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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

To Learn or Not to Learn: Perceptions Towards Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Self-identity Among English Language Teachers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Noble Po-kan Lo[1] · **Bryan Ka-ho To**[2]

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Abstract

Purpose The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a pivot towards digital teaching and learning. This study aims to assess the perceptions of self-identity and continuing professional development (CPD) among secondary school English teachers in Hong Kong in light of the academic paradigm shift triggered by the pandemic.

Methods A mixed methods approach is adopted. A quantitative survey (n = 1158) was complemented by qualitative thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with English teachers in Hong Kong (n = 9). The quantitative survey offered group perspectives related to CPD and role perception in the current context. Interviews offered exemplar views on professional identity, training and development, and change and continuity.

Results The results reveal that collaboration among educators, development of higher-order critical thinking in students, refining knowledge about teaching methods, and being a good learner and motivator were among the key traits that comprised the teacher identity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The increased workload, time pressure and stress associated with the paradigm shift during the pandemic resulted in lower voluntary involvement of teachers in CPD. However, a significant need for the development of information communications technology (ICT) skills is emphasised as educators in Hong Kong received relatively little ICT support from their schools.

Conclusion The results have implications for pedagogy and research. Schools are recommended to enhance technical support of educators and help them acquire more advanced digital skills to work effectively in the new environment. Reduction of the administrative workload and providing more autonomy to teachers is expected to lead to greater engagement in CPD and improvements in teaching.

Keywords Hong Kong secondary teaching · Professional identity · Digital learning · Identity formation · Continuing professional development · Self-efficacy

Introduction

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the organisation and experience of teaching and learning at all levels [1–4]. This effect was mostly signified, among other things, by pivoting towards digital delivery of educational material at schools. This was done in response to the social-distancing measures and closing of schools to prevent the spread of the disease [5–8].

While a substantial portion of academic focus on the educational implications of the pandemic has rightly been on the effects on learners and their educational experiences, there is also interest in the impacts of the pandemic on educators

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✉ Noble Po-kan Lo
noble.lo@cpce-polyu.edu.hk

[1] Division of Languages and Communication, College of Professional and Continuing Education, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China

[2] Department of Humanities, Suzhou Singapore International School, Suzhou, Jiangsu, China

[9–11]. This research focuses on the teacher role identity during the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of continuing professional development (CPD) in shaping teachers' self-identity in the context of Hong Kong. Previous studies of Hong Kong teachers show that their attitudes to and perceptions of CPD are positively associated with their level of qualification. This implies that teachers already holding higher qualifications have stronger feelings about further CPD [12]. While this positive feedback loop was detected among Hong Kong teachers in general, previous studies of English language teachers in Hong Kong demonstrate certain gaps in pedagogical aspects such as their insufficient understanding of thinking skills that can be applied to English learning [13]. This points at the fact that English language teachers are narrowly focused on technical aspects of teaching a foreign language and are less concerned with the way how studying a foreign language integrates with thinking skills and cognitive development of young students. This emphasises the need for CPD among English teachers in Hong Kong.

While teachers tend to exhibit positive attitudes towards CPD, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected school teaching in Hong Kong and the way it is administered. A large role is played by the transition from offline to online education [14, 15]. Furthermore, teachers were found to have fewer opportunities to actively engage in CPD during the pandemic, which is attributed to both external factors such as social distancing and cancelling of conferences, and internal factors such as the lack of motivation and the increased workload due to the need to prepare and adjust for remote teaching [16].

The study makes a contribution to previous literature by examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teachers' identity and the role that CPD played in shaping their self-identity in light of the growing need for digital skills competence and adjustments of pedagogical aspects [17–19].

Impacts of the pandemic on both teaching and teachers have been significant and varied. These include altering modes of delivery, changes in workload, the need to adapt resources to new media, and addressing the implications of such changes on teacher role identity [20]. Such new challenges have also had repercussions in terms of CPD in both loading and emphasis, and consequently, on what it means to be a teacher—the latter depends on the relative experience of the educator [20].

Other identified issues relate to those aspects of teaching—and elements of teachers' identities and focus—that may have been undermined or side-lined as a consequence of adjustments to wider COVID-19-related priorities. These include negative impacts on existing CPD directions and on teachers maturing into their roles, as well as adverse impacts of the obligation to prioritise digital skills, related learning support, and resource development. The implication is that COVID-19 responses have exacted a significant toll in terms of CPD and teacher identity [21, 22].

Aims of the Study and Research Questions

The study has two principal aims. The first aim is to assess the secondary teachers' professional identity in the context of the shift of education from physical to digital occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. The second aim is to evaluate the educator perspectives on challenges and opportunities with respect to training and development, and the role that CPD plays in shaping the teacher identity during the COVID-19 pandemic in Hong Kong [23, 24]. Research questions are as follows:

1. How do English language teachers in Hong Kong perceive their self-identity as educators in the pandemic environment?
2. How does CPD facilitate a shift in English language teachers' self-identity in Hong Kong during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Sect. "Relevant Studies" provides a review of literature on teacher identity and CPD and discusses the theoretical framework of this research. Sect. "Research Methodology" describes the data collection, sampling and methods of data analysis. Sect. "Findings and Discussion" presents the findings and their discussion. Sect. "Conclusion and Recommendations" draws final conclusions and states the limitations and implications.

Relevant Studies

Teacher Identity, CPD and COVID-19 Pandemic

The concept of self-identity of teachers encompasses all beliefs, values and characteristics that school teachers perceive they should possess in order to be effective at their job of teaching. In this study, we use the concepts of "self-identity", "teacher identity" and "professional identity" interchangeably as they all refer to how teachers perceive themselves in the teaching role. Previous studies distinguish several features of teacher identity such as teaching philosophy, style of presentation and teaching, perceived role of the educator in students' lives, and personal beliefs of teachers about education [25]. Another stream of research identifies a number of factors that determine how the teacher identity is shaped. These factors include the previous experience of teachers, their socio-economic and cultural background, and their continuing professional development (CPD) and

training [26]. However, more recent literature suggests that exogenous shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic have also influenced self-identity of teachers challenging their role competence and preparedness [27].

A separate strand of literature argues that secondary school teachers rarely distinguish between their personal identity outside of school and professional identity. This combination of personal and professional in teachers' self-identity is explained by the effect of emotions. Positive emotions such as satisfaction, confidence and passion, experienced and expressed by teachers in classes determine the aspects of their self-identity with perceptions that educational processes should be fun and informative. Conversely, negative emotions such as anger, anxiety and boredom, exhaustion and disappointment diminish the elements of teachers' self-identity such as perceptions of educators as good learners, motivators and promoters of higher order thinking [28–30].

Previous studies report that teachers' self-identity was a driving factor of digitalisation in classrooms before the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, pedagogical beliefs of teachers, their experience, their engagement in CPD and access to resources prompted school teachers to adopt and implement digital technologies for teaching and delivering the material to students [31]. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the adoption of new technologies and media to facilitate online learning stemmed from external influences rather than internal motives of teachers. As a result, when the change comes not from the teacher's initiative but is rather imposed on them, it can be associated with negative emotions such as anger, frustration and anxiety, which would in turn influence self-identity of teachers [32–34]. However, there are also opportunities and not only negative repercussions of the pandemic. This change and new skills acquired by teachers who were forced to deal with the new reality will make them more effective educators in the long run even when the pandemic is over. More technologically savvy teachers will be more flexible and more open to new ideas and new methods. However, this requires a re-engagement of what it means to be a teacher committing to appropriate CPD on an ongoing basis [35, 36].

