



IMPACT OF ONLINE TEACHING ON TEACHERS' IDENTITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

Shailja Gaur,

Research Scholar (JRF), Department of Education, Chaudhary Charan Singh University,
Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, 250004

Contact: - 9927206280; Mail id: - sg7878278@gmail.com

Sunny Gaur,

Lecturer, Faculty of Polytechnic, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, 250005,
Uttar Pradesh, India

Contact: - 9412365661; Mail id: - gaur.sunny384@gmail.com

Abstract

The rapid evolution of educational technology, particularly accelerated by global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of teaching and learning. Online teaching, once a niche pedagogical approach, has emerged as a mainstream modality, profoundly influencing not only how education is delivered but also the very essence of teachers' professional identities and roles. This paper delves into the multifaceted impact of online teaching on educators. It explores the shifting role of teachers, the historical emergence of online learning, and its current global and Indian status, including an overview of various platforms. A central focus is placed on the dual impact (merits and demerits) of online teaching on teacher identity and professionalism, addressing concerns related to training, government initiatives, and the unique challenges faced by educators. Finally, this paper offers concrete suggestions to foster a supportive environment that enables teachers to adapt, thrive, and redefine their professional selves in the digital age of education.

Keywords:

Online Teaching, Teacher Identity, Professionalism, Digital Pedagogy, Educational Technology, Teacher Training, Digital Transformation

Introduction

The advent of the 21st century has been marked by unprecedented technological advancements, profoundly influencing every sector, including education. The traditional chalk-and-talk classroom, once the sole bastion of learning, has been complemented, and in many cases,

transformed by digital modalities. Among these, online teaching stands out as a revolutionary approach, offering flexibility, accessibility, and new pedagogical possibilities. However, this paradigm shift is not without its complexities, particularly concerning the individuals at the heart of the educational process: teachers. The transition to online environments has necessitated a re-evaluation of their roles, skills, and even their fundamental professional identity. This paper aims to explore the intricate relationship between online teaching and the evolving identity and professionalism of teachers, providing a comprehensive analysis of its various dimensions. The rapid expansion of online teaching, catalyzed by technological advancements and the COVID-19 pandemic, has fundamentally reshaped the educational landscape. These changes extend deeply into the roles, identities, and professionalism of teachers across the globe, with particularly acute effects in India.

Online Learning Environment

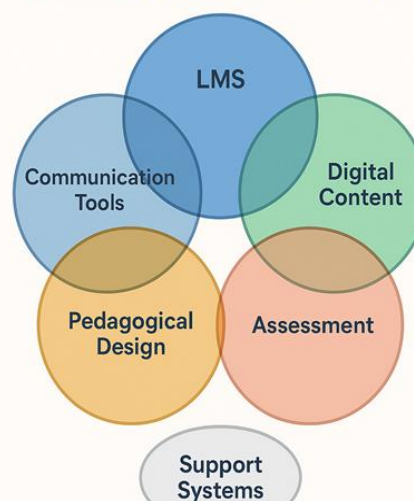


Figure 1: Components of Online Teaching

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Online Teaching

Online teaching, often interchangeably referred to as e-learning, distance learning, or virtual education, broadly encompasses the delivery of educational content and instruction through digital networks, primarily the internet. It involves a pedagogical approach where learning occurs remotely, with teachers and students interacting asynchronously (at different times) or synchronously (in real-time) through various digital tools and platforms. Unlike traditional face-to-face instruction, online teaching leverages technology to facilitate communication, content delivery, assessment, and collaborative activities, transcending geographical barriers (*Moore et al., 2011; Singh & Thurman, 2019*).

Online teaching refers to the delivery of education through internet-based platforms, where teachers and students interact in virtual environments using digital tools. It encompasses synchronous sessions (real-time video classes), asynchronous learning (recorded content,

assignments), and hybrid models blending offline and online techniques (*Hrastinski, 2008; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020*).

Role of Teachers - Their Identity and Professional Role

The role of a teacher has always been dynamic, evolving with societal changes and pedagogical advancements. Traditionally, teachers were seen primarily as knowledge disseminators and classroom managers. However, the emergence of online teaching has profoundly reshaped these roles, compelling educators to redefine their identity and professionalism.

Teachers' Identity -Teachers' professional identity is a dynamic construction shaped by their beliefs, values, experiences, socio-cultural context, and interactions with students. Online teaching often disrupts these established norms, compelling educators to revisit and sometimes reinvent their professional personas. Teachers' identity encompasses their self-perception,

values, beliefs, professional ethics, and perceived social role. Online teaching disrupts traditional reference points, forcing teachers to redefine their approach to instruction, student engagement, and self-efficacy.

Professional Role: Teachers' professional duties extend beyond delivering content to include mentorship, counseling, and community building. In the virtual environment, these roles require adaptation—using digital tools to foster relationships, monitor progress, and create meaningful educational experiences.

- **Facilitators of Learning:** Moving from content delivery to guiding discussions and activities online
- **Technology Integrators:** Mastery of educational technology becomes central to their function
- **Community Builders:** Creating virtual classroom ethos, bridging isolation

This evolving role impacts teacher identity. Their professional self-concept shifts from being a





"sage on the stage" to a "guide on the side," emphasizing facilitation, design, and technological expertise. Professionalism now encompasses digital fluency, adaptability, resilience in the face of technological challenges, and the ability to maintain a strong pedagogical presence without physical proximity.

Research Methodology

This review employed a qualitative synthesis approach. Peer-reviewed journal articles, government surveys, and case studies published between 2019 and 2025 were reviewed. Selection criteria included relevance to online teaching, teacher identity, and professionalism, with a focus on comparative studies and Indian data. Major databases like Scopus, JSTOR, and Google Scholar were used. Quantitative survey results from Indian studies (Kumar et al., 2023; Sarkar & Das, 2021) were also analyzed to extract key findings.

