

Medium of Instruction Matters: Reflecting Voices from EFL Teachers in Online/Tradition Instruction and the Impacts on Their Job Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, and Professional Well-being

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the impact of instructional modalities, namely online versus traditional face-to-face instruction, on the job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. Through narrative inquiry, ten EFL teachers, five with experience in online instruction and five with expertise in traditional face-to-face instruction, shared their experiences and perceptions. The study aimed to fill a gap in the literature by simultaneously examining the effects of instructional modalities on these crucial aspects of teacher well-being. Findings revealed nuanced insights into the strengths and challenges associated with each instructional modality. Online instruction was associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, empowerment, and satisfaction with work-life balance, attributed to factors such as autonomy and opportunities for growth. In contrast, traditional face-to-face instruction emphasized the importance of supportive work environments, interpersonal relationships, and collaborative teamwork in fostering teacher well-being. The study underscores the importance of considering teacher

well-being in designing and implementing language teaching programs, instructional practices, and policy decisions. Implications are discussed for language teachers, teacher educators, syllabus designers, and policymakers, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to instructional delivery that prioritizes teacher well-being while promoting student learning outcomes. Further research is warranted to explore strategies for optimizing teacher support systems and instructional practices in language education.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Online Instruction, Professional Well-being, Self-Esteem, Traditional Face-to-Face Instruction

Instruction

Online instruction typically involves students being distanced from the instructor and connected via computer and Internet technologies. In contrast, traditional classroom instruction normally entails face-to-face teaching conducted in a classroom environment, often employing a lecture or note-taking format (Yuliang, 2005). Presently, online instruction serves as a prominent approach to distance education. Many educational institutions are expanding their offerings of online courses and programs to cater to diverse learner requirements. According to Waits and Lewis (2003), distance education has recently experienced rapid growth.

Building upon the discussion of online and traditional instruction methods, examining their implications on educators' job satisfaction, self-esteem, and overall professional well-being is crucial. Job satisfaction is a pivotal concept within industrial and organizational psychology, linked with numerous favorable outcomes such as job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, absenteeism, and life satisfaction (Heller et al., 2002; Erdogan et al., 2012; Rezai et al., 2021). Commonly, definitions of job satisfaction center on employees' sentiments and perceptions regarding their work (Drafke, 2009; Weiss, 2002), encompassing emotional states, affective responses, and cognitive evaluations of their professional roles (Unanue et al., 2017).

Moreover, self-esteem, a pivotal construct in psychology, denotes an individual's subjective assessment of their worth and significance (Rosenberg, 2015). It encompasses perceptions of competence, acceptance, and overall self-worth, influencing various facets of human behavior and functioning (Namaziandost et al., 2023; Orth & Robins, 2014). While self-esteem is not inherently fixed, it remains a dynamic construct that can fluctuate in response to internal and external factors (Kernis, 2005). Research suggests that high levels of self-esteem are associated with favorable outcomes such as resilience in adversity and constructive interpersonal relationships (Orth et al., 2012). Conversely, low self-esteem has been linked to a spectrum of negative consequences, including increased vulnerability to psychological distress and impaired goal attainment (Orth et al., 2015).

Furthermore, professional well-being encompasses various aspects of satisfaction, fulfillment, and contentment in one's work life (Warr, 1987). It reflects job satisfaction and

broader dimensions such as work-life balance, organizational commitment, and perceived autonomy (Diener et al., 2002). Research indicates that many factors influence professional well-being, including job characteristics, interpersonal relationships at work, and individual traits (Judge & Bono, 2001). High levels of professional well-being are associated with improved job performance, reduced turnover intentions, and enhanced overall life satisfaction (Harter et al., 2002; Namaziandost et al., 2024). Conversely, poor professional well-being can lead to burnout, decreased job engagement, and adverse health outcomes (Maslach et al., 2001). Understanding the determinants and consequences of professional well-being is essential for promoting healthy work environments and fostering employee productivity and satisfaction.

Despite the growing prevalence of online instruction alongside traditional classroom teaching, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the impact of the instructional medium on EFL teachers' job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has comprehensively investigated how the choice of instructional medium—whether online or traditional—affects these crucial aspects of teachers' professional lives. Understanding the potential differences in job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being between teachers engaged in online instruction versus those in traditional classroom settings is essential for informing educational policy and practice in an increasingly digitalized learning environment. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the unique challenges and opportunities associated with different instructional modalities and their implications for EFL teachers' overall job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being. To this end, the following research questions are raised:

1. How does the medium of instruction affect EFL teachers' job satisfaction?
2. How does the medium of instruction affect EFL teachers' self-esteem?
3. How does the medium of instruction influence EFL teachers' professional well-being?