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is rooted in the Self-Assessment Theory, which posits that people have an intrinsic need to understand and know their own selves. Thus, according to this theory, individuals actively seek information, reflect on their actions and look for feedback to develop their perceptions of themselves and who they are [37]. This theory views self-assessment as a life-long activity that never stops. Self-assessment helps individuals to learn about their own strengths and weaknesses and make more informed decisions in both professional and personal lives [38]. When the teacher expectations about own self are congruent with what others (e.g. employer or students) expect of them, positive emotions such as satisfaction and confidence emerge. Conversely, when expectations of others are different from expectations of the teacher about his or her own identity and role, then negative emotions such as anger, disappointment and frustration emerge [39]. Emotions, in turn, also change the teacher identity and prompt teachers to seek new knowledge and new skills. This desire to self-improve becomes a strong part of self-identity and motivates teachers to engage in in CPD. At the same time, new skills and competences obtained from CPD change the teacher identity and make them have different perceptions about their role, teaching methods, and curriculum [40]. Thus, according to the Self-Assessment Theory, the relationships between teachers' emotions, self-identity and their CPD represent a continuous feedback loop as shown in the following figure (Fig. 1).

This closed system where emotions, teacher identity and CPD engagement interact can be subject to external

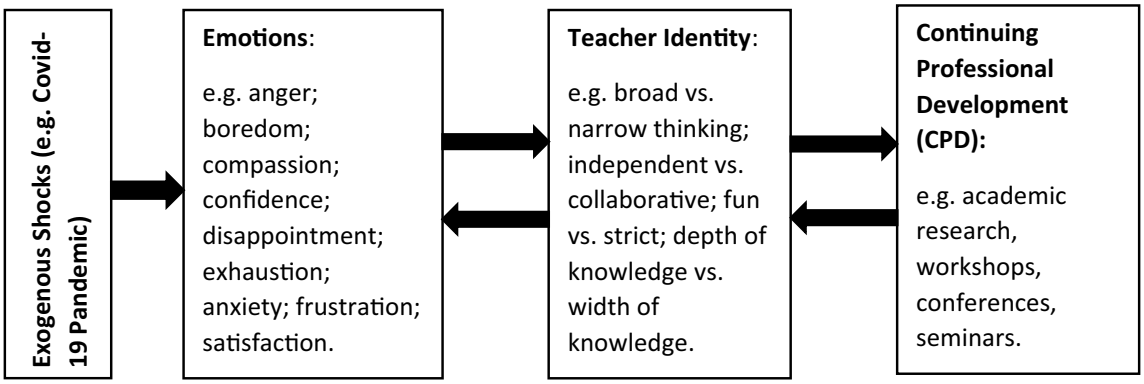


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

shocks or exogenous shocks. These shocks represent major unpredictable shifts that are outside of control of the people. The most recent shock was produced by the COVID-19 pandemic, and it affected both emotional state of teachers and their self-identity [41, 42]. Evolving delivery environments have required reconsideration from teachers in relation to the suitability of their existing skillset in supporting teaching and learning, as well as its implications on their wider responsibilities towards learners, their subject, and their institutional contexts [42]. Elements of such considerations have engaged with questions of teachers' agency in new contexts, in relationships to digital technologies, and the implications of digital delivery on the subject and level being taught. Additionally, there are questions on how to best support learners in new learning contexts [42]. Previous assessment of teachers' needs, emotions and identity during the COVID-19 pandemic show that teachers were mostly unprepared for this exogenous shock and to the urgent need to switch to the remote teaching. In line with Self-Assessment Theory, teachers were found to be adjusting their professional goals and learning goals to the new context [27, 43–46]. However, other studies report that there were also positive implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for teaching and teacher identity in the long run. This pandemic prompted educators to embrace the digital revolution and to find ways to make their subject and its delivery relevant and accessible for contemporary learners [47, 48]. In summary, the review of literature shows that previous studies provide mixed evidence on the effect of the pandemic on teachers' identity. Some argued that the effects were negative as teachers were unprepared and faced additional challenges in terms of the work-life balance, effective communication with their students and excessive time pressure and workload. Others viewed the implications of the pandemic on teachers as an opportunity for self-learning and development. However, there is a gap in previous research on how CPD facilitated the shifts in teachers' identity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This research provides an analysis of the holistic model that connects emotions, teacher's identity and CPD in light of the exogenous shock produced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Methodology

Research Paradigm

When choosing between the qualitative and mixed-method research design, the latter was favoured because it allows for making not only an in-depth inquiry but also tracing patterns of how the interpretations or perceptions of teacher identity and CPD vary across groups of respondents. This would be difficult to detect only with the qualitative methods [51]. Thus, the quantitative part of the mixed-method research is based on primary data collection by means of administering a survey among Hong Kong school teachers whereas the qualitative part is based on the semi-structured follow up interviews with some of the respondents from the survey [52].

Sampling and Participant Selection

The sample for the study has been drawn using the non-probability sampling technique. This means that respondents were selected not randomly but based on the availability of access and convenience. While this technique would be risky in the context of a positivist study with scientific methods that pursue generalisation and inferences, non-probability sampling is very common in interpretivist studies [53, 54].

The sampling frame from which the respondents were drawn is represented by 510 and secondary schools in Hong Kong with the cohort of English teachers reaching approximately 2000 people [55]. The data collection process began with designing an online questionnaire using Google Forms. The sample of the questionnaire and follow up interview questions are provided in Appendix. Then, the administration of each of the 510 secondary schools was contacted by email using the contact information on their websites. In the emails, a request was made to allow us to conduct a survey among English language teachers from the school. From 510 schools in Hong Kong, we received favourable responses from 347 schools. The schools that agreed to participate in the survey were given the electronic questionnaire form to fill in. Overall, 1203 questionnaires were returned. Among this number of questionnaires, 45 were excluded if they contained more than 50% of missing values. This resulted in 1158 valid questionnaires returned from 347 schools with approximately 3–4 English teachers from each school. Among these 1158 respondents, 9 agreed for a follow-up interview, which was administered over Skype. A sample of an interview transcript is provided in Appendix.

Data Analysis

The survey data have been analysed quantitatively in Microsoft Excel using graphical analysis and descriptive statistics. The responses were quantified using the 5-point Likert scale. Furthermore, the yes/no answers were quantified by binary variables that take the values of 1 for "yes" and zero for "no". The techniques of graphical analysis implemented in this research include bar charts, which were accompanied by frequencies tables that show the distribution of responses. The descriptive statistics analysis comprises the estimates of the mean values, as measures of central tendency of the

responses, and the standard deviation, as a measure of the variability of responses [56, 57].

The qualitative data from the nine interviews have been analysed using thematic analysis. This procedure started with preparing interview transcripts (a sample of the transcripts is shown in the Appendix). An average interview lasted around half an hour and took place over Skype. The audio from the interviews was recorded with the consent from the interviewees and transcribed. The transcripts were then coded. The lower-order codes were assigned to paragraphs based on the key information they contain. For example, if a respondent described specific emotions, the lower-order code was named by the emotion. At the next stage of the coding process, the lower-order codes were grouped into sub-categories. Finally, the sub-categories were united into higher-order themes. The complete coding scheme applied to the interview transcripts is provided in Appendix.

In order to ensure reliability of the coding process, a second researcher was involved to re-code the same transcripts. The inter-coder reliability rate was then computed and represented by the Cohen's kappa coefficient. We obtained the value of $k = 0.57$, which indicates fair agreement between the two coders [58].

