discussing how teachers navigate emotional challenges while engaging with large online audiences.

These studies collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of online teacher engagement, balancing professional development with personal experiences.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis of Selected Articles

Paper Title	Key themes	Objectives	Research methodology	Results & Limitations	Social media platform	How it relates to the objectives of the present study
Instagram as a Platform for Teacher Collaboration and Digital Social Support (Richter et al., 2022).	Teacher collaboration, professional networking	Investigate how Instagram fosters professional communities among teachers.	Qualitative study based on teachers' Instagram use.	Findings: Instagram provides professional networking and emotional support for teachers. Limitations: The study is limited to qualitative perspectives and does not provide broader quantitative data.	Instagram	Demonstrates how Instagram fosters professional communities among teachers.
Lurking with Intent: Teacher Purposeful Learning Using Facebook (Woodford et al., 2022).	Informal learning, professional identity	Understand how teachers engage in purposeful learning via Facebook.	Case study of teachers using Facebook groups.	Findings: Teachers use Facebook as a self-directed learning space, strengthening their professional identity. Limitations: The study focuses mainly on passive participation rather than active engagement.	Facebook	Shows how teachers use Facebook for self-directed learning and knowledge sharing.
TikTok for Language Teachers: Affordances of TikTok on	Identity construction, emotional vulnerability, Informal	Explore the impact of TikTok on teachers' professional identity.	Mixed-methods approach analyzing TikTok teacher content and interviews.	Findings: Teachers construct their professional identities on TikTok, balancing self-expression and	Tiktok	Examines how teachers build professional identities through TikTok interactions.

Teachers' Identity and Emotional Vulnerability (Henry E. et al., 2024).	learning, professional identity			professional boundaries. Limitations: Limited to TikTok users and does not account for broader social media experiences.		
Unveiling the TikTok Teacher: The Construction of Teacher Identity in the Digital Spotlight. (Ulla et al., 2024).	Identity construction; teacher identity; TikTok teachers; TikTok; social media	Explore how TikTok identities of teachers impact their professional identity as teachers.	exploratory-descriptive qualitative research analyzing semi structured individual interviews.	Findings: Teachers adopted expressive, relational, adaptive, and progressive identities, which enhanced authenticity, student engagement, pedagogical innovation, and professional networking. Limitations: Small sample size and specific cultural context may limit generalizability.	Tiktok	Shows how TikTok fosters identity construction and engagement among teachers, contributing to their professional growth
Teachers' Virtual Communities of Practice: A Strong Response in Times of Crisis or Just Another Fad? (Ghamrawi et al., 2022).	Virtual communities of practice (vCoP), professional development, knowledge sharing	Investigate the effectiveness of vCoPs in supporting teachers' knowledge-sharing and professional development, especially in times of crisis	Mixed-methods study: Survey with 696 participants + 8 focus group interviews	Findings: vCoPs were effective for professional development, especially during crises; facilitators and blockers affecting vCoP engagement were identified. Limitations: The study does not specify a particular platform and may not generalize to all teacher communities.	It does not specify a platform but focuses on virtual CoPs	Demonstrates how online communities support teacher collaboration and professional learning, reinforcing the value of digital interactions in professional development

<p>A Different Experience in a Different Moment? Teachers' Social Media Use before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic. (Aguilar et. al., 2021).</p>	<p>Social media in education, teacher collaboration, professional learning</p>	<p>Investigate how teachers used social media for professional learning before and during the pandemic</p>	<p>Intensive longitudinal study, surveying 14 teachers with 386 total responses</p>	<p>Findings: Teachers increased their use of social media to connect, share, and learn after the pandemic began; those with high COVID-19-related stress used social media more to find materials. Limitations: Small sample size and self-reported data may limit generalizability.</p>	<p>Multiple platforms (not specified)</p>	<p>Examines how teachers use social media for professional learning, resource sharing, and collaboration, which aligns with the concept of communities of practice</p>
<p>Learning Together Online: Insights into Knowledge Construction of Language Teachers in a CSCL Environment (Li et al., 2021)</p>	<p>Communities of practice, digital learning, knowledge construction, teacher collaboration</p>	<p>Investigate how in-service language teachers co-construct knowledge in digital discussions</p>	<p>Thematic and sociocultural discourse analysis of 13 teachers' online chats</p>	<p>Findings: Teachers focus on affordances of technology and integration methods; they use various communicative strategies to negotiate meaning and co-construct knowledge. Limitations: The study is based on online discussions but does not specify if they took place on social media platforms.</p>	<p>Asynchronous online discussions (not specified if social media)</p>	<p>Demonstrates how language teachers collaborate and construct knowledge in digital spaces, reinforcing the role of social interaction in professional learning</p>