Impact of COVID-19 on Online Teaching

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in late 2019 and spread globally in early 2020, acted as an unprecedented catalyst for the rapid and widespread adoption of online teaching. With schools, colleges, and universities forced to shut down physical campuses, online learning became the primary, and often only, mode of instruction.

- **Forced and Rapid Transition:** Institutions worldwide, regardless of their prior preparedness, had to pivot to online delivery almost overnight. This led to a surge in the use of existing platforms and the rapid development of new ones.
- **Increased Digital Literacy (for some):** Millions of teachers and students who had little to no prior experience with online learning were compelled to adapt, leading to a significant, albeit uneven, increase in digital literacy across the educational ecosystem.
- **Highlighting the Digital Divide:** The pandemic starkly exposed the existing digital divide,

with many students lacking access to reliable internet, devices, or conducive learning

Historical Context and Evolution



Early Forms (19th-20th Century)

- Correspondence courses delivered via postal mail were the precursors, allowing individuals to learn remotely.



Radio and Television (Mid-20th Century)

- Educational programs broadcast via radio and television expanded the reach of distance learning.



Computer-Based Training (CBT) (1980s)

- The advent of personal computers led to standalone software programs for learning, often delivered via floppy disks or CD-ROMs



The Internet Era (1990s-Early 2000s)

- Early online courses primarily involved text-based communication via email and discussion boards
- The development of the World Wide Web and early Learning Management Systems (LMS) like WebCT and Blackboard laid the groundwork for more structured online courses



Broadband and Multimedia (Mid-2000s)

- Increased internet speeds allowed for the integration of multimedia (video, audio) and synchronous communication tools, making online learning more interactive and engaging
- The rise of virtual classrooms and online universities began to gain traction



MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) (2010s)

- Platforms like Coursera, edX, and Udacity democratized access to university-level courses, attracting millions of learners worldwide
- This period saw a significant increase in the scale and visibility of online education



Ubiquitous Mobile Access and AI Integration (Late 2010s-Present)

- The proliferation of smartphones and tablets made online

Figure 3: Emergence of Online Teaching

environments at home, leading to significant equity concerns.

- **Innovation Under Pressure:** Educators and institutions innovated rapidly, experimenting with various tools, pedagogical approaches, and support mechanisms to maintain educational continuity.
- **Mental Health Impact:** The sudden shift, coupled with the anxieties of the pandemic, led to increased stress, burnout, and mental health challenges for both teachers and students.



- **Blurred Boundaries:** The home became the workplace and classroom, blurring the lines between personal and professional life for educators.
- **Recognition of Hybrid Models:** The experience highlighted the potential and challenges of online learning, leading to increased interest in blended or hybrid learning models that combine the best of both online and face-to-face instruction.

1. Impact of Online Teaching on Teachers' Identity and Professionalism

The transition to online teaching has had a profound and multifaceted impact on teachers' identity and professionalism, bringing forth both opportunities and challenges.

1.1 Global Findings

The rapid shift to online teaching, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, has significantly influenced teachers' professional identity and professionalism. This report synthesizes findings from recent studies to explore how this transition has reshaped teachers' sense of self, their roles, and their professional practices, while highlighting both challenges and opportunities.

- a) **Identity Instability & Adaptation** Teachers faced instability in their professional identity, needing to adapt beliefs and practices to online contexts. Some experienced tension between their established roles and new online demands (El-Soussi, 2022; Huang, 2021; El-Soussi, 2025; Celebi & Eraldemir-Tuyan*, 2022; Abdalgane, 2023). Indian teachers reported similar struggles, with many feeling unprepared for digital teaching and needing to rapidly adapt (Dayal, 2023; Selvaraj et al., 2021; Joshi et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2020). (El-Soussi, 2022; Huang, 2021; Dayal, 2023; El-Soussi, 2025; Selvaraj et al., 2021; Celebi & Eraldemir-Tuyan*, 2022; Joshi et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2020; Abdalgane, 2023)



Impact Area	Global Findings	India-Specific Findings
Identity Instability & Adaptation	Teachers faced instability in their professional identity, needing to adapt beliefs and practices to online contexts. Some experienced tension between their established roles and new online demands	Indian teachers reported similar struggles, with many feeling unprepared for digital teaching and needing to rapidly adapt
Professionalism & Self-Perception	Online teaching sometimes enhanced self-esteem and social relations, but also led to uncertainty and stress, especially when lacking training or support	Many Indian teachers felt their professionalism was compromised by inadequate infrastructure, lack of training, and increased workload
Wellbeing & Work Conditions	Globally, teachers reported increased stress, anxiety, and physical health issues due to online teaching demands	In India, 92% of surveyed teachers reported mental health issues, and 82% reported physical problems like eyestrain and back pain
Opportunities for Growth	Online environments fostered new skills, collaboration, and reflective practice, supporting professional growth for some	Some Indian teachers used self-learning and institutional training

- b) **Professionalism & Self-Perception** Online teaching sometimes enhanced self-esteem and social relations, but also led to uncertainty and stress, especially when lacking training or support (Abuhussein & Badah, 2024; Schwaller & Çakır, 2025; Wen et al., 2023; Moh et al., 2024). Many Indian teachers felt their professionalism was compromised by inadequate infrastructure, lack of training, and increased workload (Dayal, 2023; Selvaraj et al., 2021; Joshi et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2020). (Abuhussein & Badah, 2024; Schwaller &

Çakır, 2025; Dayal, 2023; Wen et al., 2023; Selvaraj et al., 2021; Moh et al., 2024; Joshi et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2020)

- c) Wellbeing & Work Conditions Globally, teachers reported increased stress, anxiety, and physical health issues due to online teaching demands (Dayal, 2023; Celebi & Eraldemir-Tuyan*, 2022; Abdalgane, 2023). In India, 92% of surveyed teachers reported mental health issues, and 82% reported physical problems like eyestrain and back pain (Dayal, 2023). (Dayal, 2023; Celebi & Eraldemir-Tuyan*, 2022; Abdalgane, 2023)
- d) Opportunities for Growth Online environments fostered new skills, collaboration, and reflective practice, supporting professional growth for some (Abuhussein & Badah, 2024; Schwaller & Çakır, 2025; Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2023; Wen et al., 2023; Moh et al., 2024). Some Indian teachers used self-learning and institutional training to adapt, but desired more support (Dayal, 2023; Selvaraj et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2020). (Abuhussein & Badah, 2024; Schwaller & Çakır, 2025; Dayal, 2023).