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute valuable insights to both the academic discourse and practical realms of education. This research addresses a critical gap in the existing literature by examining the effects of instructional medium—online versus traditional—on EFL teachers' job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being. This study's findings promise to inform educational policymakers, administrators, and practitioners about the unique challenges and opportunities associated with different instructional modalities. Understanding how the medium of instruction influences teachers' perceptions of their work and overall well-being is essential for designing effective teacher support systems, optimizing pedagogical practices, and enhancing the quality of education delivery in both online and traditional classroom settings. Furthermore, insights gleaned from this study may also have broader implications for designing and implementing teacher training programs, professional development initiatives, and

organizational policies to foster a supportive and conducive work environment for educators. Ultimately, this research's outcomes can contribute to advancing teacher satisfaction, well-being, and student learning outcomes.

Literature Review

Online vs. traditional instruction

Online instruction, often referred to as distance education or e-learning, has emerged as a popular alternative to traditional face-to-face instruction, particularly in response to rapid technological advancements and the increasing demand for flexible learning options (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Online instruction leverages digital platforms and communication technologies to deliver educational content to learners remotely, enabling access to learning materials and interactions regardless of geographical constraints (Means et al., 2014). The asynchronous nature of online instruction allows for greater flexibility in scheduling and accommodating diverse learner needs and preferences (Simonson et al., 2019). Moreover, online instruction often fosters collaborative learning environments through discussion forums, virtual classrooms, and multimedia resources, facilitating interactive and engaging learning experiences (Jiang et al., 2022). However, challenges such as technological barriers, digital literacy gaps, and feelings of isolation can hinder the effectiveness of online instruction and impact learners' motivation and engagement (Vonderwell & Zachariah, 2005). Nonetheless, the growing accessibility and affordability of digital technologies have fueled the expansion of online instruction across educational sectors, with many institutions embracing blended learning approaches that combine online and face-to-face instruction to capitalize on the benefits of both modalities (Graham et al., 2013).

In contrast, traditional face-to-face instruction remains a cornerstone of educational practice, characterized by direct interaction between instructors and students within physical classroom settings (Ferrero & Alvarez-Sainz, 2024). Face-to-face instruction allows for immediate feedback, personalized support, and real-time discussions, fostering deeper levels of engagement and comprehension among learners (Dixson, 2010). Moreover, the physical presence of instructors enables non-verbal cues, such as gestures and facial expressions, which play a crucial role in communication and relationship-building (Mehrabian, 1971). Face-to-face instruction also promotes social interaction and peer collaboration, creating opportunities for interpersonal skill development and community building within the classroom (Serhan, 2020). However, traditional face-to-face instruction may pose logistical challenges such as scheduling conflicts, travel requirements, and limited accessibility for learners with mobility constraints or geographical barriers (Stratton et al., 2020). Additionally, large class sizes and diverse learning needs can strain instructors' ability to provide individualized attention and support, potentially impacting student outcomes and satisfaction (Blatchford et al., 2003). Despite these challenges, face-to-face instruction remains a prevalent and valued approach to teaching and learning, particularly in contexts

where social interaction, hands-on activities, and immediate feedback are essential for effective education delivery (Hizer et al., 2017).

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is critical to organizational psychology, reflecting employees' attitudes and perceptions toward their work roles and environments (Judge et al., 2001). It encompasses various dimensions, including satisfaction with pay, promotions, supervision, coworker relationships, and the overall work environment (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction is associated with numerous positive outcomes for both employees and organizations, including higher levels of job performance, organizational commitment, and employee retention (Judge et al., 2001; Meyer et al., 2002). Moreover, satisfied employees are more likely to exhibit proactive behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behaviors, which contribute to the overall effectiveness and success of the organization (Organ et al., 2006). Job satisfaction is influenced by many factors, including individual characteristics, job characteristics, and organizational factors (Locke, 1969). Personal factors such as personality traits, values, and expectations significantly shape employees' perceptions of their work and satisfaction levels (Judge et al., 2001). Additionally, job characteristics such as autonomy, task variety, and opportunities for skill development have been found to impact job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Organizational factors, including leadership styles, organizational culture, and reward systems, also contribute to employees' job satisfaction (Hulin & Judge, 2003).