Ethical Concerns

The study is based on primary research and, as a result, several ethical issues had to be addressed when dealing with human respondents. First of all, the respondents had to provide their consent to participate in the survey, and they were reminded of this in the questionnaire form. Second, the respondents were allowed to withdraw from the research at any point in time. Third, the respondents were not asked personal questions that would reveal their identity in any way. This allowed for preserving the degree of anonymity and confidentiality of data [59].

In terms of data handling, the respondents were assured that their responses will be used only for academic purposes and both the audio files and transcripts will be kept safe on an encrypted hard disk so no third parties would be able to access the data [60].

Findings and Discussion

Survey Analysis

This section provides an overview of the sample and its background characteristics such as demographics. All involved were Hong Kong-based secondary educators, teaching English language as a whole or significant part of their teaching duties. A total of 50% of the cohort had three years or fewer of post-qualifying teaching experience; 19% has over 12 years' experience in their role. This is suggestive of a bias towards early-career teachers in the study cohort, and consequently, across the sector being represented by the study.

In terms of academic qualifications, while 74% of the respondents had the master's level qualification or higher in general, only 43% held the master's level or higher degree specifically in English language teaching. This might be contrasted with the 95% of survey respondents for whom English was not their first language. In other words, there is an implication that a postgraduate qualification—whether in English or not—is held as sufficient for teaching English in Hong Kong at secondary level in the general sense.

Teacher Identity

One of the traits of the teacher identity is their classroom philosophy. When it comes to English language teaching, the classroom philosophy can be dominated by several competing views on education. The first view suggests that in order to teach English effectively, the educator should focus on the technical nuances of the language in more detail and linguistic and discursive knowledge ought to dominate. An alternative view suggests that effective teaching implies developing critical thinking skills in students in the first place so they can research what is relevant to their needs on their own. Yet another view exists that teaching English implies a purpose of raising students as global citizens who will be open to communication with the world. When the respondents in Hong Kong were asked to evaluate the perceptions of these views on classroom philosophy, the following results were attained (Fig. 2).

While previous literature argued that there was mixed evidence and inclusive results on whether or not teaching higher-order critical thinking also improves language skills in learners of foreign language [61], these results of the survey in the post-pandemic period reveal that the majority of the English teachers in Hong Kong prioritised the importance of teaching critical thinking rather than technical and linguistic aspects of the language. Furthermore, it was interesting to find that this position on developing critical thinking was mostly held by educators who spent more hours teaching English and those who considered themselves more technology-savvy during the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding agrees with the previous research showing that the growth in popularity of mobile applications as instruments for helping students learn English language also facilitated the development of critical thinking skills in students [62]. Moreover, the results support the notion made by Masduqi that focusing

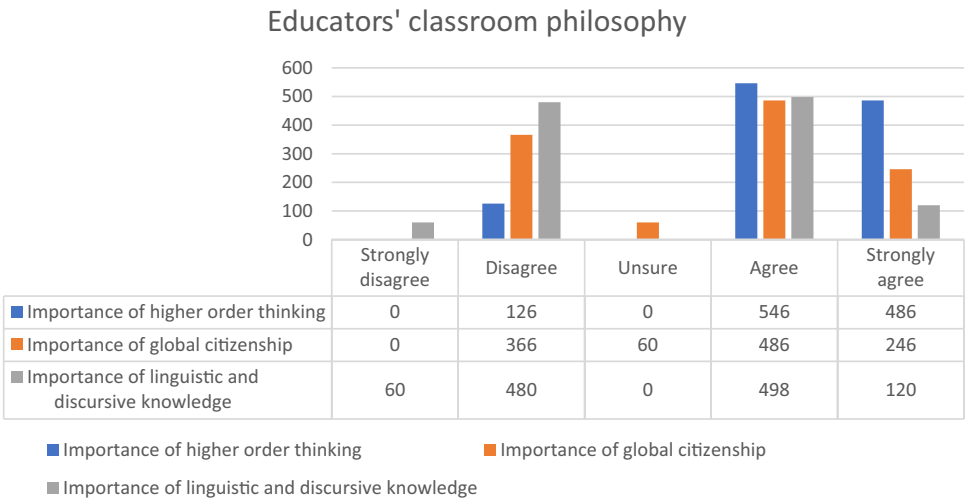


Fig. 2 Educators' classroom philosophy

on higher-order skills in language learning students will eventually make them more competent at English [63].

The next aspect of a teacher's identity relates to the perceived roles and responsibilities of the educator in the classroom. One of the responsibilities perceived by teachers as important is to develop native-like proficiency in the English language among students. Another responsibility is to focus on English language as a discipline at service of other subjects taught at school. This implies that English language is taught in order to be practical so that students can use it to gain more knowledge and information on other fundamental subjects. Finally, the most popular perception of the role of English teachers in Hong Kong was to form an independent community of English teachers who will collaborate with other educators in different subjects [64]. The following figure illustrates the distribution of the teachers' perceptions (Fig. 3).

The above figure indicates that teachers understand their role to be multifaceted but they predominantly believe that English teachers are an independent community that collaborates with others. This focus on collaboration was reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which put pressure on all educators, not only English teachers, and prompted the academic community to support each other. However, it is valid to note that even before the pandemic, collaborations and working in communities helped English teachers to be more effective at teaching the language, which resulted in quicker learning by students [65]. Thus, the findings from this research are in line with the past literature.

Teacher Emotions

Survey participants were asked to consider their positionality towards a range of emotional states, and to whether or not they felt that they experienced these in the course of their working. As represented in Table 1 below, the tendency was for the teachers to associate themselves with positive emotional states (e.g., confidence, passion, etc.) over negative ones (e.g., boredom, irritation, etc.).

The findings are suggestive of positive correlations between teacher senses of self-efficacy, control, and satisfaction in the role with their working towards maximising the same in their teaching. Table 2 develops this by collating findings related to teachers' sense of the important qualities and competencies of an educator.

The prioritisation of teaching methods, being a good learner, and competence in the subject each indicate the potential for issues when—given the shift to digital delivery—these are potentially threatened through enforced, though necessary, changes. Although these are identified as areas of strength, they may also become areas of concern because of their significance to teachers in the event of exigent circumstances.

Perceptions of CPD

Figure 4 indicates estimates of time allocation across four key aspects of the teaching role: classroom teaching, leadership responsibilities, other departmental duties, and CPD (including both research and scholarship). This is indicative of the time available to address both existing CPD priorities and those demanded by COVID-19-induced digital shift.

As might be anticipated, CPD tended to be overshadowed by combinations of classroom delivery, administration, and leadership responsibilities for the majority of respondents. With research and staff development being only an aspect of CPD—scholarship is a crucial element to consider here—the implication is that new pressures that demand significant and urgent training, development, and revision of delivery will impact teachers both in terms of workload and affective