Identity Transformation Patterns

Theme	Key Findings	Supporting Evidence	Context Factors
Identity negotiation and adaptation	Teachers experienced instability, tension, and renegotiation of professional identity in digital contexts; emergence of "digital lecturer" identity	Celebi and Eraldemir-Tuyan, 2022; Safriyani et al., 2025; Yuan and Liu, 2021; Xu and Tao, 2023; El-Soussi, 2022	COVID-19 emergency shift, prior digital training, institutional support
Pedagogical and technological adaptation	Need for new digital skills, increased workload, adaptation of teaching strategies; digital competence central to identity	Celebi and Eraldemir-Tuyan, 2022; Xu and Tao, 2023; Weng et al., 2023; Abuhussein and Badah, 2024	Technology access, training, discipline (English as a Foreign Language focus)
Social-professional relationships	Mixed effects: some report isolation and weakened bonds, others improved collegiality and self-esteem	Weng et al., 2023; Abuhussein and Badah, 2024; Safriyani et al., 2025	Institutional culture, peer support, feedback mechanisms
Emotional/psychological impact	Stress, burnout, uncertainty, but also increased agency and self-awareness in some cases	Celebi and Eraldemir-Tuyan, 2022; Xu and Tao, 2023; Abuhussein and Badah, 2024	Individual agency, support structures, career stage

- **Challenges:** Lack of digital infrastructure, insufficient training, increased workload, and blurred work-life boundaries were common, especially in India and other



developing contexts (Dayal, 2023; Selvaraj et al., 2021; Joshi et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2020).

- **Opportunities:** Some teachers reported improved digital skills, greater flexibility, and enhanced collaboration with peers and students, contributing positively to their professional identity (Abuhussein & Badah, 2024; Schwaller & Çakır, 2025; Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2023; Wen et al., 2023; Moh et al., 2024).

1.2 Findings in India

The impact of online teaching on teachers' identity and professionalism in India during the COVID-19 pandemic was largely negative, characterized by significant challenges that affected their sense of competence, connection with students, and overall well-being. While some teachers experienced growth and adapted to the new environment, the lack of training, digital infrastructure, and support systems hindered their ability to maintain their professional roles effectively. These findings, based on studies by Sarkar and Das (2021) and Kumar et al. (2023), highlight the need for targeted interventions to support teachers in navigating the complexities of online teaching while preserving their identity and professionalism.

- a) **Impact on Teachers' Identity** - Online teaching introduced significant challenges that likely affected how Indian teachers saw themselves. For example, 71% of Delhi school teachers reported a lack of interaction with students, which may have made them feel less connected to their roles (Sarkar & Das, 2021).
- b) The need to adapt to new technologies, with 94% lacking ICT training, probably made some feel less competent, impacting their professional identity (Kumar et al., 2023). However, some, like 37.5% who valued flexibility, found ways to grow, though this was often overshadowed by difficulties.
 - i. **Challenges to Identity** - Research suggests that reduced student interaction significantly affected teachers' identity. Sarkar and Das (2021) found that 71% of Delhi school teachers reported a lack of interaction, likely disrupting their emotional connection with students, a core aspect of their identity. Kumar et al. (2023) noted that 94% of teachers lacked ICT training, leading to self-learning and adaptation challenges, which may have made teachers



feel less competent and confident in their roles. This lack of preparation likely contributed to feelings of insecurity, especially for those accustomed to face-to-face teaching.

- ii. **Transformation and Growth** - Despite challenges, some teachers experienced identity transformation. Sarkar and Das (2021) reported that 37.5% of teachers valued the flexibility of online teaching, and 23.5% appreciated the ease of sharing materials, suggesting that some found new ways to define their roles. However, these positive aspects were often overshadowed by the broader difficulties, with only 3.5% preferring online teaching post-COVID, indicating limited long-term acceptance (Sarkar & Das, 2021).
- iii. **Health and Well-being Impacts** -Kumar et al. (2023) highlighted that 82% of teachers experienced physical health issues, such as eye strain and back pain, and 92% faced mental health challenges, including stress and anxiety. These health impacts, more pronounced among females (94% vs. 91% for mental issues), likely influenced teachers' professional identity, as their ability to perform their roles effectively was compromised. For instance, 76% of females vs. 51% of males reported eye strain, indicating gender-specific challenges (Kumar et al., 2023).

The following table summarizes key findings on identity impacts:

Aspect	Details	Exact Numbers	Source
 Lack of Interaction	Reduced student-teacher connection affected identity.	71% reported lack of interaction	Sarkar & Das, 2021
 Lack of ICT Training	Led to feelings of incompetence	94% lacked ICT training	Kumar et al., 2023
 Flexibility Valued	Some found new ways to define roles	37.5% valued flexibility	Kumar et al., 2021
 Physical Health issues	Impacted ability to perform roles	82% reported issues, 76% females vs. 51% males for eye strain	Kumar et al., 2023
Mental Health Issues	Stress and anxiety affected identity	92% faced issues 94% females vs. 91% males	Kumar et al., 2023



c) **Impact on Teachers' Professionalism** - Professional identity refers to teachers' sense of self in their roles, shaped by their beliefs, practices, and relationships with students. Professionalism involves the skills, competencies, and behaviors that define effective teaching. Online teaching posed several challenges to maintaining these standards:

- i. Teachers faced increased workloads and stress, with 82% reporting physical health issues and 92% mental health challenges, likely affecting their ability to maintain professional standards (Kumar et al., 2023).