Furthermore, job satisfaction has been linked to various outcomes beyond the workplace, including overall life satisfaction and psychological well-being (Judge & Watanabe, 1993). Individuals who report higher levels of job satisfaction tend to experience greater overall life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Ng et al., 2006). Conversely, dissatisfaction with one's job can lead to negative consequences such as stress, burnout, and psychological distress (Spector, 1997). Moreover, job dissatisfaction can manifest in counterproductive behaviors such as absenteeism, turnover intentions, and workplace deviance (Bowling et al., 2010). Understanding the determinants and consequences of job satisfaction is crucial for organizations seeking to foster a positive work environment and enhance employee engagement and retention (Judge & Bono, 2001). By identifying factors contributing to job satisfaction and implementing strategies to address potential sources of dissatisfaction, organizations can promote employee well-being, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness (Hulin & Judge, 2003).

Self-esteem

Self-esteem, a fundamental psychological construct, refers to individuals' subjective evaluations of their worth and significance (Rosenberg, 2015). It encompasses perceptions of competence, acceptance, and overall self-worth, which are crucial in shaping individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Orth & Robins, 2014). Self-esteem is influenced by

various factors, including early experiences, social interactions, and cultural norms (Baumeister et al., 2003). For example, individuals who receive positive feedback and validation from significant others during childhood are more likely to develop high self-esteem, whereas those who experience criticism or rejection may struggle with lower levels of self-worth (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Moreover, social comparison processes, whereby individuals evaluate themselves in relation to others, can impact self-esteem (Festinger, 1954). Engaging in upward comparisons with others perceived as more successful or attractive may lower self-esteem, whereas downward comparisons with less fortunate individuals may enhance self-esteem (Wills, 1981). However, self-esteem is not solely determined by external factors; individuals' interpretations and beliefs about themselves also play a significant role (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). For instance, individuals with a growth mindset, believing that their abilities and qualities can be developed through effort and learning, tend to have higher self-esteem than those with a fixed mindset (Dweck, 2013).

Furthermore, self-esteem has been linked to various outcomes across different domains of life, including academic achievement, mental health, and interpersonal relationships (Orth et al., 2012). High levels of self-esteem are associated with greater resilience in the face of adversity, adaptive coping strategies, and overall psychological well-being (Orth et al., 2008). Individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to pursue challenging goals, persist in the face of setbacks, and exhibit assertive behavior in interpersonal interactions (Baumeister et al., 2003). Conversely, low self-esteem has been linked to a range of negative consequences, including increased vulnerability to depression, anxiety, and interpersonal difficulties (Orth et al., 2015). Moreover, individuals with low self-esteem may engage in maladaptive coping strategies such as avoidance, self-criticism, and substance abuse as a means of coping with stressors (Kernis et al., 2000). Understanding the dynamics of self-esteem and its implications for individuals' psychological well-being is essential for developing effective interventions and strategies to promote positive self-regard and resilience across the lifespan.

Professional well-being

Professional well-being encompasses various aspects of satisfaction, fulfillment, and contentment in one's work life, reflecting the overall quality of individuals' professional experiences (Warr, 1987). It extends beyond traditional measures of job satisfaction to include broader dimensions such as work-life balance, organizational commitment, and perceived autonomy (Diener et al., 2002). Professional well-being is influenced by many factors, including job characteristics, interpersonal relationships at work, and individual traits (Judge & Bono, 2001). For example, job characteristics such as task variety, autonomy, and opportunities for skill development have positively impacted professional well-being by fostering a sense of competence, mastery, and engagement in one's work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Moreover, supportive interpersonal relationships, effective communication,

and collaborative teamwork contribute to a positive work environment that enhances professional well-being (Tims et al., 2013). Additionally, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy are crucial in shaping individuals' ability to cope with work-related stressors and maintain a sense of well-being in their professional roles (Luthans et al., 2007).

Furthermore, professional well-being has significant implications for individuals and organizations, influencing outcomes such as job performance, turnover intentions, and overall organizational effectiveness (Harter et al., 2002). High levels of professional well-being are associated with improved job performance, as individuals who experience greater satisfaction and fulfillment in their work are more likely to be motivated, productive, and committed to achieving organizational goals (Harter et al., 2002). Moreover, professional well-being is a key determinant of employee retention, as individuals who perceive their work as meaningful, rewarding, and aligned with their values are less likely to seek alternative employment opportunities (Porter et al., 1974). Conversely, poor professional well-being can lead to burnout, decreased job engagement, and adverse health outcomes such as stress-related illnesses and absenteeism (Maslach et al., 2001). Organizations can enhance employee satisfaction, retention, and overall performance by understanding the factors that contribute to professional well-being and implementing strategies to promote a positive work environment (Judge & Bono, 2001).