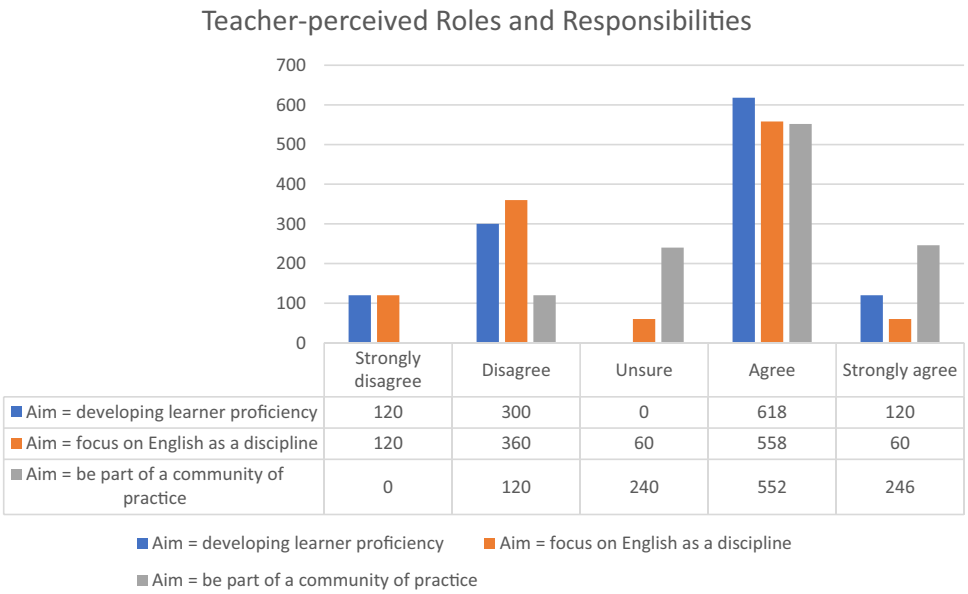


Fig. 3 Teacher-perceived roles and responsibilities

Table 1 Key emotions experienced as a teacher

Key emotions experienced as a teacher			
Ranking (frequency)	Emotion	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)
1	Confidence	3.69	0.46
2	Passion	3.58	0.59
3	Compassion	3.32	0.87
4	Satisfaction	3.32	0.73
5	Exhaustion	2.31	0.66
6	Frustration	2.93	0.70
7	Disappointment	2.73	0.49
8	Anxiety/fear	2.63	0.79
9	Irritation/anger	2.63	0.49
10	Boredom	2.36	0.67

senses. This, in turn, may impact role positionality, identity, and perceptions of efficacy as an educator and as a colleague.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a paradigm shift in education where digital skills became more important than even in order to teach remotely. The Hong Kong teachers were asked to evaluate their information and communications technology (ICT) skills and share their perceptions on how important they are during the pandemic. The results are presented in the following table.

More than 50% of the teachers in Hong Kong considered themselves technology-savvy and prepared for the digital shift in education. However, considerably fewer respondents admitted that the transition to digital went smooth. This allows for making a conclusion that the shift in the paradigm was problematic even for relatively technology-savvy educators. While most of the respondents

Table 2 Teachers' appraisal of important qualities and competencies of educators

Important qualities and competencies of teacher			
Ranking (importance)	Teacher qualities	Mean	SD
1	Appropriate knowledge about teaching methods	4.84	0.363
2	Teacher should be a good learner	4.68	0.466
3	Teacher should be a good motivator	4.63	0.485
4	Teacher should be a competent language teaching specialist	4.53	0.596
5	Teacher should share knowledge	4.42	0.591
6	Teacher should collaborate with peers to expand their own abilities	4.42	0.496
7	Teacher should positively correct learner errors	4.28	0.611
8	Teacher should emphasise learning as fun	4.21	0.701
9	Teacher should participate in social activities outside the classroom	3.64	1.222

strongly agreed that ICT should be a part of CPD for educators, the majority of Hong Kong teachers did not receive sufficient ICT support from schools. This discrepancy emphasises the importance of providing ICT support to teachers even if the staff consider themselves technology-savvy (Fig. 5).

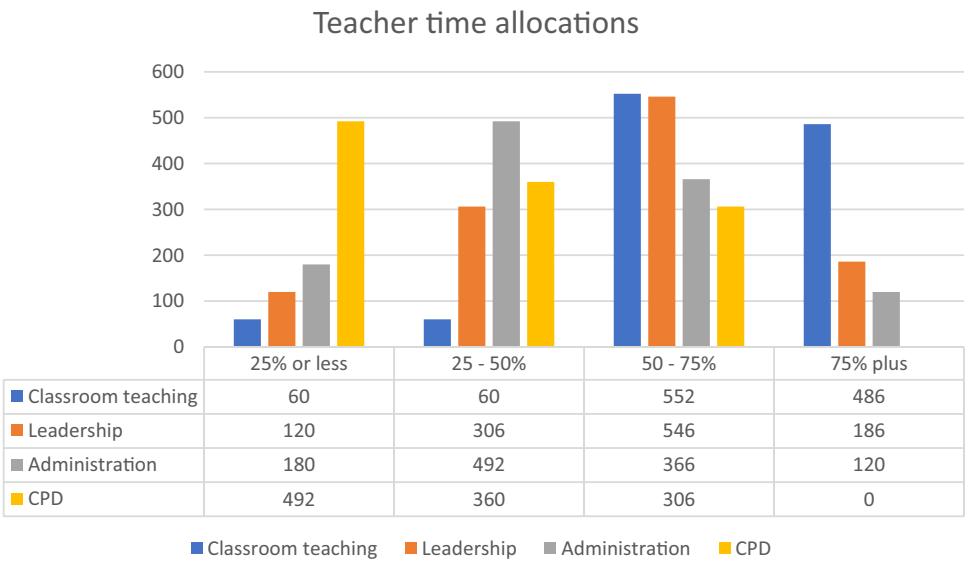
Interview Findings

Nine teachers were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews offered a balance between structure and flexibility. In terms of structure, it was important to include and discuss all key questions planned for the interviews as they stem from the research questions. In terms of flexibility, it was important to allow the respondents to open up and reveal any new information that might not be expected by the interviewer. This was done to promote the energy of research subjects and gather rich first-person testimony. The semi-structured interviews were intended to reinforce the findings from the quantitative survey and shed more light and provide more detail on the subject [66, 67]. The interviewees are anonymised as Teacher A through to Teacher I, respectively. The list of the interview questions as well as the coding scheme for thematic analysis are provided in the appendix. In the course of the coding process, three major themes have been identified, and each of these themes is discussed in this section.

Theme 1: Normative Characteristics and Arc of Teachers' Daily Responsibilities

Every day responsibilities of teachers include lesson preparation, teaching, and administrative tasks. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the normative behaviour of teachers was also affected by the social distancing measures and the need to adapt to the new reality. This required learning new skills such as how to use software for arranging online conferences and lecturing, how to test students remotely and how to deliver the material effectively in the new environment. In the course of the coding process, two major sub-themes have been identified. They were coded as positive experience and negative experience. The most frequently occurring negative emotions felt by the Hong Kong teachers included stress, anger and a lack of recognition. The most common positive emotions expressed by the teachers are the feeling of satisfaction, being relaxed and being useful.