Technical challenges, such as 48% struggling with online exams, and dissatisfaction with assessments (67%) suggest professionalism was strained (Sarkar & Das, 2021; Kumar et al., 2023). Yet, some adapted by developing new skills, though the digital divide, with only 37.25% having exclusive device access, widened gaps in professional effectiveness (Kumar et al., 2023).

- ii. **Skill Development and Technical Challenges:** Online teaching required new technical skills, such as using digital platforms and creating online content. However, Sarkar and Das (2021) found that 36.5% of teachers faced difficulties creating digital content, and 48% struggled with online exams, indicating a gap in technical proficiency. Kumar et al. (2023) noted that 94% lacked ICT training, leading to trial-and-error learning, which likely undermined their sense of professionalism.

- iii. **Workload and Stress:** The increased workload and stress associated with online teaching affected teachers' ability to maintain professional standards. Kumar et al. (2023) reported that 82% of teachers experienced physical health issues due to long hours, with 55% of those working more than 6 hours daily reporting discomfort. Additionally, 67% were dissatisfied with online assessments, suggesting they felt unable to fulfill their professional responsibilities effectively (Kumar et al., 2023). Sarkar and Das (2021) noted that 63% faced difficulties with online evaluations, further highlighting the strain on professionalism.



- iv. **Adaptation and Resilience:** Despite these challenges, some teachers showed resilience by adapting to the new environment. For example, 64.5% of teachers received training from government or schools, which helped some adapt (Sarkar & Das, 2021). However, the overall sentiment leaned toward dissatisfaction, with 77.5% feeling that online teaching was not better for quality education, and only 33% interested in continuing post-COVID (Sarkar & Das, 2021; Kumar et al., 2023).

The following table summarizes key findings on professionalism impacts:

Aspect	Details	Exact Numbers	Source
Technical Challenges	Struggled with digital content and exams.	36.5% content creation issues, 48% exam issues	Sarkar & Das, 2021
Lack of ICT Training	Hindered professional competence.	94% lacked training	Kumar et al., 2023
Physical Health Issues	Long hours affected professional performance.	82% reported issues, 55% >6h daily	Kumar et al., 2023
Dissatisfaction with Assessments	Felt unable to assess effectively.	67% dissatisfied	Kumar et al., 2023
Training Received	Some support helped adaptation.	64.5% received training	Sarkar & Das, 2021

- d) **Contextual Factors and Support Needs** - India's digital divide, with varying internet stability (52% stable, 32% satisfactory, rest poor), and gender disparities (e.g., 76% females vs. 51% males reporting eye strain) added complexity (Kumar et al., 2023). Both studies call for better training, infrastructure, and support to help teachers adapt, suggesting policy changes could mitigate these impacts (Sarkar & Das, 2021; Kumar et al., 2023). Several contextual factors in India amplified these impacts:



- i. **Digital Divide:** Kumar et al. (2023) highlighted a significant digital divide, with only 37.25% of teachers having exclusive access to a smart device, and internet connectivity stable for 52%, satisfactory for 32%, and poor for the rest. This inequality particularly affected teachers in rural areas, widening the gap in their ability to adapt and maintain professionalism.
- ii. **Gender Disparities:** Gender differences were notable, with females reporting higher rates of physical (76% vs. 51% for eye strain) and mental health issues (94% vs. 91%), which likely influenced their ability to cope with online teaching demands (Kumar et al., 2023). Additionally, 9.39% of males vs. 4.36% of females received no support, indicating gender disparities in institutional support (Kumar et al., 2023).
- iii. **Post-COVID Preferences:** Sarkar and Das (2021) found that 49% of teachers preferred a combined mode (online and offline) for future teaching, with 47.5% preferring offline and only 3.5% preferring online, reflecting a preference for traditional methods and highlighting the unsustainability of online teaching for many.
- iv. **Policy and Support Implications:** Both studies emphasize the need for enhanced support to mitigate these impacts. Sarkar and Das (2021) suggest enhancing online teaching quality, providing adequate training, improving infrastructure, and reducing the digital divide. Kumar et al. (2023) call for improved digital infrastructure and targeted training strategies, noting that 45.64% reported strong family/colleague support, but institutional support varied, with 9.39% of males vs. 4.36% of females receiving no support. These findings underscore the importance of policy interventions to support teachers' professional identity and effectiveness in online environments.

2. Merits of the Impact on Teachers' Identity and Professionalism

Online teaching, despite its challenges, has offered several avenues for teachers to grow and enhance their professional identity.

- **Enhanced Digital Competence:** Teachers are compelled to acquire and master new technological skills, becoming proficient in using LMS, video conferencing tools, digital



content creation software, and online assessment platforms. This boosts their confidence and expands their professional toolkit, making them more adaptable to future technological shifts.

- **Innovation in Pedagogy:** The online environment encourages experimentation with diverse teaching methods. Teachers learn to design interactive activities, integrate multimedia, and leverage collaborative tools, fostering a more dynamic and engaging pedagogical approach. This redefines their identity as innovative educators.
- **Increased Accessibility and Reach:** Teachers can connect with and teach students from diverse geographical locations and backgrounds, broadening their impact and professional network. This expands their sense of purpose and contribution beyond a single classroom.
- **Continuous Professional Development Opportunities:** The online realm offers a plethora of professional development courses and webinars on digital pedagogy, allowing teachers to continuously upskill and stay updated with the latest trends in educational technology. This contributes to a stronger sense of continuous professional growth.
- **Flexibility and Autonomy:** For some, online teaching offers greater flexibility in terms of work schedule and location, potentially leading to a better work-life balance and increased autonomy in designing their teaching approach. This can empower teachers and enhance their professional satisfaction.
- **Focus on Facilitation and Mentorship:** The shift from content delivery to content facilitation in online settings allows teachers to focus more on guiding student inquiry, fostering critical thinking, and providing individualized mentorship, enriching their professional role.
- **Data-Driven Instruction:** Online platforms provide valuable data on student engagement and performance, enabling teachers to make more informed pedagogical decisions and personalize learning experiences, thereby enhancing their professionalism through evidence-based practice.
- **Global Collaboration:** Opportunities to collaborate with fellow educators worldwide, sharing best practices and insights, can broaden their professional horizons and foster a sense of a global teaching community.



