

**The role of social media in the Continuing Professional
Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers**

Saddah Aldossary

PhD

University of York

Education

September 2022

Abstract:

The impact of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) among Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers remains an underexplored area of research. This mixed-method study aimed to investigate the general CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers, the prevalent use of SNS platforms, and the specific role of SNS in their professional development. A sample of 182 Saudi EFL teachers participated in this study by completing online questionnaires, followed by in-depth interviews with 15 teachers and the evaluation of tweets from 10 EFL teachers. IBM SPSS and MAXQDA facilitated quantitative and qualitative data analysis, respectively.

The study revealed that general CPD practices among Saudi EFL teachers often involve self-directed learning, with SNS emerging as an informal yet valuable resource. Various SNS platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter (now called, X), Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram, are accessible to Saudi EFL teachers and have the potential to contribute significantly to their professional development. However, despite government initiatives such as Saudi Vision 2030 and Tatweer, there is a lack of formal systems to monitor SNS usage for CPD. Results indicated that Twitter is the most widely used SNS for CPD among Saudi EFL teachers due to its succinct nature, accessibility, and capacity to facilitate global discussions and collaborations. Teachers utilise Twitter to enhance their core knowledge, disseminate information, and engage with peers worldwide.

Nevertheless, this study identified several barriers to the effective use of SNS for CPD, including limited knowledge, time constraints, poor technical facilities, and teacher hesitation. Many participants expressed concerns about their proficiency in leveraging SNS for professional development and advocated for basic ICT infrastructure and formal training initiatives to address these challenges. In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of government intervention in providing essential ICT resources and implementing formal training programmes to promote the effective use of SNS for CPD among Saudi EFL teachers.

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am highly grateful to my research Supervisor, Professor Leah Roberts for her excellent supervision, highly valuable advice, abundant wisdom and much needed feedback without which I would not have been able to complete this research.

I am also thankful to all the teachers who took part in this research.

I am grateful to the administrative staff of the University for their timely assistance whenever I needed it.

Lastly, none of this would have been possible without love and support of my parents, wife and my dear children. I dedicate this work to them.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Key Terms Used in this Study:

This section defines the main concepts used in this thesis.

Teacher core knowledge: Teachers' knowledge of pedagogic practices, including student assessment, the provision of new knowledge to students, and classroom management (Sparks, 1994). Other authors (Huang & Guo, 2019; Nguyen, 2016) have added knowledge of subject curricula and subject proficiency to teacher core knowledge. This leads to how core knowledge can be improved.

Teacher professional development (PD): Formal and informal processes and programmes adding to teacher core knowledge (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). These procedures are time-limited and have a measurable outcome (e.g., increasing the rates of students' acquisition of new knowledge).

Teacher continuing professional development (CPD): PD processes and programmes without a time limitation and not necessarily leading to measurable outcomes (Priajana, 2017). Teachers acquire new core knowledge from textbooks, social media, or their colleagues; this leads to searching for new core knowledge and applying the acquired pedagogic practices in the classroom. Thus, CPD is cyclical. Despite the significance of this term, there exists no universally accepted definition of CPD. Sparks (1994) designated this concept as 'staff development', while Ono and Ferreira (2010) focused on 'professional development'. The lack of such clarification means that different governments and other stakeholders (e.g., the International Association of Educators) implement different approaches to CPD, with no clear recommendation on which of these frameworks is the most beneficial.

While there is no clear definition of CPD, the following are typically considered as the drivers of CPD.

Teacher identity: Teachers' perceptions of their function and role in the educational sector. For example, teacher's identity can focus exclusively on providing new knowledge or preparing students to engage in self-learning (Lam, 2019; Basoz, 2016). This directs what information is acquired by engaging in CPD.

Teacher speciality: This concept refers to the subject matter taught by teachers and determines teacher's core knowledge and what information is sought during CPD. For science teachers (e.g., maths), core knowledge is limited to pedagogical and subject knowledge (Kaskens,

Segers, Goei, van Luit & Verhoeven, 2020). Language teachers also include language proficiency and culture knowledge as their core knowledge (Collins & O'Brien, 2011).

Social media websites or **social networking sites (SNS)**: Digital platforms allowing for instant communications and content sharing between users. During CPD, teachers use social media to communicate with colleagues, acquire new teaching resources, such as training videos, and discuss digitally-assisted learning and other trends in pedagogic practices (Prestridge, 2019). Although SNS are tools of CPD, there is no knowledge of the specific areas of teacher core knowledge that SNS add to.

To address the above gap, this study focuses on English as a foreign language teaching.

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL): The provision of knowledge of English to students for whom English is not a native language. In this context, language teachers need to be proficient in English to accurately assess their students' written and oral tests and exercises (Sparks, 1994). Knowledge of English-speaking cultures informs what linguistic constructions, lexemes, and rules are prioritised by teachers (Huang & Guo, 2019; Nguyen, 2016).

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction to this Study

This thesis focuses on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Saudi Arabia. CPD for teachers frequently occurs in cooperative learning, defined as a process in which two or more individuals consciously collaborate to achieve specific educational objectives, such as improving their language proficiency (Ono & Ferreira, 2010; Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Two primary outcomes of CPD are considered. Firstly, CPD is assumed to contribute to teachers' core knowledge, which directly influences their ability to fulfil their job responsibilities (Sparks, 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 1975; van Bommel et al., 2020). Secondly, CPD may enable teachers to acquire new formal qualifications, such as degrees or certificates (Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Ono & Ferreira, 2010; Prestridge, 2019).

Informal interactions and collaborations among teachers from diverse backgrounds have been shown to positively impact the CPD of higher education teachers in the United Kingdom. These interactions contribute to the advancement of teachers' core knowledge and are now facilitated by social networking sites, connecting teachers from different locations (Nerantzi, 2015; Sharma, 2022). Social networking sites (SNS) can serve as tools for facilitating cooperative learning among teachers. They are commonly used for communication and have the potential to enable teachers to jointly establish specific educational goals and share resources to achieve these objectives, such as academic articles or exposure to other teachers' experiences (Prestridge, 2019).

For EFL teachers, as English is both the core knowledge that needs development and the means of developing subject core knowledge, SNS could potentially play a vital role in CPD. However, there is a significant knowledge gap regarding the use of SNS to contribute to the CPD of EFL teachers, especially in terms of its impact on core knowledge. Social interaction has been shown to positively impact CPD for EFL teachers, as evidenced by studies on focus groups formed to communicate, such as Critical Friends Groups (CFG). CFG involves professional development activities, encouraging instructors to work together, leading to introspection about teaching methods and positive changes in practice (Vo et al., 2010; Ratten & Usmanij, 2020).

To address this research gap, this thesis focuses on CPD among EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, CPD is typically conducted through regional education training centres, with PD programmes lasting only two weeks (Collins & O'Brien, 2011, Alzhrani, 2023). Saudi Arabian EFL teachers often rely on informal communication tools, like SNS, outside of formal PD programmes to gain new core knowledge and connect with native English speakers.

In contrast to Saudi Arabia's approach, the TESOL International Association recommends CPD programmes that include seminars and conferences on virtual reality-assisted learning and other innovative pedagogical models, aligning with international CPD standards (TESOL, 2019). Saudi Arabia is working towards implementing CPD programmes that conform to the international 'gold standard' of CPD (TESOL, 2019; Vision, 2020; Vision 2030).

The following figure summarises essential data on teachers' CPD in this context.

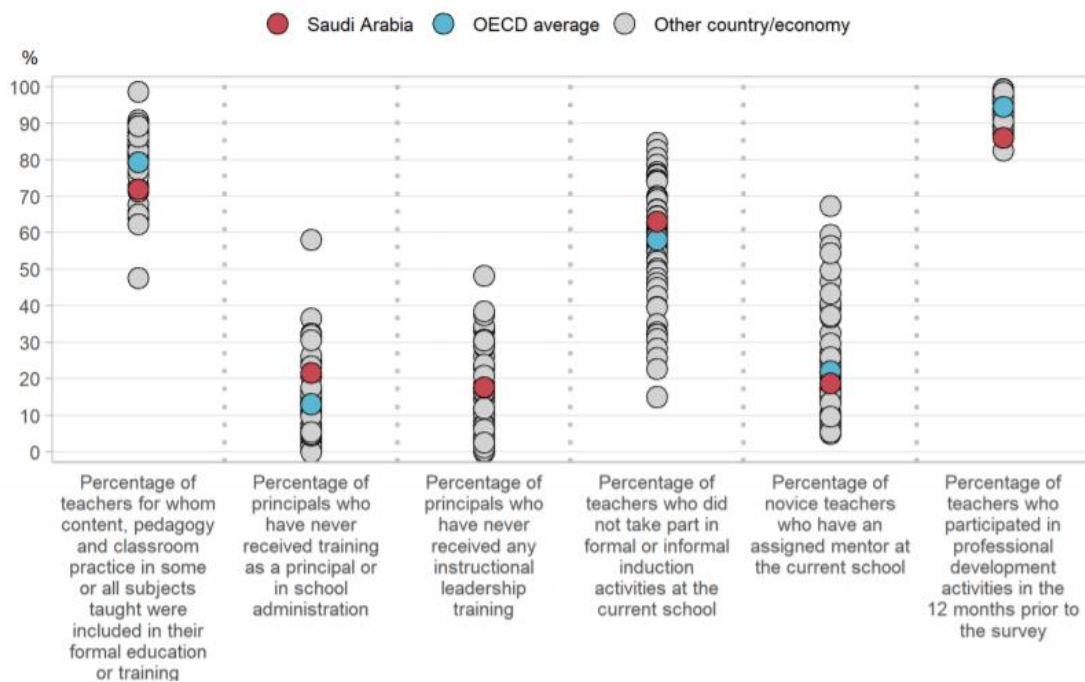


Figure 1: Teacher CPD Statistics in Saudi Arabia

Source: OECD (2020, 1)

As per the OECD (2020) data in Figure 1, Saudi Arabia's performance in terms of effective CPD programmes or processes, compared to other countries, is average or below average. For example, only 72% of teachers reported that pedagogy and classroom practice had been

included in their education and training, which is 8% lower than the OECD (2020) average. Similarly, the percentage of teachers who did not participate in induction activities at their schools is 6% lower than the OECD (2020) statistic. This comparison highlights the need for new findings on how Saudi Arabian teachers can enhance their CPD outcomes, especially given the absence of official national guidelines for CPD (Ratten & Usmanij, 2020).

In Western countries, teacher PD typically encompasses cooperative learning through joint seminars, conferences, and the use of SNS platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for digital communications (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). However, Saudi Arabia has a centralised education system overseen by the Ministry of Education, limiting teachers' ability to introduce new classroom practices independently, including innovative assessment methods (Albeladi, 2016). Thus, changing CPD practices among Saudi teachers can be challenging. Since all formal PD strategies are designed by individual training centres, teachers may turn to SNS for CPD in their free time, without support from regional training centres. This lack of training and support may limit the effectiveness of innovative tools like SNS for learning new core knowledge among Saudi EFL teachers.

This critique of CPD in Saudi Arabia applies to English Language teaching, as Saudi Vision 2030 aims to transition the economy towards a knowledge-based one, with English teachers playing a pivotal role in equipping Saudi Arabian workers with the language skills needed for global communication (Al Asmari, 2016). However, the approach taken in Saudi Arabia to develop the core knowledge of English teachers, including language and cultural knowledge, is inconsistent with international best practices. While teachers in the USA and Europe can access educational resources and collaborate with colleagues worldwide using platforms like TeachHUB, there is no evidence of Saudi EFL teachers using such platforms for CPD (TeachHUB, 2020). Saudi Arabia lacks custom-built systems like TeachHUB that serve as electronic repositories of teacher-specific knowledge. Some formal PD programs like TPD (Teacher Professional Development) focus on female teachers' core knowledge at secondary school levels (Aldhafiri & Aldhafiri, 2020), and there are a few social media handles providing updates in various disciplines but are not regulated by any authority (Sharma, 2022).

Empirical studies in other contexts suggest SNS use can enhance the core knowledge of EFL teachers, including pedagogic knowledge, subject knowledge, and cultural knowledge. SNS enables networking, knowledge sharing, and staying updated with the latest developments (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Worden, 2019). These interactions among teachers from different

regions can contribute to enhancing core knowledge. However, there is no clear link established between SNS use for CPD among Saudi EFL teachers, which this study aims to investigate.

This thesis also identifies a research gap concerning EFL teachers' general social media use in the Middle East. In the UK and the US, English teachers reported that their language proficiency, knowledge of English-speaking cultures, and familiarity with new pedagogic practices were positively impacted by social media use (Holmes et al., 2013). For instance, a study on WhatsApp groups showed that the use of audio messages effectively increased individuals' knowledge (Minalla, 2018). In Saudi Arabia, residents have distrust towards social media, and they rarely engage with social media accounts of academic professionals or scientists when seeking information. This may be influenced by the population's religious inclinations (Alhaddad, 2018), which makes it unclear how the CPD of Saudi Arabian English teachers is related to their social media use, a gap this thesis seeks to address.