The primary focus of this study is to investigate the impact of the medium of instruction, specifically online versus traditional face-to-face instruction, on the job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being of EFL teachers. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous study has explored the effects of the medium of instruction on these crucial aspects of teacher well-being simultaneously. This research aims to fill this gap in the literature by examining how the mode of instructional delivery influences EFL teachers' perceptions of their job satisfaction, self-esteem, and overall professional well-being. By gaining insights into these nuances, this study seeks to provide valuable contributions to the field of education, informing instructional practices and policies to enhance the well-being and effectiveness of EFL educators in both online and traditional classroom settings.

Method

Design

This qualitative study adopts a narrative inquiry approach to explore the experiences and perceptions of EFL teachers regarding the impact of the medium of instruction (online versus traditional face-to-face) on their job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being. Narrative inquiry was chosen as the methodological framework due to its suitability for capturing rich, contextualized accounts of individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences (Ary et al., 2019). Through narrative inquiry, participants were invited to share their personal stories, reflections, and perspectives on their teaching

practices and experiences within different instructional modalities. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the complexities and nuances inherent in EFL teaching contexts and how the medium of instruction may shape teachers' perceptions of their professional lives.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of a total of 10 EFL teachers selected through snowball sampling. Five teachers had previous experience conducting their classes online, while the remaining five teachers had exclusively taught in traditional face-to-face classroom settings. The teachers' experiences in teaching ranged from 5 to 20 years, indicating a diverse range of professional backgrounds and expertise. Additionally, all participants held Master of Arts (M.A) degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), ensuring a consistent level of qualification and expertise within the sample. These criteria were chosen to capture a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives related to the medium of instruction and its impact on job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being among EFL teachers.

Data collection procedures

The data collection procedures for this qualitative study employed a narrative inquiry approach, which solely relied on participants sharing their experiences and stories without structured interviews or document analysis. Participants were invited to participate in narrative sessions, including 5 teachers with experience in online instruction and 5 teachers with experience in traditional face-to-face instruction. During these sessions, participants were encouraged to share their experiences, feelings, and perceptions of their teaching experiences in both online and traditional classroom settings. The narrative sessions were conducted individually, allowing participants to recount significant events, challenges, successes, and emotions without predetermined prompts or structured questions.

Furthermore, participant observation techniques were utilized to supplement the narratives and provide additional context. Participants were observed in their natural teaching environments, whether online or in traditional classrooms. The observations focused on capturing participants' interactions with students, instructional methods, and overall classroom dynamics. Detailed field notes were taken to document participants' behaviors and the context of their teaching practices.

Overall, the data collection procedures centered on narrative inquiry, which prioritized participants' voices and experiences without using structured interviews or document analysis. By allowing participants to share their stories in their own words, the study aimed to gain a rich and nuanced understanding of the impact of the medium of instruction on job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being among EFL teachers.

Data analysis procedures

The data analysis procedures for this qualitative study involved a thematic analysis approach to identify patterns, themes, and meanings within the narratives shared by the participants. Initially, the narratives obtained from the participants were recorded during the narrative sessions and then manually transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data.

Once the narratives were transcribed, the thematic analysis process began. This process involved several steps to organize and interpret the data systematically. Firstly, familiarization with the data was achieved by immersing in the transcripts to understand the content and context of the narratives. This step allowed the researchers to become familiar with the richness and depth of the participants' stories.

Subsequently, initial codes were generated by identifying keywords, phrases, or concepts that captured the essence of the participants' narratives. These initial codes were then grouped into broader themes based on similarities and patterns observed across the narratives. Themes were developed iteratively through an ongoing process of comparison and refinement, ensuring that they accurately represented the content and meaning of the data.

Once the initial themes were identified, the researchers reviewed and refined them to ensure coherence and consistency. Themes were then defined and named to articulate the underlying concepts and ideas represented within the data. Throughout this process, attention was paid to the narratives' manifest content (explicitly stated ideas) and latent content (underlying meanings and interpretations).

Finally, the themes were interpreted in relation to the research questions and objectives, drawing connections between the participants' experiences and the broader theoretical framework. The findings were presented using illustrative quotes from the narratives to support the interpretation of each theme. This approach allowed for a rich and nuanced understanding of the impact of the medium of instruction on job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being among EFL teachers, as conveyed through their narratives.

Results

The effect of mode of instruction on job satisfaction

The results of the narratives on the effect of the mode of instruction on job satisfaction revealed a nuanced understanding of how EFL teachers perceive their satisfaction levels online versus traditional face-to-face instructional settings. Several themes emerged from the narratives, shedding light on the diverse experiences and perspectives of the participants.