3. Demerits of the Impact on Teachers' Identity and Professionalism

While offering merits, the rapid shift to online teaching has also posed significant challenges to teachers' identity and professionalism.

- **Role Ambiguity and Identity Crisis:** The shift to online teaching can blur traditional roles. Experienced teachers may feel like novices, uncertain about maintaining authority, engagement, and rapport in virtual settings. This can undermine self-confidence and professional identity, especially when accustomed methods prove less effective online.
- **Increased Workload and Burnout:** Designing, delivering, and managing online courses often requires significantly more time and effort than traditional teaching, leading to increased workload, stress, and burnout. This can erode their professional well-being and sense of efficacy.
- **Technological Overload and Stress:** The constant need to learn new tools, troubleshoot technical issues, and adapt to evolving platforms can be overwhelming, especially for teachers less familiar with technology. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and frustration, impacting their professional confidence.
- **Loss of Personal Connection:** The absence of face-to-face interaction can make it challenging to build rapport with students, gauge their emotional state, and provide holistic support. This can diminish the relational aspect of teaching, which is central to many teachers' identity.
- **Blurred Work-Life Boundaries:** The flexibility of online teaching can paradoxically lead to an "always-on" culture, with teachers feeling pressure to respond to emails and queries at all hours. This blurs the lines between personal and professional life, leading to exhaustion and a diminished sense of personal identity outside of work.
- **De-Skilling and Deskilling Concerns:** Some teachers might feel that the focus on technology reduces the emphasis on their core pedagogical skills, leading to a sense of deskilling. The reliance on pre-made digital content might also lessen their role as primary content creators.
- **Erosion of Authority and Control:** In a less structured online environment, teachers might perceive a loss of control over the learning environment and student behavior, impacting their traditional sense of authority and classroom management skills.



- **Lack of Adequate Training and Support:** Many teachers were thrust into online teaching without sufficient training, technical support, or pedagogical guidance specific to the online environment. This can lead to feelings of unpreparedness and professional insecurity.
- **Performance Anxiety:** Being constantly "on camera" during synchronous sessions or having their online content scrutinized can lead to performance anxiety and self-consciousness.
- **Digital Divide Among Teachers:** Not all teachers have equal access to reliable internet, suitable devices, or a conducive home environment for online teaching, leading to disparities in their ability to perform effectively and impacting their professional equity.
- **Assessment and Quality Assurance Challenges:** Ensuring academic integrity and consistent assessment standards in online settings presents ongoing challenges. Teachers must develop new strategies to monitor learning and prevent misconduct, adding complexity to their professional responsibilities.

4. Concern for the Training of Teachers for Online Teaching Platforms

The success of online teaching hinges critically on the preparedness of teachers. A significant concern revolves around the adequacy and nature of training provided to educators for effective online pedagogy.

- **Beyond Technical Skills:** Training should extend beyond mere technical proficiency in using platforms. It must encompass pedagogical strategies unique to online environments, such as fostering online engagement, designing interactive activities, managing virtual discussions, and providing effective online feedback.
- **Continuous Professional Development:** Online teaching is a rapidly evolving field. Training should not be a one-time event but a continuous process, offering ongoing workshops, webinars, and peer learning opportunities to keep teachers updated with new tools, research, and best practices.
- **Differentiated Training:** Training programs should acknowledge the diverse needs and existing skill levels of teachers. Tailored modules for beginners, intermediate, and advanced users would be more effective.
- **Focus on Content Adaptation:** Teachers need training on how to adapt existing



curriculum content for online delivery, including creating engaging multimedia, structuring modules, and curating digital resources.

- **Assessment in Online Environments:** Specific training on designing, implementing, and ensuring the integrity of online assessments is crucial, including the use of proctoring tools and alternative assessment methods.
- **Addressing Well-being:** Training should also incorporate strategies for managing workload, preventing burnout, and maintaining work-life balance in the context of online teaching.
- **Peer Support and Mentorship:** Establishing mentorship programs where experienced online teachers guide their less experienced colleagues can be highly beneficial.
- **Institutional Support:** Institutions must invest in dedicated instructional design teams and technical support staff to assist teachers in course development and troubleshooting.

5. Significance of Online Teaching on Teachers' Identity and Professionalism

The significance of online teaching on teachers' identity and professionalism cannot be overstated. It is not merely a change in delivery method but a fundamental redefinition of what it means to be an educator in the 21st century.

- **Reconceptualizing Expertise:** Teachers' expertise now extends beyond subject matter knowledge to include technological fluency, instructional design for digital environments, and the ability to foster community in virtual spaces. This broadens their professional identity.
- **Shift from Instructor to Facilitator:** The identity shifts from being the sole source of knowledge to a guide, mentor, and facilitator of learning, empowering students to take more ownership of their education. This requires a different set of professional skills focused on guidance and support.
- **Increased Adaptability and Resilience:** Navigating the dynamic landscape of online tools and platforms cultivates adaptability and resilience, crucial professional attributes in an ever-changing world.
- **Professional Autonomy and Creativity:** For many, online teaching offers greater autonomy in designing courses and experimenting with creative pedagogical approaches, fostering a stronger sense of professional agency.



- **Global Professional Networks:** Online platforms enable teachers to connect with peers globally, fostering a sense of shared identity and collective professionalism within a wider educational community.
- **Emphasis on Lifelong Learning:** The continuous evolution of online tools and pedagogy necessitates a commitment to lifelong learning, reinforcing the professional identity of teachers as perpetual learners.
- **Visibility and Accountability:** Online teaching can make pedagogical practices more transparent, potentially increasing accountability but also offering opportunities for peer learning and recognition of effective strategies.