<p>Investigating the digital proficiency of English as a foreign language (EFL) educators in association with their professional identity. (Marisa et. al., 2024).</p>	<p>CALL, digital competence, EFL teacher's professional identity, teacher's professional development.</p>	<p>Investigate how EFL teachers' digital competence influences their professional identity (PI)</p>	<p>Case study of 5 EFL teachers from various educational backgrounds; Thematic analysis guided by the DigCompEdu and TPI frameworks. A case study involving 5 EFL teachers</p>	<p>Findings: Identified organizational communication, professional collaboration, and reflective practice as key factors shaping EFL teachers' professional identity; multiple identities alternate in social and pedagogical contexts. Limitations: The study is not specific to social media but focuses on digital competence and collaboration.</p>	<p>Not specific to social media but focuses on digital competence and collaboration.</p>	<p>Provides insights into how EFL teachers develop professional identities through digital interactions and reflective practices, reinforcing the role of technology in professional learning.</p>
<p>Online Communities of Practice in the Service of Teachers' Technology Professional Development: The Case of Webheads in Action (Bostancioglu et. al., 2018)</p>	<p>Online communities of practice, EFL teacher collaboration, technology professional development</p>	<p>Investigate whether an OCoP can serve as an alternative form of technology professional development (TPD) for teachers.</p>	<p>Mixed-method study: - Survey (n=44) - Interviews (n=24) - 9-month analysis of teacher interactions</p>	<p>Findings: Participation in the Webheads in Action (WiA) OCoP led to perceived professional development, with differences observed among peripheral, active, and core members. Limitations: Findings are based on self-reported experiences and may not capture long-term impacts.</p>	<p>Webheads in Action (WiA)</p>	<p>Demonstrates how EFL teachers engage in online communities for professional development, collaboration, and identity construction, reinforcing the concept of communities of practice in digital spaces</p>

<p>Knowledge Sharing Through WhatsApp: Does It Promote EFL Teachers' Reflective Practice? (Farahian et. al., 2022)</p>	<p>Informal learning, teacher reflection</p>	<p>Investigate how EFL teachers use WhatsApp for professional learning and reflective practice</p>	<p>Mixed-method study with surveys and interviews</p>	<p>Findings: WhatsApp facilitates collaborative knowledge-sharing and reflection among teachers. Limitations: Study focuses on a single platform and self-reported data.</p>	<p>WhatsApp</p>	<p>Explores how EFL teachers engage in online reflective practice and informal learning through messaging apps.</p>
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Source: Designed by the author.

4.2 Research methodologies

The selected studies employed various research methodologies, reflecting different approaches to examining how teachers engage with social media for professional learning. A significant number of the studies used mixed-methods research, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. For instance, *A Different Experience in a Different Moment? Teachers' Social Media Use before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic* (Aguilar et al., 2021) used a survey with 696 participants and focus group interviews with eight teachers to analyze the perceived benefits and challenges of professional development in virtual spaces.

Similarly, *Online Communities of Practice in the Service of Teachers' Technology Professional Development: The Case of Webheads in Action* (Bostancioglu et al., 2018) combined survey responses (n=44) with in-depth interviews (n=24) and a nine-month analysis of online teacher interactions to explore long-term engagement in OCoPs.

Qualitative case studies were another frequently used method. Studies such as *Instagram as a Platform for Teacher Collaboration and Digital Social Support* (Richter et al., 2022) and *Lurking with Intent: Teacher Purposeful Learning Using Facebook* (Woodford et al., 2022) relied on case study methodologies to investigate how teachers participate in specific online communities. These studies focused on teachers' interactions and reflective practices, highlighting the collaborative and identity-construction aspects of professional learning in digital spaces.

Moreover, thematic and sociocultural discourse analysis played a crucial role in analyzing teacher discussions. *Learning Together Online: Insights into Knowledge Construction of Language Teachers in a CSCL Environment* (Li., 2021) examined the ways in which teachers co-construct knowledge using online discussions, identifying key strategies used for meaning-making.

The longitudinal approach seen in *A Different Experience in a Different Moment? Teachers' Social Media Use before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. (Aguilar et al., 2021) provided valuable insights into how teachers' use of social media evolved over time in response to external pressures.

4.3 Studies' Limitations

The findings across studies consistently highlight the significant role of social media in teacher professional identity construction, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing. Several studies, including *Unveiling the TikTok Teacher* (Ulla et al., 2024) and *TikTok for Language Teachers* (Henry E. et al., 2024) found that teachers use TikTok to construct professional identities, balance self-expression, and engage with wider educational communities. These studies emphasized that teachers develop different personas in digital spaces, often blending professional and personal aspects of their identities.