To enhance teacher CPD and core knowledge, Saudi Arabia has implemented formal programmes and interventions in recent decades, such as the 'Every Child Needs a Teacher' project, aimed at improving students' reading outcomes (Fountas & Pinnell, 2018). Saudi Arabian English teachers currently employ 3D games, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) software to teach lexemes, linguistic constructions, and English use in social and academic contexts (Alasimi, 2018). While previous research strongly implies that knowledge sharing through cooperative learning via SNS is effective for teacher CPD (Carpenter & Harvey, 2019), there is no available data on how the use of social media by English teachers in Saudi Arabia contributes to the positive outcomes of formal and informal CPD programmes and initiatives (Nguyen, 2016; Huang & Guo, 2019).

1.2. Background of this Research

This thesis distinguishes between SNS, and digital professional development tools used by English teachers (McCulloch, McIntosh & Barrett, 2011). The former can be utilised for both personal and professional purposes, such as sharing knowledge with other English teachers or communicating with one's family (Damico & Krutka, 2018; Damico & Panos, 2018). Professional development can be achieved through formal and informal means. Formal means include programs designed by the government or academic institutions, while informal means are self-directed, such as visiting a physical library or discussing new learning with colleagues (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019).

Digital professional development tools are exclusively intended for professional purposes and are created by think-tanks and teacher committees. More institutions are exploring innovative ways to provide teachers with learning opportunities, which may lead to an increase in using online technologies for professional development activities. Online professional development is a viable avenue for enhancing learning possibilities, promoting professional interaction, and helping to develop teachers to become more comfortable using technological tools (Little & Housand, 2011). Typically, participation in such projects has limited access and is mainly controlled by institutions. Therefore, EFL teachers may encounter obstacles in using digital professional development tools to acquire knowledge of English culture or improve their language proficiency (Borg, 2015).

The distinction between SNS and digital professional development tools is justified since SNS can serve both personal and professional purposes, potentially leading to the acquisition of cultural and language knowledge, which are crucial for CPD, particularly for EFL teachers. This thesis exclusively focuses on SNS and does not investigate digital professional development tools. In contrast to professional development tools, the full impact of social media on the CPD of EFL teachers remains largely unexplored. While Borg (2015) suggested that social media can provide lifelong continuous learning skills, it does not specify the exact capabilities and knowledge gained by academic professionals. Similarly, Carpenter and Harvey (2019), as well as Carpenter and Krutka (2015), suggest that SNS benefit CPD by enabling teachers from different countries to establish cooperative learning environments and jointly achieve CPD objectives.

All SNS provide users with the ability to create online personas, form lists of online friends, and interact with other users to establish networks and relationships. The terms "SNS" and "social media" are occasionally used interchangeably when referring to Web 2.0 technology. However, social media refers to any internet-based platforms that allows users to share content in various formats, such as images and videos, and engage with the content (Sharma, 2022). YouTube, for instance, is social media that enables users to publish content in video format (Vance et al., 2017). The realm of education is one area where the impact of social media is noticeable. Clark (2012) contends that changes in human communication are already affecting educators and outlines three stages in the effect of social media on education. The first phase involves educators using social media to help one another and facilitate their personal and professional growth. In the second phase, educators begin using social media to develop

instructional content for students. In the third phase, students take on the task of creating content for themselves and their teachers (Clark, 2012; Xerri, 2017).

However, the extent to which the theory of Cooperative Learning can explain the use of SNS by non-native EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia remains unclear. These teachers face challenges, such as a lack of computer knowledge or access to devices, including smartphones or tablets, which may hinder their use of SNS (Carpenter & Krutka, 2015). Using social media in CPD aligns with the theory of cooperative learning, which posits that teachers learn best when working in groups with other academic professionals to generate new pedagogic knowledge (Sparks, 1994; Prestridge, 2019). Before the advent of SNS, cooperative learning was achieved by dividing professionals into heterogeneous and homogeneous groups (Basoz, 2016).

In the US, English teachers use Facebook, Twitter, and TeachHUB for this purpose (Murray & Ward, 2019). However, the context in Saudi Arabia presents unique challenges, including poor internet connectivity and internet censorship, as all internet traffic is routed through a local proxy farm (Al-Shammari, 2015; Shishkina & Issaev, 2018; Rahimi & Gupta, 2020). These challenges may limit Saudi Arabian English teachers' access to the same knowledge available to their colleagues in Western countries. Despite the significance of these challenges, there are no academic studies highlighting how these context-specific limitations to social media use affect the CPD of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia (Borg, 2015).

Besides acquiring new knowledge of pedagogy and the English language, English teachers can also use social media to form professional relationships with colleagues from Saudi Arabia or English-speaking countries (Al Asmari, 2016). Social Constructivism, which emphasises the significance of culture and context in understanding societal dynamics and creating knowledge, is strongly related to many modern theories, including the views of Vygotsky, Bruner, and Bandura's social cognitive theory (Yurkofsky et al., 2019). This aligns with the theory of social constructivism in learning, as it enables English teachers to enhance their knowledge of pedagogy and language through social interaction (Powell & Bodur, 2019; Yurkofsky et al., 2019). For example, a teacher in Saudi Arabia can use Twitter to seek clarifications from the authors of the English textbooks used in Saudi Arabian public schools, such as 'Get Ready', 'Flying High', and 'Lift Off', and design new reading and writing exercises. Some teachers choose to communicate solely with colleagues in Saudi Arabia, while others prefer to establish relationships with teachers in both the US and the UK. This thesis will examine EFL teachers' SNS use through the lens of cooperative learning and the social learning theory.

1.3. Research Rationale

As outlined above, it can be argued that Saudi Arabia needs new measures to improve the efficacy of the CPD of EFL teachers. English teachers in this setting struggle to implement effective pedagogic models and practices, including digitally assisted learning or open classroom discussions (Saqlain et al., 2013; Melibari, 2015; Alrasheedi, 2020). Saudi Arabian EFL teachers may be unaware of such developments or unwilling to integrate new techniques into their classroom practices (Alrabai, 2016). While the Saudi Arabian government does not fully restrict teacher CPD and the use of SNS, EFL teachers in this context often overlook SNS for CPD, despite its potential value as a CPD tool, due to cultural and religious beliefs (Alhaddad, 2018).

While the Saudi Arabian government has recently developed Future Gate in response to Saudi Vision 2030, a custom education portal acting as a database of videos and textbooks, the country has not provided precise figures detailing its efficacy. This initiative aims to bring digitalisation and transformation to the Saudi education system (Alhaddad, 2018). While the use of social media outside of formal CPD programs and initiatives might be a valid method of improving the CPD of EFL teachers, there is still a gap in the literature related to the use of SNS by Saudi EFL teachers and its impact, which is the focus of this study.

It is also important to distinguish between sources and resources, specifically in less privileged areas of Saudi Arabia, where accessing education remains a challenge (Alzhrani, 2023). Sources in this thesis refer to educational organisations, facilities, training centres, and infrastructure available for CPD, whereas resources include relevant funding, teachers, learning materials, including SNS, which support educational outcomes such as CPD. This highlights the potential difference between the CPD needs that are crucial or needed by the teachers and the actual benefits they might receive through the use of SNS.

For example, teachers may wish to use the latest educational technologies and SNS in the classroom to stay informed about pedagogical trends and improve their classroom practices, aligning with the central objectives of CPD (Alzhrani, 2023). However, in reality, the use of SNS by teachers can pose challenges such as a lack of technological expertise in using SNS and the availability of extensive information on different social media platforms, resulting in cognitive overload, which may make teachers reluctant to use SNS (Abdullateef et al., 2023).

EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia also face a shortage of resources for professional development, including not having access to the latest editions of textbooks or new recordings for listening exercises. This situation arises because of institutional policies and procedures where decision-

making authority does not belong to teachers (Goodyear et al., 2019). Teachers have reported a lack of laptops, multimedia tablet devices, projectors, and disruptions in their internet connections (Ashraf, 2018). Using SNS, a teacher can seek advice from colleagues in other Gulf countries on how to showcase multimedia materials without laptops or projectors. In such cases, multimedia materials can be shared with students, enabling them to learn independently from such resources, which could make the learning process even more challenging (Ashraf, 2018). While studies have suggested the value of using SNS for the CPD of teachers in the USA and Europe, there is a lack of research examining how SNS are used personally and professionally by EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia (Basoz, 2016).

1.4. Significance of this Research

Regarding the theory of Cooperative Learning, this thesis explores whether the use of SNS by Saudi Arabian EFL teachers can enhance CPD by enriching teachers' core knowledge (Sparks, 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 2017). This research project also seeks to identify particular patterns of SNS use that can be helpful for the CPD of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

1.5. Aim of this Research

This thesis aims to analyse the role of SNS in the CPD of English language teachers in Saudi Arabia. Based on the findings of studies related to CPD and communicative activities for EFL teachers, it is conceivable that SNS could make a positive contribution to EFL teachers' core knowledge, including pedagogic knowledge, cultural knowledge, and language knowledge (Sparks, 1994).

1.6. Objectives of this Research

1. To establish the general CPD activities available to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.
2. To establish which social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) Saudi teachers use most to enhance their CPD and why?
3. To identify the extent to which Saudi ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers use social media for professional development.
4. To identify which SNS Saudi ESL teachers predominately use for professional development.
5. To identify the benefits of social media as a CPD tool from the perspective of teachers.

6. To identify the challenges of social media regarding its use as a CPD tool for teachers.

1.7. Research Questions

In order to address the above objectives, the following research questions are answered in this research:

- What are the general CPD practices of Saudi Arabian EFL teachers?
- Which social networking sites (SNS) (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) do Saudi teachers use most to enhance their CPD? Why?
- To what extent do Saudi English teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD? Why?
- For what purposes do Saudi English teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD?
- What kind of assistance/training do Saudi English teachers need with the use of SNS to enhance their CPD?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This study focuses on the utilisation of Social Networking Sites (SNS) by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in Saudi Arabia and its potential impact on enhancing EFL teachers' core knowledge. This enhancement, in turn, holds the promise of improving the outcomes of teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which can then potentially positively impact their students' learning in the future. In light of this, the following sections not only review the current body of knowledge concerning CPD and SNS but also consider their relevance within the unique educational context of Saudi Arabia.

The first subsection of Chapter 2 commences by explaining distinctions in the fundamental definitions of CPD and the application of social media within the education sector. This foundational understanding is essential in order to contextualise the subsequent discussion.

Following this, the remaining sections of Chapter 2 examine how CPD is currently integrated into the prevailing paradigms of English language instruction in Saudi Arabia. By scrutinising the existing landscape, this study aims to recognise the specific areas where SNS can be instrumental in augmenting EFL teachers' core knowledge. Finally, this chapter concludes by presenting the framework that underpins this study.

2.2. Defining Continuing Professional Development

This thesis distinguishes between CPD and PD of EFL teachers. CPD encompasses professional development activities driven by teachers themselves (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Reynolds, 2006; Ravandpour, 2019). Teachers can pursue professional development in areas that appeal to them personally, such as using virtual reality for teaching. Social media and other learning strategies, whether formal or informal, can work together to create a cooperative learning environment (Prestridge, 2019). As part of CPD, teachers regularly document the skills and outcomes achieved during learning. Formal qualifications are not always the outcome of CPD initiatives and interventions (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). There may be other outcomes of CPD initiatives beyond formal qualifications, such as CPD, can improve subject specific knowledge and skills of teachers, which can cause their improved confidence, motivation, and

job performance (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Khan & Umrani, 2023). Other outcomes may also include improved opportunities, such as networking with colleagues and subject experts, critical reflection and improved problem solving (Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019).

This suggests that CPD has the potential to empower teachers to direct their own professional development in a rapid and ever-changing education landscape (Cleary et al., 2022). This idea shows that teachers need to take charge of their own learning to be more effective (Cleary et al., 2022; Njenga, 2023). Teachers can align their own professional development with CPD goals to reinforce its importance and relevance (Prestridge, 2019; Njenga, 2023). For instance, in EFL teaching, teachers focusing on a collaborative learning environment through social media may find platforms like Instagram and Twitter empowering for exchanging pedagogical knowledge and practices, enhancing instructional abilities and fostering collaboration (Prestridge, 2019; Carpenter et al., 2023).

PD refers to both formal and informal learning interventions (Loucks-Horsley, 1996; Komba & Nkumbi, 2008). In contrast to CPD, PD programmes are directed by third parties like teachers, employers, or local ministries of education. Completion of PD interventions often leads to formal qualifications (Sparks, 1994; Akerson & Hanuscin, 2007). While teachers track CPD outcomes independently, PD results are typically assessed by schools, ministries, and similar authorities in education (Mitchell, 2013). However, this poses a problem, as noted by Afshar and Doosti (2022), who state that professional development (PD) courses which are planned and arranged by departments and/or administrators may be less effective in addressing teachers' needs and the authors give evidence by evaluating a peer-coached PD program which as per their findings is more effective in addressing teachers' needs as shown by the improvement in teachers' skills and satisfaction as compared to the PD courses designed by department and/or administrators. Afshar and Doosti (2022) suggest that effective professional development (PD) courses involve teachers' selecting course content and using active engagement through reflective practice and collaboration to enhance PD course efficiency (Abakah, 2023; Alzhrani, 2023).