Firstly, participants who taught online highlighted the flexibility and convenience afforded by this mode of instruction, which positively influenced their job satisfaction. They expressed satisfaction with the ability to work remotely, manage their schedules flexibly, and

eliminate the need for commuting to a physical workplace. One participant stated, "Teaching online gives me a better work-life balance, contributing to my overall job satisfaction."

Conversely, participants who taught in traditional face-to-face classrooms emphasized the interpersonal connections and immediate feedback they experienced in this mode of instruction. They expressed satisfaction with the opportunities for in-person interactions with students, colleagues, and administrators, which contributed to a sense of belonging and fulfillment in their roles. One participant mentioned, "I feel more satisfied when I can see my students' reactions and engage with them directly in the classroom."

However, both groups of participants also articulated challenges associated with their respective modes of instruction, which influenced their overall job satisfaction. For online instructors, challenges such as technological issues, feelings of isolation, and difficulties in building rapport with students negatively impacted their satisfaction levels. In contrast, face-to-face instructors highlighted challenges such as large class sizes, classroom management issues, and limited autonomy in curriculum design, which affected their satisfaction with their teaching roles.

Overall, the narratives underscored the complex interplay between the mode of instruction and job satisfaction among EFL teachers. While online instruction offered flexibility and convenience, it also presented technology and social connectedness challenges. Conversely, traditional face-to-face instruction not only provided opportunities for interpersonal interactions and immediate feedback but also posed challenges such as classroom management issues. These findings highlight the importance of considering EFL teachers' unique needs and preferences when designing instructional formats to enhance job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Based on the narratives shared by the participants, several themes emerged regarding the effect of the mode of instruction on job satisfaction among EFL teachers, summarized in the table below.

Table 1.

Emerged themes on the effect of mode of instruction on job satisfaction

Theme	Online Instruction	Traditional Face-to-Face Instruction
Flexibility and Convenience	Participants teaching online appreciated the flexibility and convenience of working remotely, managing their schedules, and eliminating the need for commuting.	Not applicable.

Interpersonal Connections and Engagement	Not applicable.	Participants valued in-person interactions, fostering a sense of community and belonging.
Technological Challenges and Isolation	Challenges such as technological issues, feelings of isolation, and difficulties building rapport with students negatively impacted job satisfaction.	Not applicable.
Classroom Management and Autonomy	Not applicable.	Participants faced challenges related to classroom management, large class sizes, and limited autonomy in curriculum design.
Work-Life Balance	Online instruction positively influenced work-life balance through greater flexibility and autonomy.	Face-to-face instruction provided satisfaction through immediate feedback and personal connections but required more rigid scheduling.
Adaptability and Resilience	Participants displayed adaptability and resilience by overcoming technological challenges and isolation in online instruction.	Participants adapted to challenges in classroom management and sought innovative teaching strategies.

These themes collectively underscored the complex interplay between the mode of instruction and job satisfaction among EFL teachers. While each mode presented unique benefits and challenges, the narratives highlighted the importance of considering teachers' diverse needs and preferences when designing instructional formats to promote job satisfaction and well-being.

The effect of mode of instruction on self-esteem

The results of the narratives on the effect of the mode of instruction on self-esteem revealed a pattern suggesting that online instruction was more facilitative of self-esteem than traditional face-to-face instruction. Participants teaching online expressed a sense of

empowerment and confidence derived from the flexibility and autonomy afforded by this mode of instruction.

One prominent theme that emerged was the sense of control and independence experienced by participants teaching online. They described feeling more empowered to design their courses, set their schedules, and create a conducive learning environment for their students. This autonomy contributed to mastery and self-efficacy, enhancing their confidence in their teaching abilities and, consequently, bolstering their self-esteem. One participant stated, "Teaching online allows me to take ownership of my teaching practice and design courses that align with my expertise and interests, boosting my self-esteem."

Furthermore, participants teaching online emphasized the positive impact of technology on their self-esteem. They highlighted how digital tools and resources facilitated creative and interactive teaching methods, enabling them to engage with students innovatively. This technological proficiency enhanced their confidence in their instructional skills and adaptability to new teaching approaches, fostering a sense of competence and efficacy. One participant stated, "Using technology in my teaching not only enhances student learning but also boosts my confidence in my abilities as an educator, which contributes to my overall self-esteem."

Additionally, participants teaching online expressed satisfaction with the opportunities for professional growth and development inherent in this mode of instruction. They highlighted how online platforms facilitated collaboration with colleagues, access to diverse educational resources, and participation in virtual professional development activities. This continuous learning and engagement with peers and resources nurtured their sense of competence and expertise, fostering a positive self-concept and self-esteem.