6. Problems Faced by Teachers during Online Teaching Which Affects Their Identity and Professionalism

Despite the opportunities, teachers have encountered numerous problems during the transition to online teaching, significantly impacting their identity and professionalism.

- **Lack of Adequate Training:** Many teachers were thrust into online teaching with minimal or no formal training in digital pedagogy. This lack of preparation led to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and a diminished sense of professional competence.
- **Technological Barriers:**
 - **Access to Reliable Infrastructure:** Not all teachers have access to stable internet connections, up-to-date hardware, or a quiet, dedicated workspace at home. This can hinder their ability to deliver lessons effectively and maintain professionalism.
 - **Technical Glitches:** Frequent technical issues with platforms, software, or internet connectivity during live sessions can disrupt lessons, cause stress, and undermine a teacher's perceived competence.
 - **Digital Literacy Gap:** A significant portion of the teaching workforce, particularly older teachers, may struggle with the rapid adoption of complex digital tools, leading to feelings of being left behind or professionally obsolete.
- **Increased Workload and Time Management:**
 - **Content Conversion:** Converting traditional lesson plans and materials into engaging online formats is time-consuming.
 - **Asynchronous Communication:** Managing discussion forums, emails, and



providing feedback outside of live sessions often extends working hours significantly.

- **Monitoring Engagement:** It is harder to gauge student engagement and understanding in an online environment, requiring more effort to design interactive activities and track participation.
- **Blurred Boundaries:** The lines between work and personal life become blurred, leading to an "always-on" mentality and contributing to burnout. This directly impacts their personal identity and ability to maintain a healthy professional life.
- **Maintaining Student Engagement and Discipline:**
 - **Distractions:** Students in online environments are prone to distractions, making it challenging to maintain their focus and participation.
 - **Lack of Non-Verbal Cues:** Teachers miss crucial non-verbal cues (body language, facial expressions) that inform their in-person teaching, making it difficult to adapt instruction in real-time. This affects their ability to connect and manage the virtual classroom, impacting their sense of control and effectiveness.
 - **Academic Integrity:** Ensuring academic honesty in online assessments is a persistent challenge, leading to increased stress for teachers in designing secure evaluations.
- **Erosion of Social Connection:**
 - **Isolation:** Teachers can feel isolated from colleagues and students, missing the informal interactions and camaraderie of a physical school environment. This can impact their professional support network and sense of belonging.
 - **Impact on Teacher-Student Rapport:** Building deep, meaningful relationships with students can be more challenging in a purely online setting, affecting the relational aspect of teaching that is central to many teachers' identity.
- **Lack of Institutional Support:**
 - **Insufficient Resources:** Many institutions did not provide adequate technical support, instructional design assistance, or mental health resources for teachers during the rapid transition.
 - **Unclear Expectations:** Ambiguous expectations regarding online teaching standards, workload, and availability can lead to confusion and frustration.
 - **Lack of Recognition:** The immense effort required for online teaching may not



always be adequately recognized or compensated, leading to a feeling of undervaluation.

- **Impact on Professional Identity:**

- **Feeling of Incompetence:** Struggling with technology or online pedagogy can lead to feelings of professional incompetence, even for highly experienced teachers.
- **Loss of Control:** The perceived loss of control over the learning environment can challenge their traditional identity as classroom masters.
- **Questioning Vocation:** For some, the challenges of online teaching may lead them to question their career choice or professional calling.

7. Suggestions for the Impact of Online Teaching on Teachers' Identity and Professionalism

To mitigate the negative impacts and maximize the benefits of online teaching on teachers' identity and professionalism, a multi-pronged approach involving institutions, governments, and individual teachers is necessary.

- **7.1. Comprehensive and Ongoing Professional Development:**

- **Beyond Basics:**

Training must go beyond basic technical skills to include advanced pedagogical strategies for online engagement, assessment, and instructional design.

Solution Area	Impact on Professionalism
Continuous Learning	Keeps skills current, boosts confidence
Engaging Content Design	Enhances teaching effectiveness, student outcomes
Community Building	Reduces isolation, fosters collaboration
Technical Preparedness	Minimizes disruptions, ensures consistency
Institutional Support	Provides resources, recognizes effort
Emotional Resilience	Maintains motivation, aids identity formation

- **Differentiated**

Learning: Offer tiered training programs catering to varying levels of digital literacy and experience.

- **Continuous Learning:** Establish ongoing professional development opportunities (webinars, workshops, online courses) to keep teachers updated on new tools and best practices.



- **Focus on Well-being:** Integrate modules on managing workload, preventing burnout, and maintaining work-life balance in online teaching.
- **Peer Mentorship:** Create programs where experienced online teachers mentor their less experienced colleagues.
- **7.2. Robust Technical and Pedagogical Support Systems:**
 - **Dedicated Support Teams:** Institutions should establish dedicated technical support teams available to teachers for immediate troubleshooting.
 - **Instructional Design Support:** Provide access to instructional designers who can assist teachers in converting content, designing engaging activities, and structuring online courses.
 - **Resource Hubs:** Create centralized online repositories of best practices, tutorials, and templates for online teaching.
- **7.3. Clear Policies and Realistic Expectations:**
 - **Workload Management:** Institutions must develop clear policies regarding workload expectations for online teachers, ensuring it is commensurate with compensation and does not lead to excessive hours.
 - **Communication Guidelines:** Establish guidelines for communication channels and response times to help teachers manage student expectations and maintain work-life boundaries.
 - **Recognition and Incentives:** Acknowledge and reward the extra effort and skills required for effective online teaching through promotions, awards, or additional compensation.
- **7.4. Fostering Community and Collaboration:**
 - **Virtual Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** Encourage and facilitate online communities where teachers can share experiences, collaborate on resources, and provide mutual support.
 - **Regular Check-ins:** Institutions should implement regular check-ins with teachers to address their concerns, provide feedback, and offer support.
 - **Hybrid Faculty Meetings:** Where possible, blend online and in-person faculty meetings to maintain social connections.