It is therefore important to differentiate between CPD and PD. Table 1 differentiates between CPD and PD:

Table 1: Differentiating CPD and PD

Category	CPD	PD
Definition	Teacher-driven, informal, self-directed	Third-party directed, formal, mandated
Outcomes	Skills documentation, not always formal qualifications	Often leads to formal qualifications
Empowerment	Teachers take charge of their learning	Limited choice, institution-driven
Influence	Teacher's goals aligned with CPD	External assessment, school and ministry-directed
Policy	More flexible, teacher-driven policies	Top-down policies, institutional demands

Adapted from Diaz-Maggioli (2003), Reynolds (2006), Ono & Ferreira (2010), Prestridge (2019), Ravandpour (2019), Cleary et al. (2022), Carpenter et al. (2023), Njenga (2023)

One of the primary reasons why teachers' needs are often disregarded during the development of professional development courses in Saudi Arabia is the heavy reliance on top-down policies (Alzhrani, 2023). This means that institutions organise professional development courses such as the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, along with local or international agents (Alzhrani, 2023). This framework implies that professional development for teachers in Saudi Arabia, including EFL teachers, is heavily influenced by socio-cultural factors and contextual teaching and learning pedagogies (Ahmad & Shah, 2022). As a result, addressing teachers' needs takes a backseat to the priority of meeting institutional requirements which reduces the effectiveness of professional development courses (Ahmad & Shah, 2022). Therefore, there are various challenges which impact upon the professional development of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. Table 2 provides the challenges in Saudi Arabia for Professional Development of EFL teachers and their impact:

Table 2: Challenges in Saudi Arabia's Professional Development for EFL Teachers

Challenge	Impact on Professional Development	Reference
Heavy reliance on top-down policies	Disregards teachers' needs for institutional demands, reduces effectiveness	Alzhrani (2023)
Socio-cultural factors	Heavily influenced by cultural and contextual factors, impacting teacher development	Ahmad & Shah (2022)
Time constraints	Limited time for collaborative planning, observation, and reflection	Al-Harbi & Ahmad (2022)
Lack of resources and materials	Impedes implementation of PD programs due to inadequate resources	Almuhammadi (2020)
Lack of training and support	Teachers face challenges due to lack of administrative support and clear guidelines	OECD (2020)

EFL teachers can participate in both formal and informal PD programmes, such as receiving a certificate from the International TESOL Association. Teachers can gain new knowledge from social media and working with colleagues, which differs from formal PD interventions (Sparks, 1994). These sources of new knowledge are commonly referred to as ‘natural learning experiences’ (Sparks, 1994) which means that individuals may effectively learn without formal education. CPD takes into consideration a holistic approach to professional development, involving various forms of learning besides formal training programmes (Hinojosa, 2022). For example, when EFL teachers engage in CPD, they usually take part in activities such as using resources which are available on social media, attending workshops, conferences, seminars which allow them to discover new ideas, views and practices which are appropriate to their teaching context (Zein, 2017).

Teachers do not deliberately choose mandatory PD programmes, since they by definition are imposed ‘from above’ by their institutions or top-down policy-makers (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003). However, these interventions can still provide opportunities for natural learning experiences. For example, an EFL teacher can discuss language teaching strategies on social media with his/her online peers and can share experiences, explore various teaching approaches which enable teachers to gain different viewpoints and practices (Abdulrazak, 2020). This is an example of PD being used for natural learning experiences because learning through collaborations and discussions with peers is an informal/natural way to learn as against a formal PD programme, and these informal collaborations and discussions with peers are the significant features of natural learning experiences in PD. These collaborations on social media, driven by the individual initiative of teachers, result in creating a vibrant learning environment which strengthens acquiring new knowledge and expertise (Assalahi, 2021).

Involvement in formal PD programmes can be seen as a facet of CPD; engagement in CPD can extend beyond participation in formal PD interventions (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Reynolds, 2006). For example, CPD stimulates teachers to reflect upon their teaching methods and to utilise innovative strategies in classrooms so to develop experiential learning which improve teachers’ ability to adjust to changing educational needs (Addae, 2022). Thus, role of CPD is vital in creating natural learning experiences by facilitating teachers to engage in self-directed learning initiatives, motivated by teachers’ commitment to enhance their effectiveness as teachers (Addae, 2022).

Although the review of existing literature provides a framework for distinguishing between CPD and PD, a precise definition of CPD remains elusive (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Reynolds, 2006; Kryvonis, 2013; OECD, 2020). In most studies on this subject (Komba & Nkumbi, 2008; Ono & Ferreira, 2010), the terms ‘CPD’ and ‘PD’ are frequently used interchangeably. To address this lack of precise definition in existing literature, the term ‘CPD’ is often either substituted or considered synonymous with various other terms. For example, CPD is synonymous with various other constructs such as ‘teacher development’ or ‘staff development’ (Sparks, 1994), ‘lifelong learning’ (Craig et al., 1998), ‘professional learning,’ ‘career development,’ ‘human resource development’ (Bolom & McMahan, 2005), and ‘professional development’ (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). Thus, the terms which will be employed throughout this thesis will be ‘CPD’, ‘PD’, ‘teacher development’, and ‘professional learning’.

Regardless of the adopted definition, it can be contended that CPD aims to enhance teachers’ capabilities for improving student learning outcomes (Lalitha, 2005; Mizell, 2010). Various

definitions often highlight distinct means through which teachers achieve this aim. For instance, the concept of 'career development' underscores the importance of enthusiastic participation in career planning and developmental opportunities, including internal promotions (Bolom & McMahon, 2005). The notion of 'lifelong learning' focuses on fostering teacher motivation for self-improvement (Bolom & McMahon, 2005). The absence of a precise CPD definition results in the absence of established guidelines on which teaching practices should be encompassed to cultivate an effective CPD approach. Thus, delineating recommendations regarding specific actions (e.g., engaging with Western English teachers) to enhance CPD becomes challenging.

Ravandpour (2019) views CPD as a strategy for professionals to enhance their skills and adapt to changing demands in their field. This can be achieved by regularly taking part in programmes that provide updates on professional practices (Ravandpour, 2019). Besides this, CPD interventions in EFL mostly focus on the active involvement of teachers and adoption of reflective practices (Alzhrani, 2023). For example, the study conducted by Bayram & Bıkmaz (2021) focuses on implementing lesson study as a mean to develop professional development for EFL teachers and argue that lesson study such as collaborative lesson planning, observing peers and reflective discussions among EFL teachers facilitated them in refining their instructional strategies and enabled teachers to adapt their teaching to students' needs and experiment with innovative approaches. Using lesson study can speed up an open exchange of ideas, encouraging a sense of community and shared responsibility which can positively affect the professional development of EFL teachers (Richardson & Diaz Maggioli, 2018). Therefore, it is argued that in-service teacher training should incorporate these discussions among EFL teachers to refine their instructional strategies, enable teachers to adapt their teaching to students' needs, and experiment with innovative approaches (Kincal et al., 2019; Bayram & Bıkmaz, 2021).

However, there are challenges involved in using lesson study for the professional development of teachers. Time constraints pose a significant challenge for using lesson study as it requires teachers to dedicate substantial time to collaborative planning, observation and reflective discussions (Ab Rashid, 2018). This can be difficult for teachers who have a jam-packed syllabus to cover, as noted by Bayram & Bıkmaz (2021) and Kovashian et al. (2022). The problem of time constraints is specifically relevant in the context of Saudi Arabia as EFL teachers find it difficult to engage in lesson study because of extensive curriculum and this is more the case for Saudi Arabia than in other countries due to which teachers may not have adequate time to provide a lesson study which call for detailed collaboration and reflection,

thus, undermining the effectiveness of lesson study for the professional development of EFL teachers (OECD, 2020; Al-Harbi & Ahmad, 2022).

Another issue regarding lesson study as a means of professional development of teachers is logistics. Logistical problems may include a lack of classrooms, a lack of required resources and scant materials including availability of ICT in classrooms and a lack of means to exchange feedback among teachers such as social media platforms (Almuhammadi, 2020; Bayram & Bıkmaz, 2021). Issues such as a lack of training, inadequate scaffolding from administration in schools, and strict hierarchical mandates can also affect the professional development of teachers, including EFL teachers (El Deen, 2023). These problems are specifically prevalent in Saudi EFL teachers because of lack of sound support from schools' administration/management and teachers face issues related to training, time and resources and addressing these issues require strong administrative support and inclusion of clear guidelines about CPD as a part of teachers' training programmes (OECD, 2020; Alzhrani, 2023).

To resolve these problems in EFL teaching, such as teaching grammar, teachers can attend hands-on workshops to improve their pedagogical skills (Almuhammadi, 2020). Teachers can also be trained in designing resources that align with students' needs and are contextually appropriate (Alruqi & Alharbi, 2022). Including language improvement courses as a part of teachers' training programmes can enhance the CPD of EFL teachers (Almuhammadi, 2020). This does not readily happen in context of Saudi Arabia and these initiatives should be implemented. Hence, by addressing these issues, professional development initiatives can be more effective and appropriate as per the needs of EFL teachers and to improve the learning outcomes/benefits as shown in Table 3. Table 3 provides different CPS activities/platforms for Saudi EFL teachers and their benefits:

Table 3: CPD activities and platforms for Saudi EFL Teachers

CPD Activity or Platform	Description	Benefits	Reference
Social Media (e.g., Instagram, Twitter)	Engaging in discussions, sharing ideas, and resources	Collaborative learning, sharing best practices	Prestridge (2019), Carpenter et al. (2023)

Lesson Study	Collaborative lesson planning, peer observations	Improves instructional strategies, fosters collaboration	Bayram & Bıkmaz (2021), Richardson & Diaz Maggioli (2018)
Hands-on Workshops	Practical training in teaching skills	Enhances pedagogical skills, contextual learning	Almuhammadi (2020)
Language Improvement Courses	Training in language skills and resources design	Improves language teaching, contextually appropriate	Alruqi & Alharbi (2022)
Online Communities and Forums	Engaging with a network of teachers, sharing ideas	Exchange of ideas, innovative technology adoption	Licain (2023), Njenga (2023)

Although the inherent ambiguity within CPD definitions in academic literature as well as in practice is fully acknowledged, this thesis adopts the definition of CPD provided by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (2012). This definition aligns with recent empirical studies on the topic (Al Asmari, 2016; Wabule, 2016; Addae, 2022; Ahmad & Shah, 2022; Cleary et al., 2022; Kavoshian et al., 2022; Abakah, 2023; Alzhrani, 2023; El Deen 2023; Njenga, 2023), which concluded that CPD serves as a mechanism for teachers to go beyond their initial training and adapt to emerging trends within the educational landscape, such as introducing virtual blackboards and similar technologies. According to the definition presented by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (2012), CPD contains three pivotal components:

- Continuing: CPD enables teachers to engage in a cyclical process of self-reflection and learning. It aids them in identifying essential attributes and skills needed for their ongoing development, serving as a valuable tool for career planning.
- Professional: CPD offers a platform for articulating the competencies and attributes essential to effective teaching. Teachers are not only tasked with enhancing these

proficiencies but also with acquiring knowledge about the skill demands prevalent within the local education sector (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012).

- Development: CPD must not be considered a box-ticking exercise to show that it has achieved specific requirements. Development should be a continuously developing professional practice for a teacher to be effective (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012).

The framework above shows that CPD follows a cyclical pattern. For instance, when a teacher discovers the utility of digital blackboards in teaching English, this newfound knowledge could spark a subsequent interest in exploring digital blackboards and other technological tools for EFL instruction (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012). The acquisition of fresh insights through CPD has the potential to inspire teachers to seek further knowledge within their academic domain or broader pedagogical sphere (Al Asmari, 2016; Wabule, 2016; Addae, 2022; Ahmad & Shah, 2022; Cleary et al., 2022; Kavoshian et al., 2022; Abakah, 2023; Alzhrani, 2023; El Deen 2023; Njenga, 2023). Thus, the term 'cyclicity' also implies that CPD is not confined by time constraints but spans the entirety of one's professional journey (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012).

Although it may be helpful, the CPD definition from the General Teaching Council for Scotland (2012) does not mention how to measure the outcomes and quality of CPD. At first, teachers are certified, but later professional development can have different results based on individual motivation of teachers as teachers who are more motivated are more likely to pursue CPD activities as against teachers who are less motivated and these varying levels of motivation of teachers can have different results on the effectiveness and outcomes of teachers' CPD. (Bradley, 1983; Abakah, 2023). CPD is influenced by how motivated teachers are, and they often self-assess instead of reporting externally (Bradley, 1983; Lenkaitis, 2020; Njenga, 2023). TeachHUB is a platform where EFL teachers in developed Western nations share their CPD outcomes and collaborate. In contrast, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries lack similar mechanisms to capture CPD outcomes effectively.