Overall, the narratives underscored the facilitative role of online instruction in promoting self-esteem among EFL teachers. The autonomy, technological proficiency, and opportunities for professional growth inherent in online teaching contributed to participants' confidence in their educators' abilities and overall sense of self-worth. These findings highlight the potential benefits of online instruction for enhancing self-esteem and well-being among teachers in the EFL context.

Based on the narratives provided by the participants, several themes emerged regarding the effect of the mode of instruction on self-esteem among EFL teachers, which are presented in the following table.

Table 2.

Emerged Themes on the Effect of Mode of Instruction on Self-Esteem

Theme	Online Instruction	Traditional Face-to-Face Instruction
Autonomy and Control	Participants teaching online emphasized the autonomy	Not applicable.

	and control they had over their teaching practices, schedules, and course designs. This sense of independence and ownership bolstered their self-esteem.	
Technological Proficiency	Online instruction required proficiency in digital tools, which enhanced participants' confidence in their instructional skills and adaptability, positively impacting their self-esteem.	Not applicable.
Innovative Teaching Methods	Participants explored innovative teaching methods, incorporating interactive multimedia resources and virtual collaboration tools, which fostered a sense of competence and efficacy.	Not applicable.
Professional Growth and Development	Online instruction facilitated professional growth through engagement with online communities, access to diverse resources, and participation in virtual professional development, contributing to positive self-esteem.	Not applicable.
Student Engagement and Feedback	Participants valued dynamic engagement with students in online environments and the immediate feedback received, reinforcing their confidence and self-esteem.	Not applicable.

Adaptability and Resilience	Participants demonstrated adaptability and resilience in overcoming challenges related to online instruction, which bolstered their confidence and contributed to positive self-esteem.	Not applicable.
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These themes collectively underscored the facilitative role of online instruction in promoting self-esteem among EFL teachers. The autonomy, technological proficiency, opportunities for professional growth, and innovative teaching methods inherent in online teaching contributed to participants' confidence in their educators' abilities and overall sense of self-worth.

The effect of mode of instruction on professional well-being

The results of the narratives on the effect of the mode of instruction on professional well-being indicated that online instruction was perceived as more facilitative than traditional face-to-face instruction among EFL teachers. Participants teaching online reported several factors contributing to their enhanced professional well-being in this mode of instruction.

One key theme that emerged was online instruction's flexibility and work-life balance. Participants expressed satisfaction with the ability to work remotely and manage their schedules flexibly, allowing them to balance their professional responsibilities and personal lives better. This flexibility contributed to reduced stress levels and increased overall satisfaction with their work, enhancing their professional well-being. One participant stated, "Teaching online gives me the flexibility to juggle my teaching responsibilities with other personal commitments, leading to a more balanced and fulfilling lifestyle."

Furthermore, participants teaching online highlighted the opportunities for professional growth and development inherent in this mode of instruction. They emphasized access to diverse educational resources, collaboration with colleagues in online communities, and participation in virtual professional development activities. Engaging in continuous learning and networking nurtured their competence and expertise, contributing to greater fulfillment and professional well-being. One participant mentioned, "The online environment provides ample opportunities for professional development and collaboration, which keeps me motivated and fulfilled in my teaching role."

Additionally, participants teaching online emphasized the positive impact of technology on their professional well-being. They highlighted how digital tools and platforms facilitated innovative teaching methods, streamlined administrative tasks, and enhanced communication with students and colleagues. This technological proficiency reduced workload and administrative burdens, allowing participants to focus more on

teaching and fostering meaningful interactions with students, enhancing their professional well-being.

Overall, the narratives underscored the facilitative role of online instruction in promoting professional well-being among EFL teachers. The flexibility, opportunities for professional development, and technological support inherent in online teaching contributed to participants' satisfaction with their work and overall sense of fulfillment in their professional roles. These findings highlight the potential benefits of online instruction for enhancing professional well-being and job satisfaction among EFL teachers.

Based on the narratives provided by the participants, several themes emerged regarding the effect of the mode of instruction on professional well-being among EFL teachers, with a focus on online instruction facilitating higher levels of professional well-being, which the following table demonstrates:

Table 3.

Themes emerged from the effect of mode of instruction on professional well-being.