The most typical causes of stress among teachers were time pressure and work overload. There was agreement among the teachers that preparation time was at a premium, and that this was replicated across other aspects of the role as experienced. For Teacher B, the 'time pressure is everywhere: I struggle at times to write lessons, to grade effectively, and to keep up with administration. This impacts my ability to properly perform my job.' Linking this to COVID-19, several teachers noted that the need to develop or expand digital skills was also problematic from a time perspective and contributed to building up of stress. Teacher H, for example, said that 'we are encouraged to condense teaching, combine classes, and, in other ways, refocus on the non-delivery aspects of the role.' Teacher A agreed: 'teaching has been de-prioritised, and with that, learning has to suffer. While I have developed my digital skills, this has come at a personal cost, and I think of my students!'. However, Teacher F was more positive: 'while 2020 and 2021 were extremely challenging, being forced to adapt to digital delivery has been a positive change in view of the



	25% or less	25 - 50%	50 - 75%	75% plus
Classroom teaching	60	60	552	486
Leadership	120	306	546	186
Administration	180	492	366	120
CPD	492	360	306	0

Fig. 4 Estimates of time allocation across four key aspects of the teaching role

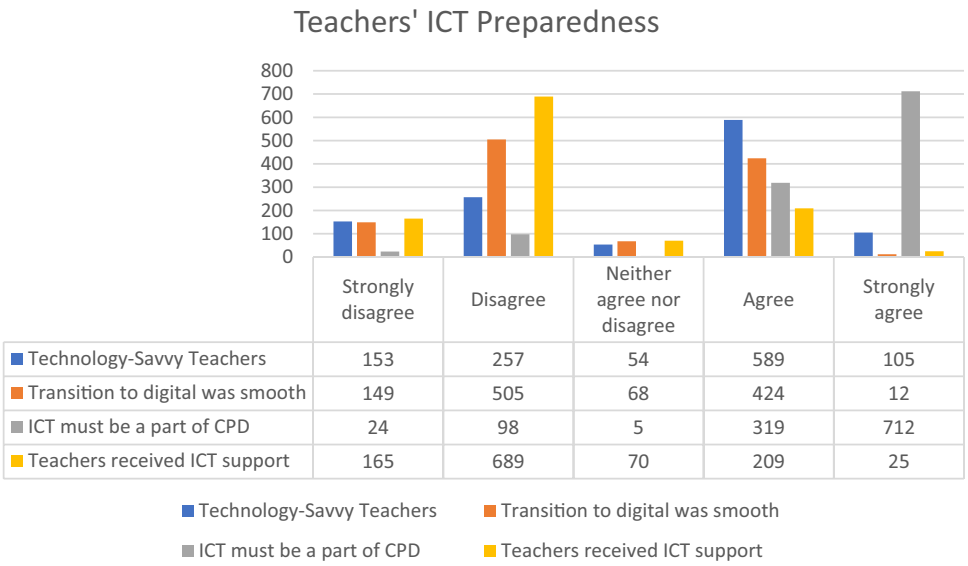


Fig. 5 Estimates of ICT preparedness

long term. I think things would not have developed if it had not been forced.'

Identified positives were linked to supporting learners with their use of digital conferencing and associated technologies, and their engagement with the digital world in ways that were not leisure-based. 'This has been productive, not least because the classes have linked English to real-world uses in new ways,' commented Teacher E. 'However, there has been little support for this. Training was minimal: teachers were expected to learn in their personal time or on the job.' Teacher C noted that there were different opinions towards digital delivery, but the most common challenge was the extreme difficulty in controlling online classes. 'We ran the classes, but they were not as effective or straightforward as in-person classes.' This frustration led to negative perceptions of the self as a competent teacher and contributed to the build-up of anger and the feeling of not being recognised at school.

The discussed issues in daily responsibilities of teachers have strong implications for their CPD. On the one hand, the excessive time pressure to prepare lessons and teaching materials using the new delivery media leave teachers with even less time and energy to dedicate to CPD. Thus, even though they may be able to exercise their normative tasks in the short run effectively, albeit with much stress, this behaviour will not be sustainable in the long run and can lead to burnout and higher turnover rates among the teaching staff.

On the other hand, the new challenges may motivate the Hong Kong English language teachers to find a solution, and instead of fire-fighting they can decide to make time for CPD to learn new skills and new pedagogical methods. This will help them enhance their job satisfaction in the long run and develop the feeling of being useful rather than unrecognised. It is valid to argue that the ultimate result will also depend on the readiness of schools to support their teachers, provide them with sufficient resources to learn and reduce administrative burden so they can have more time for CPD.

Theme 2: Range of CPD Commitments

The theme of CPD commitments made by Hong Kong teachers was broken down into two sub-categories, namely: CPD commitments before the pandemic and after the pandemic. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was irregular attendance of conferences and workshops by the interviewed teachers. Instead, they viewed academic research as a break from teaching. This form of CPD was preferred and considered more enjoyable by the teachers. However, they noted that some conferences and workshops were mandatory even though not all mandatory training was relevant to their professional development. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, joining online and hybrid workshops continued to be the popular way of CPD by the Hong Kong teachers. The most significant difference from the pre-pandemic period was the increased focus on tech-based training.

In relation to pre-existing CPD responsibilities, each of the participants was involved in a combination of scholarship, curriculum development, collaboration on research, or on further directed study. Expectations in relation to CPD were understood to be high. Teacher F noted that 'at government and school levels there is positive pressure to be productive and to contribute to research and the future of the school. This is commendable, but it consumes time and effort, and sometimes these expectations come at a cost.' Teacher G said that there were many opportunities available, but limited time, which implied that 'one has to be selective, and strike the right balance between career and personal

development'. Moreover, Teacher G was critical about the digital skills support offered at the outset of the pandemic: 'It was evident that despite good intentions, only a basic offer was made—one that did not reflect either teachers' or learners' needs.' Teacher E noted that 'the support was there from a technical, but not teaching, standpoint. This was done collaboratively between colleagues: identifying what works and what does not, and communicating this to others.' An emergent theme was insufficient attention to digitally mediated teaching and learning at all levels, leading to the lack of infrastructure for effective and quick support for teachers. Teacher B commented that '2020 was extremely difficult. The pressures were enormous, and that impacted our colleagues' sense of self, fitness to teach, and ability to replicate in-person classes into virtual classes.' The same commentator stated that several of their colleagues quit the profession because of the pressures, and those that stayed had to work through their initial challenges and reservations. 'It was an additional burden to existing CPD', Teacher B noted.

The identified theme CPD commitments has several implications. First of all, the presence of mandatory conferences that the Hong Teachers are expected to attend speaks of the proactive role of schools in CPD of their teachers. However, the content of the conferences was not always considered relevant by the attending teachers. Thus, instead of making it an opportunity for grow and develop, schools seem to make it a formal milestone that teachers have to tick in their schedule. Considering the extreme workload and time pressure on teachers, there could be more effective ways to support CPD. Second, collaboration on research among teachers and making publications will not only add points to their recognition but also improve their career paths. While researching new pedagogical methods or new approaches to teaching English as a foreign language, teachers will be able to upgrade and prepare their lecture materials more effectively.

Theme 3: Alignment of Professional Identity and Employer Expectations

The professional identity of school teachers encompasses their practice, beliefs, values and experience at work. This then determines how teachers perform their job. In the course of the thematic analysis, this theme has been broken down in what is expected by employers (schools) from their teachers and what perceptions teachers have about their professional identity. The most typical expectations are delivering content, strict choice of materials approved by the school and no significant deviations from the school guidelines. However, it was also noted that most expectations are vague. Teachers, in their turn, favour autonomy at work, a clear career path, technical support from school, healthy competition, and teaching efficiency.

In spite of some discrepancies between teachers' perceptions and employer expectations, there was broad agreement across the nine interviewees that their schools' expectations were mostly congruent with their own for the profession and the subject. 'When it works, it works well', Teacher C commented. 'The expectation is that you teach competently, and in return, you can be left alone to focus on your work and your professional development. This suits me, and, I think, many of my peers.' Teacher D concurred, but also noted that because of workload pressures, there was little flexibility in the teaching role to assume additional duties. 'The pandemic reinforced this. The focus was mainly on continuity of learning; there was little emphasis on how this should be done best. There was extreme reactivity as a sector, at the level of my school, and on my part as a teacher.' According to Teacher H this implied that 'I was not sure if I could teach online. It was not something that I had ever wanted to do, or had been trained to do. Like many of my peers, I had to learn as I went.'