Understanding what drives CPD helps differentiate between 'lifelong learning', 'teacher development', and 'staff development'. Western English teachers are viewed as role-models by Saudi English teachers because of their effective teaching practices, including the use of digital tools (Shahri, 2018; Lenkaitis, 2020; Alzhrani, 2023). The CPD journey of Saudi teachers is influenced by various factors including classroom interactions, research, and

insights from Western experts (Hassel, 1999; Day, 1999; Ahmad & Shah, 2022; Alzhrani, 2023). Should an English teacher express dissatisfaction with their school's reliance on formal assessments over open-ended classroom discussions, they may turn to social media platforms to explore alternatives like FluentU or RubiStar, which complement formal assessments (Craig et al., 1998; Njenga, 2023).

For example, RubiStar helps teachers in creating rubrics which are based on clear evaluation criteria and using FluentU provides an extensive range of authentic content including videos, music and discussions, enhancing language learning by offering real-world context (Licain, 2023). A teacher seeking information about FluentU might engage with its developers via platforms like Twitter or Facebook. This interaction could prompt the adoption of FluentU within the classroom and further foster social media interactions between the language teacher and fellow FluentU users (Licain, 2023). This suggests that EFL teachers are more likely to use interactive methods as against formal assessments if these do not match with their teaching objectives and teachers may pursue substitutes such as social media to develop their teaching methods (Aprianti et al., 2021; Hu, 2022; Njenga, 2023). EFL teachers with the use of social media are more likely to engage with extensive network of teachers via digital communities, exchange ideas and use innovative technologies which can all contribute towards developing teachers' CPD (Njenga, 2023).

The above definition of CPD has focused only on teachers gaining new knowledge by consciously searching for new information online or using physical sources and communications with their colleagues (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012; Njenga, 2023). This approach does not address how new knowledge gained during CPD affects student performance; as a result, it is difficult to capture the outcomes of CPD besides teachers' self-reflective reports (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Collins & O'Brien, 2011; Njenga, 2023).

It is important to analyse the relationship between professional development of teachers and student learning. However, the relationship between teachers' professional development and student learning is complex (Strong, 2022). Many studies have explored the comprehensive nature of CPD, but they have not definitively established a direct correlation between teachers' professional development and student learning. For example, Goodyear et al. (2019) have conducted a study about assessing the outcomes of CPD on students' learning. Goodyear et al. (2019) note that the CPD paths adopted by the teachers in their study resulted and improvement of their instructional strategies, classroom management methods and overall teaching

efficiency, thus, these improvements resulted in enhanced student learning experiences and improved educational results, hence, signifying the practical importance of CPD. Goodyear et al. (2019) measured these improvements by analysing factors such as how engaged teachers felt in using the professional learning communities (PLCs) such as Twitter's #pechat and how the shared practices such as discussions between teachers on #pechat resulted in development of new practices which teachers could use in their classroom lessons.

Teachers can plan diverse objectives for their CPD. For instance, they might target elevating student engagement in open discussions or enhancing writing skills (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Wilcox, 2005; Chouana, 2022). In Australia and Europe, teachers frequently submit self-reflective information and student feedback, outlining their CPD objectives and the strategies employed to attain them (Stevenson et al., 2016; Valdmann et al., 2017; Mercer et al., 2022). However, it remains uncertain to what extent Saudi Arabia adopts this practice (Shahri, 2018; Lenkaitis, 2020). The precise manner in which EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia utilise cooperative learning theory and related tools (including SNS) to strengthen their CPD remains unclear.

To summarise, the following points illustrate the primary similarities within the current definitions of CPD:

1. CPD integrates natural learning experiences arising from phenomena experienced within and beyond the classroom (such as independent research conducted at work).
2. CPD adheres to a cyclical model by deriving fresh knowledge from teachers' reflective experiences. This new knowledge drives subsequent actions, like implementing digital learning, and offers new insights.
3. CPD is sensitive to cultural contexts and commonly addresses specific classroom or school needs, including enhancing student literacy or elevating standardised test scores.

The aforementioned definition encompasses natural learning experiences, cyclicity, and teachers' capacity to select and tailor specific aims and objectives for CPD. Natural learning experiences encompass all events influencing the information sought and gained during CPD (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Wilcox, 2005; Mercer et al., 2022). For instance, if a student struggles with an intermediate English exam, teachers might seek Facebook blog posts discussing methods to assist struggling students. Subsequently, these posts might prompt teachers to engage with the authors via instant messages. This suggests that natural learning experiences originate from real-life circumstances, challenges (such as student struggles in an English

exam) and events which prompt teachers to search for new knowledge and strategies (such as teacher initiatives to search for information via Facebook blog posts) highlight the application of natural learning experiences in CPD (Rimmer & Floyd, 2020).

The absence of effective mechanisms for systematically tracking the CPD of Saudi Arabian EFL teachers beyond formal PD programmes remains clear (Shahri, 2018; Lenkaitis, 2020; Alzhrani, 2023). The specific strategies consistently employed by EFL educators in this context to gain new knowledge and the tools they deploy to fulfil their CPD objectives are still not clear (Alzhrani, 2023). The prevailing definitions of CPD and the underpinning theory of cooperative learning suggest that EFL teachers might find value in sharing their CPD outcomes with their peers, fostering collaborative initiatives to establish robust CPD frameworks (Johnson & Johnson, 1975; Kavoshian et al., 2022; Mercer et al., 2022). Thus, different CPD outcomes could offer different benefits for Saudi EFL teachers. Table 4 provides CPD outcomes and benefits for Saudi EFL teachers:

Table 4: CPD outcomes for Saudi EFL Teachers

CPD Outcome	Description	Benefits	Reference
Enhanced Instructional Strategies	Improved teaching methods and approaches	Increased student engagement, learning	Addae (2022), Alzhrani (2023)
Classroom Management Skills	Effective classroom organisation and discipline	Improved classroom environment, focus	Sparks (1994), Bayram & Bıkmaz (2021)
Technological Proficiency	Proficiency in using technology for teaching	Enhanced digital literacy, innovation	Shahri (2018), Prestridge (2019)
Language Teaching Skills	Improved language teaching methods and resources	Enhanced language learning, communication	Alruqi & Alharbi (2022), Licain (2023)

Collaboration and Networking	Building a professional network of educators	Sharing of ideas, mutual support	Mercer et al. (2022), Njenga (2023)
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The lack of a well-defined CPD model poses a significant obstacle, which may impede EFL teachers from crafting impactful and efficacious CPD strategies in the ever-changing educational landscape (Worden, 2019; Bohnke & Thiel, 2019; Abakah, 2023). It is imperative to address these gaps comprehensively to facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the CPD practices in the Saudi Arabian EFL teaching context. In order to address the gaps in understanding the CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers, Alzhrani (2023) notes that empirical research using case studies, interviews and surveys can be vital in obtaining an understanding of the methods, issues and preferences relating to the CPD of Saudi EFL teachers. For example, Mehdizadeh et al. (2023) note that using a longitudinal case study approach can be effective in understanding how EFL teachers over an extended time period engage in communities of practice which can be helpful in understanding how teachers' CPD evolve and it can equally offer a platform for shared experiences, collective learning and mutual identity formation among EFL which can be vital in improving teachers' CPD. Likewise Ahmad & Shah (2022), Mehdizadeh et al. (2023) and Zeng (2023) note that using collaborative practices on collaborative platforms can be helpful for EFL teachers to exchange their experiences, outcomes and approaches about CPD which can be helpful in developing best practices of CPD (Ma, 2022). Thus, different strategies to improve CPD for Saudi EFL teachers can offer different benefits as shown in Table 5. Thus, Table 5 provides various strategies to improve CPD for Saudi EFL Teachers:

Table 5: Strategies to improve CPD for Saudi EFL Teachers

Strategies to Improve CPD	Description	Benefits	Reference

Encourage Teacher-Driven CPD	Empower teachers to take charge of their CPD	Personalised development, motivation	Cleary et al. (2022), Njenga (2023)
Promote Reflective Practice	Encourage teachers to reflect on their teaching	Enhanced self-awareness, pedagogical growth	Ahmad & Shah (2022), Addae (2022)
Utilise Collaborative Learning Communities	Foster communities for collaborative learning	Shared knowledge, diverse perspectives	Richardson & Diaz Maggioli (2018), Kincal et al. (2019)
Offer Hands-on Workshops and Training	Provide practical training and skill development	Improved pedagogical skills, resource creation	Almuhammadi (2020), Alruqi & Alharbi (2022)
Address Time and Resource Constraints	Overcome time and resource limitations	Enhanced participation, efficient CPD	Kovashian et al. (2022), OECD (2020)

To understand the CPD of Saudi EFL teachers effectively, policymakers at the government and institutional levels should plan clear standards or frameworks (Alzhrani, 2023). These policies should create different approaches, resources such as training programmes and self-learning courses, and platforms that teachers can use for their CPD. (Derakshan, 2022; Wang et al., 2022; Ahmad & Shah, 2022). By adopting these strategies, Saudi EFL teachers can build a more inclusive and refined understanding of CPD practices, thus addressing the gaps identified in the existing research. It is important to analyse the concept of core knowledge base of EFL teachers which is presented next.

2.3. The Core Knowledge Base of EFL Teachers

This study focuses on EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, and in this section, the concept of EFL teachers' core knowledge is discussed. The EFL context is unique as teachers need cultural and language proficiency knowledge besides their pedagogic knowledge (Worden, 2019; Abakah, 2023). Effective CPD can enable EFL teachers to possess a clear comprehension of how different CPD tools, including social media, may contribute to pedagogic knowledge, language

knowledge and proficiency and cultural knowledge. The following figure graphically summarises the findings of Nguyen (2016), Huang and Guo (2019), and Lam (2019) to present a three-part framework of EFL teacher core knowledge.



Figure 2. A 3-Part Framework of Core Knowledge for EFL Teachers

Source: Adapted from of Lam (2019, 78), Huang and Guo (2019, 1) and Nguyen (2016, 66)

The above constructs can be defined as follows.

- Pedagogic knowledge is important for all teachers and encompasses understanding contemporary teaching methodologies and classroom management techniques (Lam, 2019). This includes staying updated on the use of digital blackboards, incorporating educational games into lessons, and integrating technology-driven activities (Lam, 2019). Pedagogic knowledge involves making informed decisions about students and their characteristics, including factors like their motivations for learning English (Tarone & Allwright, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Abakah, 2023). It is also important to state that pedagogic knowledge may be new, which may relate to innovative teaching practices that have developed because of innovations in educational technology and research (Lam, 2019). However, pedagogic knowledge is also about updating the existing knowledge to add the updated and applicable teaching practices and this way the notion of pedagogic knowledge align with the changing nature of educational methods and the need to do continuous improvement in teaching strategies

over time (Papageorgiou et al., 2019; Nkundabakura et al., 2023). New educational theories, technologies, and research constantly emerge, causing pedagogical knowledge to evolve (Gore & Rosser, 2020). Therefore, pedagogical knowledge comprises proven best practices and advanced approaches, such as educational technologies, which enhance learning outcomes for both teachers and students (Gore & Rosser, 2020).

- Language knowledge and proficiency encompass the extent to which EFL teachers effectively utilise English in both their professional and daily lives (Huang & Huo, 2019). This aspect of core knowledge also pertains to EFL teachers' understanding of the process of English acquisition and learning among students. For instance, it involves their ability to distinguish between advanced and intermediate learners based on specific indicators (Huang & Huo, 2019). These indicators can be student's fluency in speaking English, correctness, use of vocabulary and level of comprehension (Shakki, 2022). Advanced learners may illustrate a higher level of fluency, have a diverse range of vocabulary and have a rich understanding of intricate grammatical structures (Shakki, 2022). Intermediate learners may have a developing fluency, are familiar with basic vocabulary which allow them to understand and communicate about familiar subjects (Li, 2020; Shakki, 2022). Hence, for EFL teachers to have a sound understanding of these differences among advanced and intermediate learners is important for them to adapt their instructional strategies and teaching materials to match the different needs of their students (Li, 2020; Shakki, 2022).
- Cultural knowledge encompasses an understanding of cultural artefacts and phenomena associated with language. This may encompass various elements such as TV shows, music, literature, the etymology of different idioms, etc. (Nguyen, 2016; Cantrell et al., 2022). These three aspects are more strongly interlinked for EFL teachers or language teachers versus teachers of academic subjects like history, science, mathematics as cultural knowledge is least important in these subjects but for EFL/language teachers incorporating cultural knowledge is of paramount importance without which language learning cannot take place. Thus, it is important to analyse three-part framework of core knowledge for EFL teachers. Therefore, Table 6 shows Three-part framework of core knowledge for EFL teachers:

Table 6: Three-part framework of core knowledge for EFL Teachers

Core Knowledge Domain	Description	References
Pedagogic Knowledge	Understanding contemporary teaching methodologies and classroom management techniques.	Tarone & Allwright (2005), Darling-Hammond (2006), Lam (2019), Papageorgiou et al. (2019)
Language Knowledge	Proficiency in English, ability to distinguish between advanced and intermediate learners.	Huang & Huo (2019), Li (2020), Shakki (2022)
Cultural Knowledge	Understanding of cultural artifacts and phenomena associated with language.	Lafayette (1993), Nguyen (2016), Cantrell et al. (2022)