Theme	Online Instruction	Traditional Face-to-Face Instruction
Flexibility and Work-Life Balance	Participants teaching online valued the flexibility to work remotely and manage schedules, achieving a better balance between professional responsibilities and personal lives. This led to increased satisfaction and well-being.	Not applicable.
Opportunities for Professional Growth and Development	Online instruction provided continuous learning opportunities, collaboration with colleagues, and access to diverse educational resources. This nurtured competence, expertise, and fulfillment in professional roles.	Not applicable.
Technological Support and Efficiency	Digital tools and platforms facilitated innovative teaching, streamlined administrative tasks, and	Not applicable.

Sense of Autonomy and Control	improved communication, reducing workload and enhancing professional well-being. Participants teaching online expressed satisfaction with their autonomy and control over teaching practices, course design, and schedules, contributing to empowerment and professional satisfaction.	Not applicable.
Supportive Online Communities	Online communities provide a sense of belonging, collaboration, and support, fostering a positive work environment and enhancing professional well-being.	Not applicable.
Adaptability and Resilience	Participants showed adaptability and resilience in overcoming challenges in online instruction, contributing to a positive outlook and satisfaction in their professional roles.	

These themes collectively underscored the facilitative role of online instruction in promoting professional well-being among EFL teachers. The flexibility, opportunities for growth and development, technological support, autonomy, and supportive online communities inherent in online teaching contributed to participants' satisfaction with their work and overall sense of fulfillment in their professional roles.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the impact of the mode of instruction on various aspects of EFL teachers' professional experiences, including job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being. Through narrative inquiry, the narratives shared by the participants provided valuable insights into the nuanced ways in which online and traditional face-to-face instruction influence these dimensions of professional life.

The results of this study suggest that online instruction offers unique advantages that contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction among EFL teachers. Participants teaching online highlighted the flexibility, autonomy, and opportunities for professional growth inherent in this mode of instruction, which positively influenced their overall satisfaction with their work. The ability to work remotely, manage schedules flexibly, and engage in continuous learning and networking activities contributed to a greater sense of fulfillment and well-being in their professional roles. These findings align with previous research highlighting the benefits of online instruction in promoting job satisfaction among educators (Allen & Seaman, 2017; Graham et al., 2013).

Moreover, the narratives revealed that online instruction was perceived as more facilitative of self-esteem among EFL teachers than traditional face-to-face instruction. Participants teaching online expressed a sense of empowerment and confidence derived from the autonomy, technological proficiency, and opportunities for professional growth inherent in this mode of instruction. These findings highlight the importance of providing teachers with opportunities to exercise autonomy and engage in continuous learning to enhance their self-esteem.

Additionally, the results of this study indicate that online instruction is conducive to professional well-being among EFL teachers. Participants teaching online reported higher levels of professional well-being attributed to flexibility, work-life balance, technological support, and supportive online communities. These findings underscore the importance of creating supportive work environments and providing teachers with the resources and support necessary to thrive in their professional roles.

The findings of this study align with previous research highlighting the advantages and challenges associated with online and traditional face-to-face instruction. Consistent with the literature, participants teaching online emphasized the flexibility, autonomy, and collaborative learning environments facilitated by digital platforms (Allen & Seaman, 2017; Means et al., 2014). These factors contributed to higher levels of job satisfaction among online instructors, reflecting the growing trend of institutions embracing blended learning approaches to accommodate diverse learner needs (Graham et al., 2013). Conversely, participants teaching in traditional face-to-face settings highlighted the benefits of immediate feedback, personalized support, and social interaction, which are characteristic of this mode of instruction (Dixson, 2010; Serhan, 2020). Despite logistical challenges such as large class sizes and scheduling conflicts, traditional instruction remains valuable for fostering engagement and interpersonal connections within the classroom (Blatchford et al., 2003; Hizer et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the narratives shared by participants underscored the importance of job satisfaction in influencing overall well-being and organizational outcomes, consistent with previous research findings (Judge et al., 2001; Spector, 1997). Online instructors reported

higher levels of job satisfaction attributed to factors such as autonomy, task variety, and opportunities for professional development, aligning with research highlighting the role of job characteristics and individual factors in shaping job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Hulin & Judge, 2003). Conversely, traditional instructors emphasized the significance of supportive work environments and interpersonal relationships in fostering job satisfaction, highlighting the multifaceted nature of this construct across instructional modalities (Bowling et al., 2010; Judge & Watanabe, 1993).