One of the aspects in which the employer and teacher expectations were not congruent was the measure of autonomy. Several interviewees commented that online delivery was a problem given to them to solve, and as such, there was latitude in how it was approached from a teaching-specific perspective. Teacher G observed that 'when the systems were agreed, teachers had latitude about how they approached the delivery. Everyone was learning and teaching at the same time.' The schools were more focused on appropriate use of technology than on teaching—for example, with concerns about having oversight in place. As Teacher E observed, 'schools' concerns about technology misuse tended to dominate any CPD that was offered, implying that actual teaching-specific uses tended to be downplayed.' What was evident, though, was that teachers understood their employers' concerns, though there was agreement that there tended to be little focus on potential impacts on educators themselves in this change context.

The discussion of the theme of professional identity of teachers and their employer expectations has some implications for teachers and their future professional development. There was a misalignment between the school's requirement not to deviate strongly from guidelines and the desire of

teachers to have more autonomy at work. This misalignment can be resolved by open communication between teachers and their employer. While guidelines are important, teachers should also be given sufficient freedom to teach students in the way they consider more efficient. This is one of the outcomes of CPD that training should result in a change in the teaching methods to the better. With extremely strict requirements and a lack of flexibility on the school's part, there will be little use from CPD. Furthermore, when it comes to the digitalisation of the teaching process in the new environment, the schools should cooperate more closely with teachers guiding them on how to deliver the material using the new media and how to prepare digital presentations. They should also arrange brainstorm sessions and conferences with teachers so they can communicate with each other and share their approaches to teaching in the new environment. This knowledge sharing will facilitate easier transition to online education and help reduce frictions and pressure on teachers who are left alone to solve the issue.

Summary of Findings

The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of primary data reveal that self-identity of English language teachers in Hong Kong emphasises collaboration among educators, developing higher-order critical thinking in students, having appropriate knowledge about teaching methods, being a good learner and motivator and being able to share knowledge. While more than a half of the Hong Kong secondary school English teachers considered themselves technology-savvy, the transition to digital education was not found to be smooth mostly because schools failed to provide sufficient ICT support to educators. While there are mandatory conferences in which teachers had to participate, not sufficient attention was paid to ICT. Among various CPD activities, teachers preferred independent research besides teaching, but the increased workload, time pressure and stress associated with the paradigm shift resulted in lower voluntary involvement of teachers in CPD.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of the study was to assess the perceptions of self-identity and CPD by secondary school English teachers in Hong Kong in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been done by administering a large-scale online survey among the teachers and conducting follow up interviews with educators. The primary data have been analysed using graphical analysis, descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

The results revealed the increasing role of collaboration among educators and the development of digital skills, which can be attained by introducing ICT in CPD. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, educators faced with the problem of excessive workload, paradigm shift, time pressure, stress and frustration associated with the insufficient support from schools.

Teacher self-efficacy is an ongoing theme in sectoral research terms, and the challenges represented by responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have had implications for teachers' sense of self, autonomy, and role competence. This is not the least, given the challenges associated with balancing educational continuity through a turn to digital delivery, and the learning curve that this has represented to many educators [23, 68]. This, in the context—for the Hong Kong educators focused on in this research—of high expectations, and with that, a significant load in non-teaching work and CPD commitments. The interviewed teachers broadly agreed that teaching itself can, at times, be marginalised in the wider context of school life and the assertive priorities of educational leaders and a schooling system that values ongoing CPD. Such pressures can have impacts in respect of positionality to the job, to perceptions of what it means to be a teacher in the present day, and on how the subject and the sector alike need to reposition themselves in the light of new COVID-19—provoked realities [69–71].

It is clear, though, that while online delivery may not be a complete replacement for classroom-based learning and teaching, particularly in compulsory schooling contexts, the pandemic represents a paradigm shift for the education sector. The challenge, going forwards, is to move from

responsiveness to the immediate situation to agency. This is so that existing pedagogies and subject-specific approaches may be reappraised, and that all relevant stakeholders can be supported to be acclimatised to the new realities within which teaching and learning are being experienced. This includes teachers as central to language-based educational experiences [72].

In the interviews, although the impacts on perceptions of self-efficacy, teacher role identity, and role competence were noted in the rollout of digital-first learning in Hong Kong, some teachers also highlighted the positives effects. According to Teacher B, for example, 'while there was concern, panic, and some mistakes inevitably made, being forced to adjust was ultimately a good thing. What is needed now is a commitment from schools and the government to support educators with both CPD opportunities and the time to consolidate and share what has been learned.' These teachers now have new digital competencies, and consequently, an augmented sense of self and teaching abilities. The challenge moving forwards is to build on these from initial teacher training onwards. This is required so that Hong Kong's English teachers and their peers in other subject areas can enhance and reflect on the learning in the last two years [73, 74].

The findings from this research have implications for pedagogy and research. First of all, schools should provide more technical tools for educators to work effectively in the new digital environment. This include high-speed internet, modern high-performance laptops, and access to paid online services that can facilitate the teaching process. Second, school are recommended to arrange workshops on ICT education and enhancement of digital skills among teachers as not all of them technically-savvy. Third, schools should reduce the administrative burden imposed on teachers to give them more time for self-development, learning and perfecting their skills. Fourth, teachers should be given more autonomy in order to allow them to find the most effective and efficient pedagogical methods of teaching their subject.

Limitations and Future Directions of Research

The study has several limitations. The first limitation is that the evidence from the survey and semi-structured interviews presents only cross-sectional evaluation of teacher identity and CPD. However, in future studies it would be interesting to explore the dynamics of teach identity and CPD, which can be achieved by conducting several waves of the same survey at different points in time such as every year. This will allow future studies to trace how the perceptions were changing with time.

The second limitation of this research is that the sample was narrowed down to teachers in secondary schools. Thus, it would be recommended for future studies to assess the perceptions of primary school teachers and teachers from higher education. It could be expected that the methodologies of teaching at these levels will be different but the role of common factors could be identified and traced in future studies.

The third limitation is that the results of the study are applicable only to a relatively narrow geographical location bounded by Hong Kong. However, future studies are recommended to conduct international comparisons of teachers' perceptions their self-identity and CPD. It will also be interesting to compare the perceptions in Hong Kong and other regions of China.

The fourth limitation is that that this research compared the perceptions of teachers and their employers but omitted the perceptions of students. Thus, future studies can enhance this research by comparing the perceptions of students with perceptions of teachers and their employers to build a more holistic picture of teacher identity in the post-covid period.

Finally, future studies are recommended to update and elaborate on the scales used for measuring the perceptions of teacher identity, emotions and CPD. These scales should be validated and cross-checked.

Appendix

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Research Titled "To Learn or Not to Learn: Perceptions Towards Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Self-identity Among Secondary School English Language Teachers in Hong Kong During the COVID-19 Pandemic"

Consent of participant:

I understand that the data collected will be kept confidential and any information used in a published or public report will be anonymous:

- o No
- o Yes

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements on your teaching philosophy.

Q1. In my classroom, it is important to focus on higher order thinking [e.g. critical thinking, problem-solving skills, etc.]

- o Strongly disagree
- o Disagree
- o Neither agree nor disagree
- o Agree
- o Strongly agree

Q2. In my classroom, it is important to focus on global awareness and world citizenship [e.g. equality, diversity, etc.]

- o Strongly disagree
- o Disagree
- o Neither agree nor disagree
- o Agree
- o Strongly agree

Q3. In my classroom, it is important to focus on advanced linguistic and discursive knowledge [e.g. rhetorical knowledge, conventions of academic writing (citations and referencing), etc.]