Nguyen (2016), Huang and Huo (2019), and Lam (2019) have all conducted studies to investigate potential correlations between CPD and EFL teachers' core knowledge. While these studies have meticulously defined the core knowledge of EFL teachers, they fall short in connecting core knowledge development to CPD, as they neglect to explore how various CPD interventions may contribute to this knowledge. These investigations do not offer conclusive evidence on whether specific CPD actions, such as using social media or attending teacher conferences, unequivocally enhance one or more aspects of core knowledge (Nguyen, 2016; Hu, 2022). This study primarily focuses on the general CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers, as well as the potential impact of social networking sites (SNS) on CPD. The aim is to establish a link between these factors and the core knowledge of teachers. Therefore, this study aims to discern a clear relationship between a teacher's CPD practices, and their core knowledge level as shown in Table 7. Thus, Table 7 provides aspect of core knowledge and its' connection to CPD:

Table 7: Core Knowledge and CPD

Aspect of Core Knowledge	Connection to CPD	References
Pedagogic Knowledge	CPD involves updating teaching practices and incorporating educational technology.	Lam (2019), Gore & Rosser (2020)
Language Knowledge	CPD involves enhancing language proficiency and adapting teaching for different learner levels.	Huang & Huo (2019), Shakki (2022)
Cultural Knowledge	CPD can include learning about cultural aspects through various sources.	Nguyen (2016), Cantrell et al. (2022)

It is important to delve into the notion of teachers' identity to explain the connection between core knowledge and CPD (Huang & Guo, 2019; Nguyen, 2016; Mehdizadeh et al., 2023). Depending on their individual identities, teachers can allocate priority to distinct aspects of their core knowledge, which consequently shapes their trajectories of CPD advancement. For instance, a teacher whose identity centers on knowledge dissemination might focus on pedagogic knowledge and language proficiency and may place less focus on cultural knowledge (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012). Hence, teacher's sense of identity is pivotal in shaping their CPD choices and the aspects of knowledge they focus on during their CPD (Mehdizadeh et al., 2023).

It is equally crucial to examine the individual skills of teachers and how they can effectively apply their core knowledge in practical settings. It is also essential to examine how these skills relate to CPD activities. For instance, a teacher might engage with YouTube videos to learn about enhancing students' writing skills through methods like structured summaries and idiom usage yet struggle to implement these techniques in the classroom (Lam, 2019). EFL teachers can adopt a standardised set of CPD tools (such as social media, empirical articles, and conferences), or they may tailor their approaches based on their unique needs and preferences (Yang, 2019; Lan & Fan, 2019; Njenga, 2023).

Certain scholars have focused solely on the error-centered learning of pre-service teachers, under the belief that addressing errors either leads to mastery in a field or triggers negative emotional responses (Bohnke & Thiel, 2019; Worden, 2019). So far, their research has not explored whether EFL teachers consistently utilise specific tools for CPD when pursuing familiar CPD objectives. In contrast to educators from other disciplines, EFL teachers also need to enhance their cultural knowledge through CPD (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Richards, 1998; Cantrell et al., 2023). For instance, mathematics teachers can prioritise pedagogic knowledge without the necessity of incorporating cultural knowledge, as cultural aspects hold lesser significance in formal sciences (Faez, 2011; Jacob et al., 2017; Gore et al., 2021).

Traditionally, language teaching and learning has been associated with four primary language skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing (Zaghar & Zaghar, 2021; El Deen, 2023). However, language and culture are arguably inextricably linked (Yu, 2020). Therefore, EFL teachers need to introduce cultural instructions in their classrooms (Zaghar & Zaghar, 2021). EFL teachers can add cultural elements into their lessons and can better train students to learn about the cultural sensitivities which can make students to be receptive towards cross-cultural understanding (Zaghar & Zaghar, 2021). Hence, by adding cultural knowledge into their teaching, EFL teachers can show commitment towards their CPD (Mehdizadeh et al., 2023). This highlights the significance of understanding cultural contexts along with the traditional language skills, which can be vital in improving EFL teachers' CPD.

Given the intrinsic connection between language and culture, EFL teachers require a foundational understanding of cultural knowledge. EFL teachers not only need a foundational understanding of cultural knowledge in general, but also for specific subjects such as explaining idiomatic expressions or providing examples of social and pragmatic contexts in which specific words or structures are used (Bohnke & Thiel, 2019). For children, the notion of natural learning becomes easily explicable. Employing the approach of natural learning settings, experts aim to identify and capitalise on the organic learning opportunities that emerge from the regular routines and activities of children within their home and community environments. Experts believe that a child's immediate surroundings can provide them with core knowledge (Moore, 2008, Mehdizadeh et al., 2023).

While the graphical representation in Figure 2 introduces a novel model, this framework overlooks connections to natural learning experiences that could significantly enrich the various aspects of core knowledge (Worden, 2019; Bohnke & Thiel, 2019). Second, within the

context of CPD, cultural knowledge becomes interconnected and influenced. However, there is a lack of data regarding whether teachers gain cultural knowledge from the same sources as their pedagogic and language knowledge (Worden, 2019, Abakah, 2023).

Higher education is among the various sectors influenced by the widespread use of social media which is even more the case since Covid-19 (Perez et al., 2023). Despite concerns that social media might detract from pedagogy, it can still be harnessed to enhance teaching and learning strategies (Adu et al., 2022). Social media has reshaped social structures and provided people with more opportunities to communicate and advance their careers (Perez et al., 2023). As it offers a new source of inspiration and facilitates informal learning, social media is gaining popularity among teachers (Perez et al., 2023). Teachers worldwide have found inspiration in social media groups like Facebook Groups (FG). FGs are online social media communities where individuals with similar interests can connect and share information; they transcend cultural and geographic boundaries, are easily accessible, and are thus increasingly utilised for teachers' professional development (Bissessar, 2014; Adu et al., 2022).

According to Patahuddin et al. (2022), social media exchanges can offer valuable narratives, as evident in their study of remote Indonesian secondary math's teachers in educationally disadvantaged communities who have limited access to resources for professional growth and education. Some disadvantages of these online social media communities are possible distractions from other, less useful activities on social media, excessive information, and absence of quality control in terms of the content which is shared on these social media communities (Patahuddin et al., 2022). Due to cultural constraints that prevent teachers from participating in face-to-face events, female teachers have restricted access. Gender-related participation was examined in three years' worth of activity data from a private Facebook group for professional development (Patahuddin et al., 2023). The data shows that cultural barriers did not deter female mathematics teachers from participating. Conversations exchanged within the private Facebook group generated narratives that contributed to the learning and development of participants. Additionally, there were slight differences in the posts made by male and female participants that provided opportunities to enhance the professional development experiences of both genders. Overall, there were no significant gender differences in engagement (Patahuddin et al., 2022).

According to Bett & Makewa (2020), Facebook was considered as a potential platform in Kenya to enhance teachers' professional development. A cross-sectional exploratory study centered on conversations among instructors on the Facebook group "Teachers of English" was

conducted. A guided content analysis of the 647 posts falling within Shulman's category of teacher knowledge base revealed that the interactions in the group primarily revolved around teaching English and literature, as well as other education-related topics. The findings suggest that Facebook Groups, particularly in developing nations with limited opportunities, can serve as fruitful forums for teachers' ongoing professional development (Bett & Makewa, 2020).

Chawinga (2017) conducted a study in Malawi employing two methods for data collection. Firstly, a student analysis of blog and Twitter posts was carried out. Secondly, a survey was emailed to 64 students to assess their opinions regarding the use of blogs and Twitter in the classroom. The findings indicate that, when used effectively, Twitter and blogs act as catalysts for the much-advocated learner-centered approach to teaching. It became evident that students utilised these tools to share and discuss course materials, post their reflections on the course, and maintain constant communication with their professors. However, the study also highlighted several challenges, including the cost of internet data bundles, limited access to Wi-Fi, insufficient bandwidth, and a shortage of computers (Chawinga, 2017).

In a study conducted by Rosell-Aguilar (2018), a group of language instructors used the #MFLtwitterati hashtag as a mechanism for ongoing professional development. The study describes how this group of teachers used the hashtag and examined the effect of their Twitter network on their teaching practices, based on data gathered through a survey (n=116) and interviews (n=11). The findings indicated that most users try the advice and concepts they discover on this network, which has the potential to have a beneficial effect on their teaching (Rosell-Aguilar, 2018).

Lichy & Merle (2020) conducted a study that leveraged socio-technical interaction concepts to investigate how individuals from different cultural backgrounds perceive and utilise ICT within CPD, with a specific focus on business skills. Data collection took place at two distinct time points in France and the UK, examining how the adoption of ICT innovations evolves within each cultural context. The findings of Lichy & Merle (2020) shed light on the dynamic evolution and convergence of ICT usage, revealing varying user engagement levels and motivations across the two countries. Moreover, the research underscores the influence of the professional environment within each country on how ICT may be perceived and employed. In response to these insights, the study formulates managerial recommendations tailored to the specific ways ICT is shaped by the professional context in each country (Lichy & Merle, 2020).

According to Jash (2014), exploration and experimentation are fundamental aspects of a teacher's profession; they inject vitality into teaching, preventing it from becoming

monotonous. CPD is universally acknowledged as an essential component of teacher education (Jash, 2014). Only through continuous teaching and learning can educators attain and sustain a high level of expertise, keeping their professional skills and knowledge aligned with the evolving needs of the present generation (Jash, 2014). CPD should not be perceived merely as a mandatory activity to fulfil classroom requirements. Instead, teachers should broaden their perspective beyond the latest pedagogical approaches. They should also focus on acquiring relevant and contemporary knowledge of technology utilisation and the latest engaging teaching tools. In this context, the role of social media emerges as a powerful tool for engaging with the technologically adept younger generation (Jash, 2014). Educators should consider social media as an opportunity for professional development and to enhance classroom skills. They should not confine themselves to the classroom but extend their reach to cater to students' needs beyond regular hours through platforms like Twitter. Even experienced, long-serving teachers should remain open to embracing changes in their CPD endeavors (Jash, 2014). According to Jash (2014), experienced teachers should continuously innovate their lesson plans, promote assignment-based learning, incorporate interactive grammar and vocabulary practices, and utilise activities and games in the teaching process. Maintaining an extensive presence and engagement with students and CPD through Twitter is highlighted as a transformative aspect of educators' lives (Jash, 2014).

A study conducted in Spain by Beardsley et al. (2021) examined how teachers' motivation and digital proficiency evolved since the onset of Covid-19. The survey questions were drawn from SELFIE and the Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers, and the types of guidance and advice sought by teachers on Twitter during both the lockdown and post-lockdown periods were specifically analysed. The findings suggest that teachers perceive an enhancement in their competence in using digital technologies for teaching. Their confidence in employing technology for lesson preparation, classroom instruction, assessment, feedback delivery, and communication with students and families has notably increased. Teachers' engagement on Twitter for advice shifted from immediate instructional needs to a focus on professional development and creating their digital educational content (Beardsley et al., 2021).

Goodyear et al. (2019) highlight the role of professional learning communities (PLCs) as effective mechanisms for continuous professional development (CPD) that can influence teachers' practices and, consequently, students' learning outcomes. Goodyear et al. (2019) examined the attributes of a particular Twitter-based professional learning community known as #pechat, analysing data from 901 tweets involving 100 participants and conducting 18 in-

depth semi-structured interviews with participants and moderators of this PLC. Goodyear et al. (2019)'s study has identified two themes. The first theme, "engagement," illustrates how diverse participants in #pechat actively participated in discussions, with moderators playing a pivotal role in facilitating these exchanges. The second theme, "shared practices," highlights how discussions among #pechat participants led to the development of new teaching practices, thus emphasising the role of social media exchanges in offering valuable narratives that can strengthen the professional development experiences of teachers (Goodyear et al., 2019).

Using SNS can have a major impact on CPD of EFL teachers by improving specific areas of their core knowledge. For example, the interaction via SNS between Saudi EFL teachers and English teachers in Western countries can form a cooperative learning environment, resulting in the improvement of cultural and pedagogical knowledge (El Deen, 2023). For example, liaising with English teachers in Western countries via SNS offers Saudi EFL teachers the chance to gain knowledge about educational practices in Western countries, communication standards and cultural understandings which cause improvement in cultural knowledge of Saudi EFL teachers because of which Saudi EFL teachers can adapt their teaching methods to varying students' needs, and developing inclusivity in English language teaching (O'Toole, 2019; Griffiths et al., 2021).