Moreover, the narratives provided insights into the relationship between the mode of instruction and self-esteem among EFL teachers. Participants teaching online reported feeling empowered and confident in their abilities, driven by the autonomy and opportunities for growth inherent in online instruction (Dweck, 2013; Orth et al., 2008). In contrast, traditional instructors highlighted the importance of external validation and social comparison processes in shaping their self-esteem, underscoring the role of social interactions and feedback in conventional face-to-face settings (Festinger, 1954; Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

Finally, the narratives illuminated the impact of the mode of instruction on professional well-being, extending beyond traditional measures of job satisfaction to include broader dimensions such as work-life balance and perceived autonomy (Diener et al., 2002; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Online instructors reported greater work-life balance and technological support satisfaction, contributing to their overall professional well-being (Luthans et al., 2007; Tims et al., 2013). Conversely, traditional instructors emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships and collaborative teamwork in enhancing professional well-being, highlighting the contextual factors influencing this construct across instructional modalities (Harter et al., 2002; Maslach et al., 2001).

The implications of the study are numerous. Language teachers can benefit from this study's findings by understanding how different modes of instruction impact their job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being. Educators teaching in both online and traditional face-to-face settings can leverage the insights provided to reflect on their teaching practices and identify areas for improvement. For online instructors, emphasizing autonomy, flexibility, and opportunities for collaboration can enhance job satisfaction and foster a sense of empowerment among teachers. On the other hand, traditional instructors can focus on building supportive classroom environments, providing personalized support, and fostering interpersonal relationships to promote job satisfaction and professional well-being.

Teacher educators play a crucial role in preparing future educators to navigate the challenges and opportunities associated with different modes of instruction. By integrating discussions on the impact of instructional modalities on teacher well-being into teacher training programs, teacher educators can equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in diverse educational contexts. Additionally, providing

opportunities for pre-service teachers to experience both online and traditional face-to-face instruction during their training can help them develop a nuanced understanding of the strengths and limitations of each mode of instruction.

Syllabus designers can use the insights gained from this study to inform the development of instructional materials and curriculum frameworks that promote teacher well-being. By incorporating elements that enhance job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being into language teaching curricula, syllabus designers can create more supportive learning environments for teachers and students. For example, integrating opportunities for autonomy, collaboration, and ongoing professional development into the curriculum can contribute to teacher satisfaction and effectiveness in both online and traditional instructional settings.

Policymakers have the opportunity to enact policies that support teacher well-being and promote effective instructional practices across educational settings. By prioritizing investments in professional development, technological infrastructure, and support systems for educators, policymakers can create environments that enable teachers to thrive in their professional roles. Additionally, policies that recognize and reward effective teaching practices, regardless of instructional modality, can incentivize educators to prioritize student learning outcomes while maintaining well-being. Furthermore, policymakers can advocate for initiatives promoting a balanced approach to instructional delivery, recognizing the unique strengths and challenges associated with online and traditional face-to-face instruction.

All in all, the implications of this study underscore the importance of considering teacher well-being in the design and implementation of language teaching programs, instructional practices, and policy decisions. By prioritizing the well-being of language teachers, educators can create more supportive and effective learning environments that benefit teachers and students alike.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has explored the impact of instructional modalities, specifically online versus traditional face-to-face instruction, on EFL teachers' job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being. Through narrative inquiry, insights were gained into the experiences and perceptions of teachers in both instructional settings. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between the mode of instruction and teacher well-being, highlighting the strengths and challenges associated with each approach.

The narratives shared by participants underscored the importance of autonomy, flexibility, and collaborative learning environments in online instruction while also recognizing the benefits of immediate feedback, personalized support, and social interaction in traditional face-to-face settings. These findings align with previous research highlighting

the advantages and challenges of both instructional modalities, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of teacher well-being across educational contexts.

Furthermore, the narratives provided insights into the relationship between the mode of instruction and key constructs such as job satisfaction, self-esteem, and professional well-being. Online instructors reported higher levels of job satisfaction, empowerment, and satisfaction with work-life balance, driven by the autonomy and opportunities for growth inherent in online instruction. Conversely, traditional instructors highlighted the importance of supportive work environments, interpersonal relationships, and collaborative teamwork in fostering job satisfaction and professional well-being.

The implications of this study extend to language teachers, teacher educators, syllabus designers, and policymakers, offering valuable insights for enhancing teacher well-being and instructional effectiveness in diverse educational settings. By prioritizing investments in professional development, technological infrastructure, and support systems for educators, stakeholders can create environments that enable teachers to thrive in their professional roles while promoting student learning outcomes.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on teacher well-being and instructional practices, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to instructional delivery that considers the unique strengths and challenges of online and traditional face-to-face instruction. Further research is warranted to explore strategies for optimizing teacher support systems and instructional practices to enhance teacher well-being and student learning outcomes in language education.

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