- o Strongly disagree
- o Disagree
- o Neither agree nor disagree
- o Agree
- o Strongly agree

Q4. The aim of a secondary school English teacher is to develop native / native-like proficiency in students for academic and professional discourses.

- o Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Q5. The role of the English teacher should be at the service of discipline / subject teachers.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Q6. Secondary school English teachers should be an independent academic community which collaborates with discipline / subject teachers.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Q7. Please indicate the best description of your actual classroom practice.

- In my classroom, I focus on helping students with their course assignments.
- In my classroom, I give feedback on discursive aspects such as thesis, audience, purpose, organisation, and development.
- In my classroom, I give feedback on linguistic aspects of language such as vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, mechanics, or grammar.
- In my classroom, I spend more time on consultations than on teaching.
- For my assigned courses, I prepare materials for lessons.

Please indicate the extent to which statements below represent an IMPORTANT quality to you personally as a teacher.

Q8. The teacher should also be a good learner.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Q9. The teacher should have appropriate knowledge about teaching methods.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Q10. The teacher should have knowledge about language learning.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Q11. The teacher should enhance learner motivation.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Q12. The teacher should correct students' errors when they make (language) mistakes.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Q13. The teacher should consider their teaching as a matter of fun.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Q14. The teacher should share their knowledge with students when dealing with content.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Q15. The teacher should participate in social activities outside the classroom.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Q16. The teacher should obtain a better understanding about their own teaching by consulting with their colleagues.

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Q17. Are there any other IMPORTANT qualities you wish to mention? (optional)

_____

Q18. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Anger / Irritation]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q19. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Boredom]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q20. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Compassion]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q21. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Confidence]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q22. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Disappointment]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q23. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Exhaustion]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q24. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Fear / anxiety]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q25. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Frustration]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q26. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Passion]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q27. How often do you feel these emotions as a teacher? [Satisfaction]

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q28. Name one of the emotions in Q18-Q27 and describe how it affects your teaching practice.

_____
_____
_____

Q29. How does the emotion you named in Q28 affect your attitude(s) to being a teacher?

_____
_____
_____

Q30. Are there any other emotion(s) you wish to mention? (optional)

_____

Indicate the frequency that best represents your research / scholarship practice.

Q31. I read published language teaching research in academic and professional journals and books.

- o Never
- o Rarely
- o Sometimes
- o Often
- o Always

Q32. I attend workshops / seminars / webinars / conferences on language teaching.

- o Never
- o Rarely
- o Sometimes
- o Often
- o Always

Q33. I publish in academic / professional journals, magazines and / or newsletters.

- o Never
- o Rarely
- o Sometimes
- o Often
- o Always

Q34. I review abstracts or articles for journals / books / conferences on language teaching.

- o Never
- o Rarely
- o Sometimes
- o Often
- o Always

Q35. I conduct academic research.

- o Never
- o Rarely
- o Sometimes
- o Often
- o Always

Q36. I share / present my academic research or teaching experience or ideas in workshops / seminars / conferences / on language teaching.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q37. I edit academic publications (articles / books / proceedings) on language teaching.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Q38. Do you engage in research or SoTL activities?

- No
- Yes

Q39. I engage in research or SoTL activities...

- as part of a course / programme I am studying on
- because it is good for my academic / professional development
- because other teachers can learn from my findings or experiences
- to find better ways of teaching
- because I enjoy it
- because it will help me get a promotion
- because my employer expects me to
- to contribute to the improvement of the university generally
- to solve problems in my teaching

Q40. What is/are your research area(s)?

- English language acquisition
- L1/L2 FL Learning and Teaching
- Literature in English

Q41. What percentage of your working time in a typical term is spent on the following? [Classroom teaching (e.g. including consultation and grading)]

- Less than 25%
- More than 25% but less than 50%
- More than 50% but less than 75%
- 75% or more

Q42. What percentage of your working time in a typical term is spent on the following? [Programme / Curriculum leadership (e.g. curriculum planning, staff coordination, QA, and reporting)]

- Less than 25%
- More than 25% but less than 50%
- More than 50% but less than 75%
- 75% or more

Q43. What percentage of your working time in a typical term is spent on the following? [Departmental duties (e.g. student recruitment, conducting workshops, organizing staff activities, etc)]

- Less than 25%
- More than 25% but less than 50%
- More than 50% but less than 75%
- 75% or more

Q44. What percentage of your working time in a typical term is spent on the following? [Research and/or scholarship (e.g. attending seminars and conferences, conducting research, presenting papers, etc)]

- Less than 25%
- More than 25% but less than 50%
- More than 50% but less than 75%
- 75% or more

Q45. How do you spend your summer holiday?

- Meetings
- Evaluation
- Improving materials
- Learning
- Organisation
- Preparation
- Resting, vacation, traveling

Q46. What professional development do you want your school to offer? Why?

- Conference
- Curriculum development
- Strategies
- Team building
- Technology

Q47. What best describes your employment status? (select one)

- I work full time in one school
- I work part time in one school
- I work part time in multiple schools

- Other

Q48. What best describes your place of work? (select one)

- Government school operated by government
- Aided school fully subsidized by government
- Private school
- International school
- Multiple schools

Q49. How many years of experience do you have as an English teacher in secondary education (in Hong Kong)? (select one)

- 0-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- 10-12 hours
- More than 12 hours

Q50. What is your highest academic qualification? (select one)

- Bachelor's
- Certificate (e.g. PGDE)
- Master's
- Doctorate

Q51. What is your highest qualification in English Language Teaching? (select one)

- Bachelor's
- Certificate (e.g. PGDE)
- Master's
- Doctorate

Q52. What is your current position?

- Teacher
- Graduate Master/Mistress
- Principal Graduate Master/Mistress
- Other

Q53. How many hours do you teach per week?

- 0-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- 10-12 hours
- More than 12 hours

Q54. What percentage in your teaching involves English language teaching?

- 25%
- 50%
- 75%
- 100%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Q54. I consider myself as a technology-savvy educator.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Q55. The transition to digital education during the covid-19 pandemic went very smooth for me.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Q56. I believe it is essential for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to be a part of teachers' CPD.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Q57. I received substantial support in ICT from my school during the covid-19 pandemic.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Q58. I am a

- Native English speaking teacher
- Non-native English speaking teacher

Thank you!

Appendix B: Interview Questions and Guidelines

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interviews. By answering the following questions, you are giving consent to use your responses for academic purposes. You are free to avoid the answers or stop the interview at any point if you consider any of the questions too sensitive. Let's being:

Question 1: Describe a typical teaching day.

Question 2: And what emotion do you feel most strongly?

Question 3: Describe an example of a very positive experience (i.e. positive emotions).

Question 4: Describe an example of a very negative experience (i.e. negative emotions).

Question 5: Do you typically attend any activities related to professional development (e.g. workshops, seminars, conference, etc.)?

Question 6: Why do you join these activities? What are some emotions you feel?

Question 7: How do you feel about conducting academic research?

Question 8: Is there an alignment between your professional identity and your employer's expectations? Why do you think / feel this?

Question 9: Do you feel you have sufficient autonomy within your institution (e.g. classroom practice, how to use your time and effort)?

Question 10: Do you feel there is sufficient opportunity for development? Is there enough institutional support?

Question 11: Any final comments?

Thank you!