In terms of collaboration, studies like *A Different Experience in a Different Moment? Teachers' Social Media Use before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic* (Aguilar et. al., 2021) and *Online Communities of Practice in the Service of Teachers' Technology Professional Development* (Bostancioglu et. al., 2018) demonstrated that participation in online communities leads to perceived professional development benefits. However, these studies also noted variations in engagement levels, with core members benefiting the most while peripheral members engaged passively.

Another important finding relates to the role of specific platforms in enabling professional learning. Studies such as *Lurking with Intent: Teacher Purposeful Learning Using Facebook* (Woodford et al., 2022) and *Instagram as a Platform for Teacher Collaboration* (Richter et al., 2022) found that teachers use these platforms to network, share resources, and engage in reflective practices. However, platform-specific constraints were identified, such as Facebook favoring passive participation and Instagram limiting discussions due to its format.

Despite these valuable insights, the studies reviewed also present several limitations. Small sample sizes are a recurring issue, as seen in *Unveiling the TikTok Teacher* (Ulla et al., 2024) and *Investigating the Digital Proficiency of EFL Educators* (Marisa et. al., 2024), where findings are drawn from limited participants, making generalization difficult. Additionally, self-reported data in studies like *Different Experience in a Different Moment? Teachers' Social Media Use before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic* (Aguilar et. al., 2021) raises concerns about bias and accuracy.

Finally, several studies did not specify long-term impacts, as many focused on short-term teacher experiences within social media spaces. This is particularly evident in research on OCoPs, where longitudinal engagement beyond the study period remains unclear.

In sum, it becomes evident that while social media plays an important role in teacher professional development, the effectiveness of these platforms depends on engagement levels, platform affordances, and the sustainability of online interaction. They also point at the importance of more longitudinal and extensive studies on the matter.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper had the objectives of understanding three questions: (i) in what ways a community of practice contributes to the continuing English teachers' development; (ii) how English teachers build communities of practice using social websites; and (iii) in what ways those platforms afford or constraint accessing meaningful contents.

After collecting and analysing ten papers, as the literature review proposed in the methodology section, it is possible to conclude that communities of practice play a crucial role in the continuous development of English teachers. These communities facilitate collaboration, reflective practice, and professional identity construction by enabling educators to engage with peers, share pedagogical resources, and discuss innovative methodologies.

Through active participation in such communities, teachers enhance their instructional skills, adapt to emerging educational trends, and develop a deeper understanding of their professional roles. The findings also highlight that while some teachers take an active role in these spaces, others benefit from passive engagement, demonstrating the diverse ways in which communities of practice support professional growth.

Regarding the second question, the findings suggest that English teachers construct communities of practice through various social websites by employing digital tools for interaction, collaboration, and networking. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok serve as spaces where educators connect, exchange ideas, and develop collective knowledge.

These digital environments provide both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for engagement, fostering professional relationships that transcend geographical boundaries.

The studies analyzed also indicate that teachers strategically choose platforms that align with their professional needs, whether for resource sharing, emotional support, or professional identity negotiation. The ability to engage with global pedagogical discussions further strengthens the role of social websites in shaping contemporary teacher communities.

Regarding the third question, the Literature Review demonstrates that while social media platforms afford access to professional development opportunities, they also present limitations that can constrain meaningful engagement. Affordances include the ability to interact with diverse educators, access diverse teaching materials, and participate in discussions on innovative teaching approaches.

However, constraints such as algorithmic limitations, platform-specific interaction restrictions, and the predominance of informal learning over structured professional development can restrict their effectiveness. Additionally, engagement disparities between core and peripheral participants suggest that passive users may not fully benefit from the knowledge-sharing potential of these communities.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. First, the methodological scope was restricted to articles published between 2014 and 2024, which may have excluded relevant studies published outside this timeframe. Second, the selection criteria were limited to open-access articles available in the chosen databases, potentially overlooking significant contributions from restricted-access research.

These constraints highlight the need for further studies that incorporate a broader range of sources and consider longitudinal analyses to better understand the evolving nature of digital communities of practice for English teachers. Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the role of digital platforms in fostering teacher collaboration and continuous professional development.

Looking ahead, future research should explore how teachers maintain engagement in online communities over time and how digital platforms can be optimized to better support professional learning. Investigating the long-term effects of participation in digital communities of practice, as well as the role of institutional support in promoting these spaces, could offer deeper insights into their impact. Additionally, comparative studies analyzing the effectiveness of different platforms in supporting professional growth could help educators

and policymakers make more informed decisions about the regulations of social media into educational contexts.

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