Using SNS can also improve the pedagogical knowledge of EFL teachers. For example, via interactions using SNS, Saudi EFL teachers can discuss with colleagues in Western countries about effective methods for developing students' proficiency, assessment methods which can enable EFL teachers to improve their instructional practices and pedagogical knowledge (Ozdemir, 2020). Ekoc (2020) notes that by incorporating social media into their teaching practices, EFL teachers can learn, adjust and improve their current teaching practices based on understandings developed as a result of interaction on SNS with teachers in Western countries which can also motivate EFL teachers to engage in self-learning through these SNS. This aspect of self-learning CPD corresponds with its cyclical nature, where EFL teachers gain new knowledge and implement it in their teaching practices to improve their professional development (Abakah, 2023). This self-learning and cyclical nature of CPD is what that is currently known about SNS and EFL teacher's CPD as shown in Table 8 which shows the impact of SNS on EFL teachers' CPD:

Table 8: Impact of SNS on EFL Teachers' CPD

Core Knowledge Aspect	Impact of SNS on CPD	References
Cultural Knowledge	SNS interactions with English teachers abroad can enhance cultural knowledge.	O'Toole (2019), El Deen (2023)
Pedagogic Knowledge	SNS interactions can improve pedagogical knowledge through discussions with colleagues.	Ekoc (2020), Ozdemir (2020)
Language Knowledge	SNS interactions with native speakers can enhance English language proficiency.	Manca & Ranieri (2016), Bui (2022)

A comprehensive understanding of the culture associated with English-speaking countries makes up a fundamental component of core knowledge for EFL teachers across diverse cultural contexts, spanning from Saudi Arabia to the US or the UK (Lafayette, 1993; Day, 1993; Alzhrani, 2023). Aligned with the essence of CPD, the acquisition of cultural knowledge is cyclical. For instance, when a Saudi EFL teacher encounters innovative writing exercises, like creative writing prompts, there is a natural inclination to explore resources on platforms like Twitter and Facebook to collect information about these techniques (Yuan and Mak, 2018; Ngo, 2018; Carpenter et al., 2023). EFL teachers are expected to possess a balanced amalgamation of both cultural and pedagogical knowledge (Day, 1993; Carpenter et al., 2023), hence, it is important to explore the potential impact of SNS on both these dimensions of knowledge.

The aforementioned model of teacher core knowledge aims to bridge the gap between CPD and various areas of core knowledge. This approach mirrors that of Shulman (1986), who centered his focus on teachers and categorised their knowledge into three pivotal domains: subject knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge. While subject knowledge aligns with language knowledge, it is noteworthy that Shulman (1986) did not encompass cultural knowledge, a cornerstone for EFL teachers. A parallel gap is observed in the works of Richards (1998) and Freeman and Johnson (1998) as they contemplate the core

knowledge of teachers. Darling-Hammond (2006) and Darling-Hammond (2021) integrated an understanding of subject content, yet they did not distinctly interpret its differentiation from pedagogic knowledge. This discrepancy highlights the potential inadequacy of most core knowledge models in fully encapsulating the unique intricacies of the EFL context.

Experts in EFL teachers' core knowledge (Yang, 2019; Lan & Fan, 2019) have suggested that teaching theories (such as the zone of proximal development by Vygotsky, 1978; Gong et al., 2018), teaching skills (including enhancing student literacy in the target language), and communication and language skills (such as proficiency in the target language) are essential for EFL teachers. Cultural knowledge further enriches this by encompassing an awareness of the distinctions in teaching English between English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries (Yang, 2019; Gong et al., 2018; Carmel & Badash, 2021). This implies that teacher core knowledge transcends Shulman's (1986) framework and integrates knowledge specific to the EFL domain. The proposed three-part model of EFL teacher knowledge in the Figure 2 therefore represents an enhanced framework of core knowledge that encompasses both knowledge beneficial to teachers in general and EFL-specific knowledge of EFL teachers.

Given that the core knowledge of EFL teachers encompasses both cultural and language knowledge, SNS serve as a potential avenue for natural learning experiences. Considering that SNS has become an integral part of our daily lives, it can indeed be regarded as a conduit for natural learning experiences (Lo & To, 2023). The utilisation of SNS, particularly during interactions with native English speakers and English teachers from other countries, inherently involves the use of the English language. This engagement has the potential to enhance an EFL teacher's English proficiency (Manca & Ranieri, 2016; Chawinga, 2017; Bui, 2022). For instance, when EFL teachers interact with native English teachers through SNS, they can witness how English is used in authentic real-life situations, which can enhance their English proficiency. This engagement can contribute to the natural growth of EFL teachers as they learn by observation, aligning with the concept of natural learning (Lo & To, 2023).

SNS can also develop natural learning experiences as these are viewed as informal as compared to traditional classroom setting and using SNS, EFL teachers can have casual discussions, share views and exchange experiences regarding English language teaching (Liang, 2021). This informal communication shows the natural way individuals learn outside of traditional classroom and motivate EFL teachers to use SNS in their daily routines, fostering continuous learning without having the limitations of time and place which therefore supports natural

learning that takes place through regular experience and practice (Bui, 2022; Salton et al., 2022; Lo & To, 2023) as shown in Table 9. Table 9 provides theoretical frameworks of core knowledge for EFL teachers.

Table 9: Theoretical frameworks of core knowledge for EFL Teachers

Theoretical Framework	Key Components	References
Traditional Core Knowledge Models	Emphasises subject knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge.	Shulman (1986), Darling-Hammond (2006)
EFL-Specific Core Knowledge Model	Encompasses cultural knowledge, language proficiency, teaching theories, skills, and communication skills.	Yang (2019), Carmel & Badash (2021)
Natural Learning Model	Highlights the role of natural learning experiences in acquiring core knowledge.	Lo & To (2023), Mehdizadeh et al. (2023)

SNS might contribute to cultural knowledge by exposing EFL teachers to new cultural phenomena, particularly music, YouTube videos, and discussions of TV shows on Facebook (Moghavvemi, Sulaiman, Jaafar & Kasem, 2018; Lo & To, 2023). Other authors have successfully conducted mixed-method studies, utilising surveys, and interviews with both EFL and general teachers to support the aforementioned findings (Manca & Ranieri, 2016; Moghavvemi et al., 2018). In their study, Moghavvemi et al. (2018) focused on role of YouTube in providing visual tools for classroom instruction by interviewing thirty students initially, developing a scale based on the gathered data. Subsequently, they administered a questionnaire to 321 university students in Malaysia. Findings of this study have confirmed that YouTube plays an effective role in learning of students, the authors reached this conclusion based on data from questionnaire results and interviews with 30 students. The data confirmed that students' main motivations for using YouTube were entertainment, obtaining information, and academic learning. It was also observed that using videos related to the subject at hand

could enhance the learning experience for students. YouTube offers an extensive range of visual and multimedia content and teachers by using these visuals and multimedia content can improve students' understanding of difficult subjects (Moghavvemi et al., 2018).

The format of multimedia and visual content on YouTube addresses different learning modes of students and their varying learning needs. It can make the content more enjoyable, thus improving students' engagement. Thus, Moghavvemi et al. (2018) concluded that YouTube significantly enhances student learning and recommends the integration of YouTube use into the curriculum. These findings have not been specifically applied to the Saudi Arabian context. Additionally, there remains a lack of clarity on whether EFL teachers using SNS observe improvements in their core knowledge compared to their counterparts. This highlights the significance of delving deeper into these aspects through further research.

To summarise, different theories regarding core teacher knowledge focus on various aspects. In EFL teaching, the comprehensive model of core knowledge encompasses cultural knowledge alongside pedagogic knowledge and language proficiency (Malderez & Wedell, 2007; Lo & To, 2023) as shown in Table 10. Table 10 summarises the key ideas:

Table 10: Summary of key ideas

Key Ideas	References
EFL teachers require a diverse core knowledge, including pedagogic, language, and cultural knowledge.	Nguyen (2016), Lam (2019), Huang & Huo (2019)
CPD is crucial for updating and enhancing core knowledge, especially in pedagogical and language aspects.	Tarone & Allwright (2005), Gore & Rosser (2020), Shakki (2022)
Social networking sites (SNS) play a significant role in enhancing cultural, pedagogical, and language knowledge through interactions and discussions.	Manca & Ranieri (2016), Ekoc (2020), El Deen (2023)

Theoretical frameworks for core knowledge in EFL teaching go beyond traditional models to incorporate EFL-specific elements such as cultural knowledge.	Yang (2019), Carmel & Badash (2021), Lo & To (2023)
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Teachers can consider acquiring or developing new core knowledge as an element of their CPD (Wallace, 1991; Salton et al., 2022). This thesis aims to explore whether SNS can serve as a potential source of core knowledge, contributing to how SNS might enhance the effectiveness of CPD based on EFL teacher perspectives. One expected limitation is that knowledge itself is abstract and challenging to quantify in terms of knowledge-building activities (Pennycook, 1989; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Abakah, 2023).

2.4. Assessing Teacher Core Knowledge

Because CPD contributes to teacher's core knowledge (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Collins & O'Brien, 2011; Abakah, 2023), the acquisition of new core knowledge becomes a decisive factor in gauging the effectiveness of CPD processes (Malva, Leijen & Baucal, 2020). Building upon the research by Richards (1998) and Freeman and Johnson (1998), this thesis will delve into a comprehensive framework of EFL teacher core knowledge, encompassing language knowledge, cultural knowledge, and pedagogic knowledge. In a study by Sato and Oyanedel (2019), they explored the extent to which core knowledge influenced EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching grammar. They highlighted in their research that pedagogic knowledge could be divided into six different areas: lesson planning and teaching methods, classroom management, learning and development, affective-motivational dispositions, evaluation procedures, and literacy in data and research.

CPD plays a pivotal role in assessing and enhancing the core knowledge of EFL teachers by strengthening their language proficiency and encouraging the adoption of effective teaching methods (Wang et al., 2022). For instance, CPD workshops focused on advanced English grammar and composition can elevate the English proficiency of EFL teachers. This enables them to show language usage skillfully to students and correct grammatical and sentence construction errors in both spoken and written assignments (Wong & Moorhouse, 2021). CPD sessions addressing reading comprehension instruction empower EFL teachers with diverse strategies, encompassing comprehension tasks, pre-reading activities, and engaging in post-

reading discussions. These tools prompt EFL teachers to evaluate students' reading comprehension levels, enabling them to tailor instructional methods based on individual comprehension and reading proficiencies (Wammes et al., 2022; Pappa et al., 2023).

To assess students' writing abilities, EFL teachers can benefit from CPD initiatives aimed at refining writing skills. These workshops encompass essay structuring, vocabulary utilisation, and evaluating students' written submissions through diverse writing assessments, followed by constructive feedback (Pappa et al., 2023). EFL teachers can improve speaking and listening capabilities of students through CPD programmes incorporating role-playing, simulated authentic conversations, and pronunciation exercises. These methods equip EFL teachers to assess students' verbal skills, scrutinise fluency, pronunciation, and the ability to have detailed discussions in the English language (Georgiou et al., 2023; Pappa et al., 2023).

Similarly, Chen, Flowerdew, and Anthony (2019) highlighted data literacy, research skills, and lesson planning while investigating EFL teachers' utilisation of digital collections of English texts. However, the question remains unanswered regarding whether SNS use can introduce innovative teaching methodologies, effective classroom management practices, or enhanced evaluation procedures. While existing literature has described specific aspects of pedagogic knowledge, such as digitally assisted learning, a gap remains in the exploration of whether incorporating SNS during CPD initiatives contributes to the development of new pedagogic knowledge (Sato & Oyanedel, 2019; Chen et al., 2019; Alzhrani et al., 2023). It is therefore important to examine the potential correlation between SNS utilisation and the enrichment of EFL teachers' pedagogic knowledge. This research therefore seeks to investigate the question of whether there is a clear link between how SNS integration may cause the augmentation of pedagogic knowledge of EFL teachers as observed in the studies of Vance, Pendergast & Garvis (2017), Leigh (2019), Pappa et al. (2023).

For language proficiency, Alipoor and Jadidi (2016) examined whether reflective writing practices contributed to the language proficiency of EFL teachers. These scholars distinguished between the proficiency gap, the frequency of English use in class, and the frequency of English use in instruction (Alipoor & Jadidi, 2016). It is possible that SNS may augment these four dimensions of EFL teachers' language knowledge, including fostering the use of the target language for instruction (English language) (Goodyear et al., 2019; Carpenter & Harvey, 2019; Carpenter et al., 2023).

The inclusion of rubrics for assessing language skills is an essential aspect of effective CPD. Rubrics provide a structured framework for assessing language proficiency (Maryam, 2020). For example, EFL teachers can use the target language (English) as the primary mode of instruction when teaching reading comprehension can form an engaging atmosphere facilitating students to engage in authentic use of the English language (Carpenter et al., 2023). EFL teachers by using rubrics in reading comprehension can facilitate them to assess students' ability to present a synopsis of the main points of a reading paragraph, ability to engage in critical thinking and their ability to skim and scan information from reading paragraphs (Algazzaz, 2023). With the help of CPD workshops and using SNS to interact, EFL teachers can learn about constructing and using rubrics effectively, eventually enhancing their assessment practices (Algazzaz, 2023). With this approach, CPD not only contributes to language proficiency, but also to the development of effective evaluation strategies.