- **7.5. Investment in Infrastructure and Resources:**
 - **Equitable Access:** Ensure all teachers have access to reliable internet, suitable devices, and conducive home working environments. Institutions might need to provide equipment or subsidies.
 - **Quality Platforms:** Invest in robust, user-friendly, and secure online learning platforms that meet the diverse needs of teachers and students.
 - **Digital Content Libraries:** Provide access to high-quality digital content, open educational resources (OERs), and multimedia tools to ease the burden of content creation.
- **7.6. Redefining Professional Standards:**
 - **Inclusion of Digital Competencies:** Integrate digital literacy, online pedagogical skills, and instructional design principles into formal professional standards and evaluation criteria for teachers.
 - **Focus on Facilitation:** Shift the emphasis in professional evaluation from traditional lecturing skills to skills in facilitating online discussions, fostering collaboration, and personalizing learning in virtual environments.
- **7.7. Advocating for Teacher Well-being:**
 - **Mental Health Support:** Provide access to mental health resources and counseling services for teachers struggling with the demands of online teaching.
 - **Promote Self-Care:** Encourage and facilitate self-care practices among teachers to prevent burnout.
- **7.8. Government and Policy-Level Interventions:**
 - **National Frameworks:** Develop national frameworks for online teacher training and certification.
 - **Funding for Digital Transformation:** Allocate significant funding for digital infrastructure in educational institutions and for teacher professional development.
 - **Research and Innovation:** Fund research into effective online teaching practices and technologies, and disseminate findings widely.
 - **Addressing Digital Divide:** Implement policies to bridge the digital divide for both teachers and students, ensuring equitable access to technology and connectivity.



Results and Discussion

The review revealed four major impact areas: (1) Identity instability, (2) Compromised professionalism, (3) Workload and well-being deterioration, and (4) Opportunities for growth. Indian teachers showed high levels of distress—92% reported mental health issues, and 94% lacked ICT training (Kumar et al., 2023). However, 37.5% valued the flexibility online teaching offered (Sarkar & Das, 2021). Global parallels exist where teachers experienced an initial identity crisis but gradually acquired new digital and pedagogical skills (El-Soussi, 2025; Wen et al., 2023). Still, lack of institutional support, blurred work-life boundaries, and digital fatigue are recurring concerns. Opportunities lie in redesigning professional development and fostering hybrid teaching models.

Conclusion

The rise of online teaching, dramatically accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, represents a pivotal moment in the history of education. It has undeniably reshaped the landscape of learning, offering unprecedented opportunities for accessibility, flexibility, and pedagogical innovation. However, this transformation has come with significant implications for the teaching profession, fundamentally altering teachers' roles, demanding new skill sets, and challenging their established professional identities.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a concerted effort from all stakeholders. Comprehensive and ongoing professional development that extends beyond technical skills to encompass specialized online pedagogical strategies is paramount. Institutions must provide robust technical and instructional design support, coupled with clear policies that manage workload and set realistic expectations. Fostering strong professional learning communities and investing in equitable digital infrastructure are crucial for creating a supportive environment. Ultimately, the future of education hinges on empowering teachers to navigate the complexities of the digital age, ensuring that their evolving identity and professionalism are not just preserved but enhanced, allowing them to thrive as guides and mentors in the dynamic online learning ecosystem. By proactively addressing the concerns and implementing strategic interventions, we can ensure that teachers remain at the heart of quality education, regardless of the modality.



References

1. Abdalgane, M. (2023). Professionalism in the classroom: How online learning influences English language instructors. *Contemporary Educational Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.30935/cedtech/13741>
2. Abuhussein, H., & Badah, A. (2024). Exploring the Impact of Online Teaching Environment on EFL Teachers' Professional Identity. *Electronic Journal of e-Learning*. <https://doi.org/10.34190/ejel.22.5.3280>
3. Alshammari, A. N., et al. (2022). The shift from face-to-face to online teaching due to COVID-19: Its impact on higher education faculty's professional identity. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 3, 100139. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijedro.2022.100139.
4. Amira El-Soussi. "The Shift from Face-to-Face to Online Teaching Due to COVID-19: Its Impact on Higher Education Faculty's Professional Identity." *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 2022.
5. Bozkurt, A., & Sharma, R. C. (2020). *Emergency remote teaching in a time of global crisis due to the CoronaVirus pandemic*. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3778083>
6. Bruggeman, B., et al. (2025). Effects of online teacher professional development on teacher-, classroom-, and student-level outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Computers & Education*, 105247. DOI: 10.1016/j.compedu.2025.105247.
7. Celebi, E., & Eraldemir-Tuyan*, S. (2022). Transformative Experiences of EFL Lecturers' Professional Identity in Online Education. *European Journal of Educational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.11.2.795>
8. Dayal, S. (2023). Online education and its effect on teachers during COVID-19—A case study from India. *PLOS ONE*, 18. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282287>
9. DeCoito, I., & Estaiteyeh, M. (2022). Online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic: Exploring science/STEM teachers' curriculum and assessment practices in Canada. *Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Science Education Research*, 4(8). DOI: 10.1186/s43031-022-00048-z.
10. El-Soussi, A. (2022). The shift from face-to-face to online teaching due to COVID-19: Its impact on higher education faculty's professional identity. *International Journal of*