Appendix C: Coding Scheme

Theme 1: Normative characteristics and arc of teachers' daily responsibilities

Sub-category 1.1: Positive experience

Code 1.1.1: Relaxed

Code 1.1.2: Satisfaction

Code 1.1.3: Being useful

Sub-category 1.2: Negative experience

Code 1.2.1: Stress

Code 1.2.2: Anger

Code 1.2.3: Lack of recognition

Theme 2: Range of CPD commitments

Sub-category 2.1: CPD commitments before the Covid-19 pandemic

Code 2.1.1: Irregular attendance of conferences and workshops

Code 2.1.2: Mandatory conferences

Code 2.1.3: Academic research as a break from teaching

Code 2.1.4: Some mandatory training is irrelevant to professional development

Sub-category 2.2: CPD commitments after the Covid-19 pandemic

Code 2.2.1: Submitting abstracts/Writing papers

Code 2.2.2: Mandatory conferences

Code 2.2.3: More tech-based training

Code 2.2.4: Voluntary training

Theme 3: Alignment of professional identity and employer expectations

Sub-category 3.1: Professional identity of teachers

Code 3.1.1: Autonomy

Code 3.1.2: Competitiveness

Code 3.1.3: Efficiency

Code 3.1.4: Career path

Code 3.1.5: Technical skills

Sub-category 3.2: Employer expectations from teachers

Code 3.2.1: Deliver content

Code 3.2.2: Vague expectations

Code 3.2.3: Not much deviation from guidelines

Code 3.2.4: Strict choice of material

Appendix D: A Sample of Interview Transcripts

Interviewer: Describe a typical teaching day

Respondent: Okay, so I work as a tutorial school teacher, so I don't work in a regular school, so a typical teaching day for me is like, okay, I go there and have lessons, and when the classes are over, I'll just leave. So first, I need to enter the classroom earlier to check the equipment. I'll start teaching to set up everything, and in the tutorial school, the classroom, I will say the setup is quite advanced. I've got the overhead projector, and for the notes, while I'm writing, the students can see it. At the same time, there is a video camera at the back of the classroom so the students can simultaneously see my face and the notes on the table. And the typical teaching date is okay; most probably it's just me doing all the talking. Tell them to ask questions, so the interaction is quite minimal between a teacher and the students. But then, after class, if I have got the time I will answer their questions, but it has to be outside the classroom because sometimes another teacher is waiting for the classroom. I'll leave. I also go through some local secondary schools. But it's in the summer. I worked at a secondary school. They recorded their attendance and then I just started teaching and after that I will leave. Short course teacher, the only extra thing for me is to record the students attendance. Everything else is pretty much the same.

Interviewer: And what emotion do you feel most strongly?

Respondent: I didn't really think about that before. I don't know if I feel any kind of emotions, maybe, maybe most probably I would feel like okay each day is much like a challenge. Because I tried to pack a lot of stuff into one single lesson I want them to learn as much as possible, so it's like a challenge, and especially on the first day. The nature of my job is quite interesting because I see many different students but I won't see them for long. Let's say back in summer, it was just five days in the morning and I'm for tutorial classes, sometimes they didn't continue. So, more is like a challenge and sometimes yes, the day is quite stressful because, especially, especially for the tutorial classes I'll need to keep the people coming back.

Interviewer: Describe an example of a very positive experience (i.e. positive emotions).

Respondent: um let me think okay um, but it wasn't in the context of a secondary school but was post secondary. At a university in one class, by the end of the class after everything has finished, I said, " Okay, thank you very much for coming and I'll see you next week, something like that, and the class would clap and some students stay and ask me questions. My hard work paid off and in my lesson I

inserted a lot of energy, and so I think okay it's rewarding and satisfying.

Interviewer: Describe an example of a very negative experience (i.e. negative emotions).

Respondent: I'm going to give you two that I can think of, to now in the context of their secondary school; in a tutorial school several years back then. You know, it was really stressful to keep students coming back, it was almost the end of the term and there weren't many students. There were only eight or nine students in my classroom and it didn't look good if you have got only eight nine students in the classroom. It felt so empty. I could sense that the atmosphere wasn't really nice and the students have their doubts when they were having my lessons I don't know whether they trust me or not. And for the post secondary. Experience it was several years back then, when I first started as a part time lecturer. At a community college, classes were really, really noisy. When I started talking okay now let's check the answers together, but then, I still remember maybe at least two three groups of people were talking. I felt angry, to be honest, at that time you're here, why don't you listen. And when the lesson ends, you can talk as much as you can. So at that time I didn't know how to handle it and then emotion was more like anger. At that time, and afterwards I felt really unhappy, disappointing because I wanted to teach.

Interviewer: Do you typically attend any activities related to professional development (e.g. workshops, seminars, conference, etc.)?

Respondent: I'm still quite new in the industry. A year ago, I started writing papers with my colleagues. That was about service learning and yeah just one paper one conference. That year and this year again that's just one paper, so what I would say is I'm not really regular attendees to these workshops or seminars or conference but if I have the time I will try and right now I am discussing the possibility of submitting an abstract with a friend of mine. It is about the emoji used in the social media contact, and we're still discussing.

Interviewer: Why do you join these activities? What are some emotions you feel?

Respondent: At first, when I started, that was the paper about service learning, and I just felt that okay. I needed to do something my boss told me. And then, when it was published, I felt quite satisfied, then I tried to look for this kind of activity and just back in July, we had the conference on service learning. It's good for my professional development.

Interviewer: How do you feel about conducting academic research?

Respondent: I teach a lot, and so, when I conduct academic research, I feel like okay now I can take a break from all the teaching. What I would say is very stressful but rather I feel like okay now I am accepting another challenge, so I look forward to this kind of academic research.

Interviewer: Is there an alignment between your professional identity and your employer's expectations? Why do you think/feel this?

Respondent: My employees expectations of me would be more like a teacher. My feeling is that they want someone to teach they just want someone to deliver the content. Yeah, this is true, a little bit sad but true they want someone to deliver the content. One year ago I would tell you that okay I'm a teacher, but now I want to be both. I want to teach but at the same time, to publish something or attend conferences.

Interviewer: Do you feel you have sufficient autonomy within your institution (e.g. classroom practice, how to use your time and effort)?

Respondent: Yes, I've got a high degree of autonomy, even though I'm provided with the timetable or schedule. The course coordinators would tell us that's okay to do whatever you want. I can still move around things. We can negotiate about that, so what I would say is yes I've sufficient autonomy and I can do, what I want, and I can simply express my desire to do what I plan to do in class.

Interviewer: Do you feel there is sufficient opportunity for development? Is there enough institutional support?

Respondent: Development as a professional teacher right. In all the institutions I work, at first, I felt so unfamiliar, that everything felt so unfamiliar. But then there were

some workshops on how to use Zoom and Microsoft teams, how to share screen that sort of thing yeah that was new to me. What I say is sufficient, but not particularly useful. When I attended some conferences, some professors said that they never used Moodle before. They had to upload the materials or even do the printing themselves, so the professors will just go into the classroom and teach so what I can say is yeah maybe they're not that tech savvy, because they never want to step out of the comfort zone but for me, I think it's easy enough for me.

Interviewer: Any final comments?

Respondent: Right now we all need to stay competitive, not just as a teacher, not just in terms of the teaching effectiveness, but also in terms of the let's say the admin, the ability to handle admin. I mean if you can't handle admin or if you can't conduct research, you will be easily replaced. I would say designing a course and drafting course outline—that sort of thing. If you can just teach, it is easily replaceable and that's the experience shared by one of my colleagues. At my level, of course, I don't quite understand what it means, but what I would say is at least I'll need to know how to coordinate a course and, if I can, conduct research so that I can stay competitive.

Interviewer: Thank you!

Data availability All the relevant data used in this study are already included within the manuscript. No additional data beyond what is presented in the paper is available.

Declarations

Conflict of interest On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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