Poecze, Ebster, and Strauss (2018) and Manca (2020) identified that cultural knowledge among social media users encompassed familiarity with popular culture figures, such as William Jefferson Clinton (Bill Clinton), and language-specific cultural phenomena. However, Poecze et al. (2018) demonstrated that SNS engagement introduced new cultural insights, but whether this applies to EFL teachers remains unverified. In contrast, there remains a gap in knowledge regarding whether EFL teachers gain new pedagogic and language knowledge, as well as skills like designing effective rubrics through their interactions on SNS (Choi & Lee, 2016; Algazzaz, 2023). This examination aligns with the overarching theme of this PhD research, seeking to explain the potential of SNS to contribute to EFL teachers' multifaceted knowledge domains, language proficiency, and evaluation practices. These different areas of teacher core knowledge are shown in Table 11. Table 11 below summarises the different areas of teacher core knowledge as conceptualised above by different authors:

Table 11: Assessment of Teacher Core Knowledge

Variable	Clarification	Area of Teacher Core Knowledge
Teaching methods and lesson planning	Awareness of new trends in classroom instruction.	Pedagogic knowledge
Classroom management	Knowledge of tools for managing classroom behaviours.	
Learning and development	Awareness of the availability of formal PD programmes.	

Affective-motivational dispositions	Knowledge of motivation required to teach new knowledge.	
Evaluation procedures	Knowledge of standardised tests and similar evaluation metrics.	
Data and research literacy	Knowledge of conducting independent research.	
Proficiency gap	The difference between current English proficiency and perceived minimum level.	Language knowledge
Frequency of using English in class	The frequency of using English in classroom management.	
Frequency of using English in instruction	The frequency of using English when teaching new knowledge of English.	
Knowledge of popular culture	Awareness of events and individuals in popular culture.	Cultural knowledge
Knowledge of language-specific cultural phenomena	Knowledge of how Western culture could affect the English language.	
Use of target language for instruction	Integration of the English language in teaching practices.	Language Knowledge
Rubric in assessing skills	Utilisation of rubrics to evaluate language proficiency	Pedagogic Knowledge

2.5. EFL Teachers' Qualifications in Saudi Arabia

This study will concentrate on the CPD of Saudi EFL teachers and its correlation with their core knowledge. Examining the history and origins of the TEFL movement in Saudi Arabia, this thesis centers on the pivotal contribution made by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to the evolution of TEFL. This section outlines how the Saudi Arabian government differentiates among EFL teachers' qualifications. Saudi Arabia lacks effective methods to measure EFL teachers' core knowledge using formal academic qualifications. As a result, the country cannot monitor the development of EFL teachers' core knowledge during their CPD. The significance of English language instruction has witnessed a substantial surge, particularly after the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia, notably through institutions like Aramco and King Faisal University (KFU) (Abdullateef et al., 2023). This surge emerged in response to the imperative

of fostering connections with the global oil and gas community (Al-Asmari and Khan, 2014; Alzhrani, 2023).

While English remains of utmost importance in achieving nationwide strategic objectives, there is still a need to understand whether the current approaches to EFL teaching align with the oil export policies implemented by the Saudi Arabian government (Nurunnabi, 2017; Gaffas, 2019). Even though foreign investments are drawn to oil exports, Saudi Arabia's English proficiency ranks 98th out of 100 countries (EF, 2020; Abdullateef et al., 2023). Without an increase in the effectiveness of EFL teaching, Saudi Arabia could encounter challenges in attracting foreign investments and maximising the profitability of its oil export strategy.

It is vital to acknowledge the pivotal role of the education sector in driving economic growth, and the National Transformation Program (NTP) under Saudi Vision 2030 has meticulously charted a comprehensive roadmap for educational transformation (Abdullateef et al., 2023; Alzhrani, 2023). EFL teaching forms a foundation of this educational transformation, as highlighted by the NTP's priorities, which include enhancing teacher recruitment and development, including specialised training for EFL educators (Hossain et al., 2022; Abdullateef et al., 2023). This research seeks to contribute towards Saudi Vision 2030 by investigating how Social Networking Sites (SNS), particularly platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and other social media platforms, can effectively facilitate the professional growth of Saudi EFL teachers. The NTP places considerable focus on the importance of refining curricula and instructional methodologies, ensuring they align with the evolving demands of the job market (Abdullateef et al., 2023).

The Saudi Vision 2030 aims to empower Saudi EFL teachers by leveraging the potential of social media to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning within the nation (Alkrajji & Eidaroos, 2016; Abdullateef et al., 2023). The integration of enhanced English language teaching and learning through digital transformation, exemplified by SNS utilisation, aligns with the core tenets of Saudi Vision 2030, namely cultivating a skilled workforce, enhancing employment prospects, and developing the national economy through a well-equipped and proficient generation of Saudi youth (Almoaibed, 2020; Abdullateef et al., 2023).

Despite the crucial role of EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia, empirical evidence supporting the contribution of formal Professional Development (PD) programmes to EFL teachers' core knowledge is lacking (Zhao et al., 2019; Lindvall & Ryve, 2019). Lindvall & Ryve (2019) conducted a review of 95 articles focusing on PD programmes introduced by governments.

They highlighted that despite the emphasis, these programmes have not been effective in enhancing student performance and teachers' core knowledge. In Saudi Arabia, the assessment of EFL teachers' core knowledge follows a two-tiered system: TEL Educators, individuals who practiced English language teaching during their college studies and passed the exam to obtain an EFL teaching license, and non-educators, those holding a master's or bachelor's degree in English Language teaching but awaiting the EFL teaching license exam (Ministry of Civil Service, 2017; Alzhrani, 2023). Thus, educators in context of this thesis are those individuals who have EFL teaching license and are often provided with formal PD programmes and non-educators are those who have degrees in English language teaching but have not obtained EFL teaching license due to which may face problems in accessing formal PD programmes (Assalahi, 2021).

This formal differentiation between educators and non-educators suggests that educators have a higher level of core knowledge as against non-educators as Saudi government recognises educators to take part in formal PD programs and this differentiation is the basis of awarding higher salaries, role and responsibilities (Assalahi, 2021). The downside of this strict differentiation between educators and non-educators is that educators are more likely to have formal qualifications and certifications because of which they are more likely to have a professional level of core knowledge due to which it remains difficult to evaluate the improvement in their core knowledge because of participation in formal PD programs (Abdullateef et al., 2023). This differentiation further signifies the bureaucratic involvement as the basis of deciding what makes up core knowledge of educators as against letting educators decide how to gain the core knowledge keeping in view the educators' and learners' needs (Alzhrani, 2023). This strict differentiation between educators and non-educators also undermines the potential usefulness of acquiring core knowledge other than formal PD programs such as using self-governed professional development activities and using SNS as a mean to develop core knowledge among Saudi EFL teachers (Assalahi, 2021). It is therefore important to show qualifications and differentiation among EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. Table 12 outlines qualifications and differentiation among EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia:

Table 12: Qualifications and differentiation among EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia

Aspect	Description	References
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Qualification Categories	Saudi Arabia categorises EFL teachers as educators and non-educators based on qualifications.	Ministry of Civil Service (2017), Assalahi (2021)
Impact of Qualifications	Educators have formal EFL teaching licenses and often access formal PD programmes. Non-educators hold degrees but await licenses.	Abdullateef et al. (2023), Alzhrani (2023)
Bureaucratic Involvement	The differentiation is based on bureaucratic decisions rather than educators' input.	El Deen (2023)
Implications for CPD	Educators are incentivised to engage in formal PD programmes, potentially improving core knowledge.	Wolf & Peele (2019), Zhao et al. (2019)
Role of Formal PD Programmes	Formal PD programmes are government-sponsored avenues for obtaining professional qualifications.	Alruqi & Alharbi (2022)

This distinction reflects varying levels of qualifications and diverse levels of core knowledge. The Saudi Arabian government, as showed by the Ministry of Civil Service (2017), considers educators to possess greater core knowledge compared to non-educators (Assalahi, 2021). Despite this, the question whether these differences in qualifications translate into improved teaching effectiveness and overall EFL learning outcomes remains a pertinent issue in Saudi Vision 2030 and the need for enhancing English proficiency across the nation (Alzhrani et al., 2023).

The implications of differentiating between educators and non-educators in the context of CPD are not entirely clear. On one hand, certain scholars propose that the formal distinction between these two categories, namely those with qualifications as educators and non-educators, serves as a compelling incentive to engage in developmental activities (Zhao et al., 2019). This motivation arises from the recognition that certified individuals or those with higher education tend to participate more actively in such initiatives (Zhao et al., 2019; Wolf & Peele, 2019;

Alzhrani, 2023). Consequently, EFL teachers classified as educators are more likely to participate in formal PD programmes, aligning with government-approved standards of core knowledge. As a result, they become eligible for higher salaries (Alzhrani, 2023).

In Saudi Arabia, where there is a formal distinction between academic qualifications, government-sponsored PD interventions provided by colleges and universities emerge as the main avenues for obtaining professional certificates and degrees (Alruqi & Alharbi, 2022). This approach ensures that educators meet the required standards of competence and knowledge as defined by the government (Alruqi & Alharbi, 2022).

It is important to explain that within the context of this thesis, term ‘educators’ describes those individuals who hold professional qualifications in teaching, similar to the UK’s Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) which is a formal academic qualification that can be obtained through teacher training and it shows a specific level of educational training and competence, and it is not a requirement to become a qualified teacher in England, but its role is vital in developing teachers’ skills and knowledge (Department For Education, 2023). This also signifies the importance of CPD for teachers as per the Department for Education (DfE), UK’s Standard for Teachers’ Professional Development, which states that effective CPD for teachers is a fundamental part of securing effective teaching (CPD, 2019).

CPD in UK is no more limited to traditional school training but considering UK schools’ annual spending on educational technology was £900M in 2019 (CPD, 2019) and it has increased to £3.4 billion by end of 2021 (Department for Education, 2022), thus, CPD is also about incorporating educational technology and about e-learning (CPD, 2019; Department for Education, 2022). This also highlights the significance of using SNS to develop effective CPD for teachers. In the wider context of EFL teaching, by joining CPD programmes, EFL educators can associate their teaching practices with international standards and specific objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 and contributing to the development of a trained and competent teaching workforce (Abdullateef et al., 2023).

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The English language education in Saudi Arabia is undergoing significant transformations (Mohiuddin et al., 2023). Among these changes, the introduction of English language instruction at the primary education level emerges as a pivotal initiative for fostering English language proficiency in young learners. This development closely aligns with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030, which strives to cultivate English language competence among school-level students (Abdullateef et al., 2023) as shown in Table 13. Table 13 outlines Saudi Vision 2030 and EFL teaching transformation:

Table 13: Saudi Vision 2030 and EFL teaching transformation

Aspect	Description	References
Role of EFL Teaching in Vision 2030	EFL teaching plays a foundational role in Saudi Vision 2030, focusing on teacher recruitment and development.	Hossain et al. (2022), Abdullateef et al. (2023)
Integration of Educational Technology	CPD in the UK integrates educational technology and e-learning, emphasising its importance.	CPD (2019), Department for Education (2022)

SNS and CPD	SNS can facilitate the professional growth of Saudi EFL teachers, aligning with Vision 2030.	Alkrajji & Eidaros (2016), Abdullateef et al. (2023)
Role of Cultivating a Skilled Workforce	Saudi Vision 2030 aims to develop a well-equipped, proficient generation of Saudi youth.	Almoaibed (2020), Abdullateef et al. (2023)

Furthermore, the strategic recruitment of educators from non-native English-speaking countries, such as Bangladesh, emerges as a promising strategy to improve the pool of qualified EFL teachers, in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030's goal of cultivating a skilled and adept teaching workforce (Alzhrani, 2023). This recruitment approach, focusing on Bangladeshi nationals, bears particular significance for EFL instruction in Saudi Arabia due to the fact that Bangladeshi EFL teachers generally exhibit a strong command of the English language, a result of their educational curriculum being conducted predominantly in English (Ara, 2020).

While English is not officially designated as a second language in Bangladesh, it is widely used throughout the country, underscoring the proficiency of Bangladeshi nationals in the English language (Ara, 2020). Consequently, the recruitment of EFL teachers from Bangladeshi backgrounds has the potential to enhance students' cultural intelligence by facilitating interactions with Bangladeshi educators. This interaction can foster an improved grasp of cultural awareness, augment communication skills, and contribute to the overall English language learning experience which align with the Saudi Vision 2030's objectives of improved language learning and teaching (Alnufaie, 2022). Table 14 shows the role of CPD in Saudi Vision 2030

Table 14: The Role of CPD in Saudi Vision 2030

Vision 2030 Goal	Relevance to CPD
Quality Education and Learning Outcomes	CPD improves teaching quality and student outcomes.

Professional Development of Teachers	CPD aligns with the development of teaching staff.
Technology Integration	CPD supports educators in adopting new technologies.
Global Competitiveness	CPD enhances the competence of Saudi teachers.

Adapted from Alnufaie (2022), Abdullateef et al. (2023)

However, there remains a gap in the literature as other scholars (Zhao et al., 2019; Lindvall & Ryve, 2019) have not examined into the specifics of how Saudi Arabian EFL teachers complement their participation in formal PD programmes by engaging in CPD during their leisure time. This includes activities like conducting independent research or engaging in peer discussions. For instance, Gonzalez & Quinchia (2003) categorise EFL teachers' needs into three domains: as a worker, an instructor, and a learner. Similarly, Stevenson et al. (2016) assert that EFL teachers possess a nuanced understanding of their areas of core knowledge that require further development, allowing them to tailor their professional development activities accordingly.