- Educational Research Open, 3, 100139 - 100139.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2022.100139>
11. El-Soussi, A. (2025). Teacher identity continuum: A framework for teacher identity shifts online. International Journal of Educational Research Open.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2024.100411>
 12. Ezgi Celebi, and Seden Eraldemir-Tuyan*. "Transformative Experiences of EFL Lecturers' Professional Identity in Online Education." European Journal of Educational Research, 2022.
 13. Hassan, M., Mirza, T., & Hussain, M. (2020). A Critical Review by Teachers on the Online Teaching-Learning during the COVID-19. International Journal of Education and Management Engineering. <https://doi.org/10.5815/ijeme.2020.05.03>
 14. Haya Fayyad Abuhussein, and Amjad Badah. "Exploring the Impact of Online Teaching Environment on EFL Teachers' Professional Identity." Electronic Journal of e-Learning, 2024.
 15. Hrastinski, S. (2008). *Asynchronous and synchronous e-learning*. Educause Quarterly, 31(4), 51–55. <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2008/11/asynchronous-and-synchronous-elearning>
 16. Huang, L. (2021). Experienced Efl Teachers' Professional Identity Construction: from Face-to-Face to Online Teaching.
 17. Jacqueline Baxter. "The Impact of Professional Learning on the Teaching Identities of Higher Education Lecturers," 2012.
 18. Jennifer C. Richardson, and Janet Alsup. "MOVING FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE KEYBOARD: HOW SEVEN TEACHERS CREATED THEIR ONLINE TEACHER IDENTITIES," 2015.
 19. Joshi, A., Vinay, M., & Bhaskar, P. (2020). Impact of coronavirus pandemic on the Indian education sector: perspectives of teachers on online teaching and assessments. Interact. Technol. Smart Educ., 18, 205-226. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ITSE-06-2020-0087>
 20. Kaihao Yuan, and Shuwen Liu. "Understanding EFL Instructor Identity Changes During Online Teaching in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study in China." RELC Journal : A Journal of Language Teaching and Research in Southeast Asia, 2021.



21. Kumar, R., et al. (2023). Online education and its effect on teachers during COVID-19—A case study from India. PMC. DOI:[10.1371/journal.pone.0282287] (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282287>)
22. McConnell, J., Tian, Z., & Yazan, B. (2024). Content-area teacher candidates' identity work in an online teacher education course. System. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103348>
23. Mingzhu Weng, Tingna Yang, Tingzhi Chang, and Xiaofang Ye. "College Teacher Identity Crisis and Its Improving Path in Online Courses During the Epidemic." Journal of Educational Technology and Innovation, 2023.
24. Moh, M., Fauyan, M., Nur, K., & Saprolla, D. (2024). ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF ONLINE LEARNING ON PROFESSIONALISM OF IN-SERVICE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AT ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS. Jurnal Pendidikan Islam. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v0i0.38463>
25. Moore, M. G., Dickson-Deane, C., & Galyen, K. (2011). *e-Learning, online learning, and distance learning environments: Are they the same?* The Internet and Higher Education, 14(2), 129–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2010.10.001>
26. Nazari, M., & Seyri, H. (2024). The role of teaching subject in teachers' online identity construction: an interpretative phenomenological approach. Technology, Pedagogy and Education, 33, 545 - 560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2024.2361679>
27. Philipsen, B., et al. (2025). Teachers' perceptions about online teaching: Analysis of their experiences and opportunities for knowledge sharing. International Journal of Educational Research Open, 100016. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijedro.2025.000160.
28. Rizka Safriyani, P. Retnaningdyah, Ahmad Munir, Zulfikri Malik, and Suhartono Suhartono. "Digital Lecturers in the Making: Identity Construction in Indonesia's Online English Language Teaching." Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology, 2025.
29. Sarkar, S., & Das, A. (2021). *School teachers' perception and challenges towards online teaching during COVID-19 pandemic in India: an econometric analysis*. Emerald Insight. DOI: [10.1108/aaouj-10-2021-0122] (<https://doi.org/10.1108/aaouj-10-2021-0122>)
30. Schwaller, D., & Çakır, N. (2025). Professional identity development in pre-service



- teachers: the impact of online informal mentoring. Professional Development in Education. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2025.2451892>
31. Selvaraj, A., Radhin, V., Ka, N., Benson, N., & Mathew, A. (2021). Effect of pandemic based online education on teaching and learning system. International Journal of Educational Development, 85, 102444 - 102444. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102444>
32. Singh, V., & Thurman, A. (2019). *How many ways can we define online learning? A systematic literature review of definitions of online learning (1988–2018)*. American Journal of Distance Education, 33(4), 289–306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2019.1663082>
33. Tsybulsky, D., & Muchnik-Rozanov, Y. (2023). The contribution of a project-based learning course, designed as a pedagogy of practice, to the development of preservice teachers' professional identity. Teaching and Teacher Education. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104020>
34. Tsybulsky, D., & Muchnik-Rozanov, Y. (2023). The contribution of a project-based learning course, designed as a pedagogy of practice, to the development of preservice teachers' professional identity. Teaching and Teacher Education. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104020>
35. University of Rochester, Center for Learning in the Digital Age. (n.d.). Online Teacher Identity. Retrieved from <https://www.rochester.edu/warner/lida/curated/online-teacher-identity/>.
36. Wang Xueyu, and Chen Ming. ““A Little Bit Out of Control”: Doing Identity-Work by Chinese University Teachers in Online Teachings,” 2020.
37. Wen, B., Wang, Q., Gooden, A., Grasso, F., Chen, Q., & Shen, J. (2023). The Dual-Challenge of Teaching Online in a Foreign Land: Understanding Western Foreign Teachers' Professional Identity and Confidence Development via a Transformative Learning Lens. The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 1 - 13. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-023-00723-3>
38. Wen, B., Wang, Q., Gooden, A., Grasso, F., Chen, Q., & Shen, J. (2023). The Dual-Challenge of Teaching Online in a Foreign Land: Understanding Western Foreign



Teachers' Professional Identity and Confidence Development via a Transformative Learning Lens. The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 1 - 13.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-023-00723-3>

39. Yueting Xu, and J. Tao. "The Pedagogical and Socio-Affective Dimensions of Identity Tensions and Teacher Agency: Case Studies of University English Teachers Teaching Online." Language Teaching Research, 2023.