However, despite this gap, the Human Capability Development Program, an integral component of Saudi Vision 2030, has witnessed a surge in educators' pursuit of professional development courses in Saudi Arabia. Notably, more than 420,000 educational professionals have benefitted from 3,700 professional development programmes (Mohiuddin et al., 2023). While this surge highlights the increasing popularity of formal professional development (PD) courses, it does not provide clarity regarding the proportion of EFL teachers engaged in these programmes or their specific areas of interest. This shortage of information highlights the need for further investigation. Although, this thesis will not address this question, nonetheless, it is important to find out the percentage of EFL teachers actively participating in formal PD courses and identify the specific areas in which these educators seek additional professional development. By addressing these aspects, this research can contribute valuable insights into the alignment between formal PD programmes and the actual developmental needs of Saudi EFL teachers.

Table 15 outlines the impact of EFL teachers' participation in formal PD programmes:

Table 15: Impact of EFL teachers' participation in formal PD programmes

Aspect	Description	References
Surge in Participation in PD Programmes	The Human Capability Development Programme under Vision 2030 has seen significant participation.	Mohiuddin et al. (2023)
Lack of Clarity on EFL Teachers' Participation	The surge in formal PD programmes' popularity does not clarify the percentage of EFL teacher participation.	Mohiuddin et al. (2023)
Need for Investigation of PD Programme Alignment	Research is needed to determine if formal PD programmes align with the actual developmental needs of EFL teachers.	Abdullateef et al. (2023)

In contrast to the approach practiced in Saudi Arabia, the international framework for assessing the outcomes of formal Professional Development (PD) programmes reflects varying levels of core knowledge across different disciplines (e.g., academic English vs. business English) (Ministry of Civil Service, 2013; TEFL, 2020). TESOL (2019) states that educators, teaching practices, contextual settings, and methodologies employed form the essence of core knowledge. It is imperative that this knowledge base encompasses various forms of knowledge representation that effectively capture the evolution of teacher learning within the intricate interplay of social, cultural, and institutional dimensions (Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Ozdemir, 2020).

However, Saudi Arabia's rigorous demarcation between educators and non-educators affects precise assessment of the advancements in teacher core knowledge brought about by participation in formal PD programmes. The country does not have proper mechanisms to monitor improvements in EFL teachers' fundamental knowledge, such as providing supplementary formal courses and certificates like the ones given by the TEFL association (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019; TEFL, 2020), it is therefore important to outline international

framework versus Saudi approach to core knowledge as shown in Table 16. Thus, it remains likely that EFL educators in Saudi Arabia can also gain core knowledge outside the domains of formal PD programmes, notably through the utilisation of SNS. This thesis aims to explore the issue of how SNS can enrich the core knowledge of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Table 16 provides aspects of international framework versus Saudi approach to core knowledge:

Table 16: International framework vs. Saudi approach to core knowledge

Aspect	Description	References
International Framework	International frameworks assess core knowledge across disciplines (e.g., academic English vs. business English).	TESOL (2019), TEFL (2020)
Saudi Approach	Saudi Arabia has a strict distinction between educators and non-educators, affecting core knowledge assessment.	Ministry of Civil Service (2017)
Lack of Mechanisms to Monitor Core Knowledge	Saudi Arabia lacks mechanisms to monitor improvements in EFL teachers' fundamental knowledge.	Abdullateef et al. (2023), Alzhrani (2023)
Potential Role of SNS	EFL educators in Saudi Arabia may gain core knowledge outside formal PD programmes, including through SNS.	TEFL (2020), Abdullateef et al. (2023)

2.6. The Key Characteristics of EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia

The aim of this section is to outline the fundamental characteristics of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, using the Tatweer programme as a reference in this thesis. The Tatweer programme serves as a valuable source of professional development (PD) programs in Saudi Arabia (Tatweer, 2018; Alghamdi & Al Dossary, 2021). Central to the objectives of the Tatweer programme is the alignment of EFL teaching practices with global standards. The global EFL teaching community has put forth the 'Key Global Criteria for EFL Teaching,' and Tatweer programme strives to follow these criteria which encompasses four primary dimensions: language proficiency, cultural awareness, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques. These dimensions collectively define the notion of 'professionalism' within the realm of EFL teaching (TESOL, 2019). The following aspects encapsulate these dimensions:

- Language: Proficiency in the English language and understanding of English acquisition processes.
- Culture: Familiarity with the cultures of English-speaking countries.
- Instruction: Acumen in employing effective pedagogical practices for English language teaching.
- Assessment: Expertise in utilising various tests and exercises for evaluating students' performance.

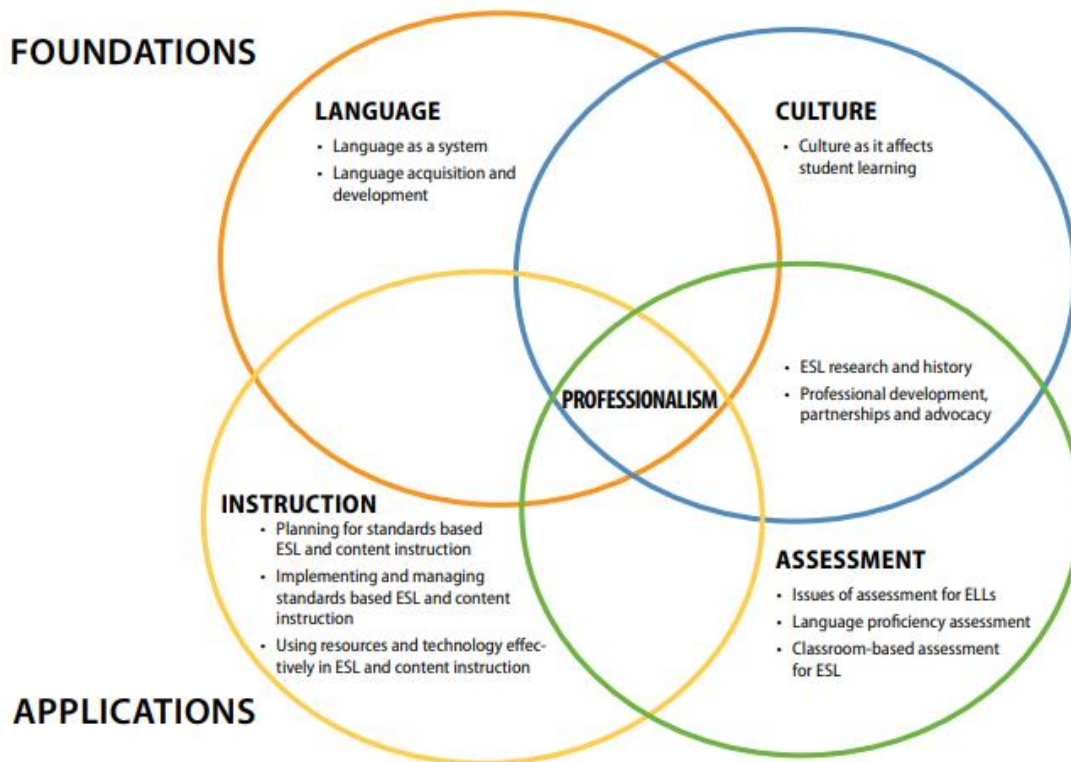


Figure 3. Key Global Criteria for EFL Teaching

The model depicted in Figure 3 shares similarities with the definition of teacher core knowledge employed in this study, which encompasses a focus on pedagogical, cultural, and language knowledge. For instance, the term 'Culture' aligns with cultural knowledge, 'Language' corresponds to language knowledge, while 'Professionalism,' 'Instruction,' and 'Assessment' collectively encompass pedagogical knowledge (TESOL, 2019; Alzhrani, 2023). EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia aspire to fulfill these EFL teaching criteria by enhancing their core knowledge through CPD activities.

However, despite this aspiration, EFL teachers and schools taking part in the Tatweer programme do not have access to formal PD courses or CPD resources (such as hubs with digital textbooks and videos) that address these specific criteria. Currently, the Tatweer initiative primarily concentrates on instructional aspects, integrating digital training and ICT (Aleasa, 2009; Alkatheery & Alnassar, 2010; Allahbi, 2023). The Tatweer initiative primarily focuses on integrating digital training and ICT into instructional aspects. However, culture, language, and assessment have not been explicitly incorporated into the formal PD programs of the Tatweer project as essential elements of EFL teaching quality or recognised as components of teacher core knowledge. SNS platforms emerge as one of the few sources for Saudi EFL teachers to augment their core knowledge. The absence of a clear definition of how

SNS contributes to core knowledge results in Saudi EFL teachers encountering challenges in effectively utilising CPD platforms, revealing certain limitations of the Tatweer project (Zonoubi et al., 2017; Wang & Kokotsaki, 2018).

The Tatweer project categorises the disparities in the goals of its PD programs into qualification and training, curriculum development, school environment enhancement, and the implementation of extracurricular activities (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020). Tatweer serves as an entity responsible for designing and funding CPD interventions for EFL teachers. However, as of now, no studies in Saudi Arabia have comprehensively evaluated whether Tatweer has successfully brought about substantial improvements in CPD outcomes. The current literature predominantly centers on teaching English to young learners and on English language learning students' motivation to pursue English courses (Wedell & Alshumaimeri, 2014; Gaffas, 2019; Abdullateef et al., 2023). This highlights the need for new mechanisms to enhance CPD beyond the Tatweer project. Therefore, this thesis aims to address this gap by examining the role of SNS usage in the CPD of English teachers, aiming to potentially generalise the findings to assess how SNS use contributes to meeting the global criteria for EFL teaching excellence as shown in Table 17. Table 17 shows key characteristics of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia

Table 17: Key characteristics of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia

Characteristic	Description	References
Language Proficiency	Proficiency in the English language and understanding of English acquisition processes.	TESOL (2019), Alzhrani (2023)
Cultural Awareness	Familiarity with the cultures of English-speaking countries.	TESOL (2019), Alzhrani (2023)
Instructional Skills	Acumen in employing effective pedagogical practices for English language teaching.	Aleasa (2009), Alkathery & Alnassar (2010), TESOL (2019), Allahbi (2023)
Assessment Expertise	Expertise in utilising various tests and exercises for	TESOL (2019)

	evaluating students' performance.	
Tatweer Initiative	Tatweer primarily focuses on instructional aspects, integrating digital training and ICT into teaching.	Tatweer (2018), Allmnakrah & Evers (2020)
CPD Challenges	Lack of formal PD courses or CPD resources addressing specific criteria like culture, language, and assessment.	Alzhrani (2023)
Role of SNS	SNS platforms are essential for Saudi EFL teachers to augment their core knowledge, but their role is not well-defined.	Zonoubi et al. (2017), Wang & Kokotsaki (2018)
Tatweer Program Goals	Tatweer categorises its PD programs into qualification, curriculum development, school environment, and extracurricular activities.	Allmnakrah & Evers (2020)
Evaluation of Tatweer	No comprehensive studies have evaluated whether Tatweer has brought substantial improvements in CPD outcomes.	Wedell & Alshumaimeri (2014), Gaffas (2019), Abdullateef et al. (2023)
Research Gap	There is a gap in the literature regarding mechanisms to enhance CPD beyond the Tatweer project.	Abdullateef et al. (2023)

2.7. Self-directed learning and CPD

It is important to outline how the key characteristics of EFL teachers discussed in the previous section may affect the efficiency of their self-directed learning and CPD initiatives in developing their teaching skills and knowledge. This section presents self-directed learning, and the CPD. Self-directed learning is an integral part of what differentiates CPD from PD. Self-directed learning entails independent engagement that embraces principles of self-management and personal autonomy (Abakah, 2023). Within this framework, learners take initiative, select subject, determine teaching strategies, and regulate the pace of learning. This learner-centered approach ensures that learners leverage their prior knowledge, internalise newly gained knowledge, and effectively apply it, contributing to its perceived success. Any intentional and systematic effort to gain knowledge falls under the umbrella of self-directed learning (Abakah, 2023; Wang et al., 2023).

Learning initiatives, whether self-initiating studies or group projects, are often motivated by multifaceted factors that vary from person to person. Designing CPD programmes that cultivate a culture of inquiry, discourage judgment, and nurture self-guidance through constructive feedback can facilitate self-directed learning (Abakah, 2023). CPD designers can help learners confidently plan self-directed learning projects by offering courses that build practical skills such as literature research, critical assessment, information organisation, retrieval, and computer proficiency (Sharma, 2022). Modes of CPD that foster supported self-directed learning encompass small-group instruction, journal clubs, apprenticeships, practice audits and evaluations, as well as maintaining a learning portfolio (Shannon, 2000; Sharma, 2022).

Regarding EFL and self-directed learning, a quasi-experimental study conducted with EFL students in Saudi Arabia showed the efficacy of the self-directed learning approach (Khodary, 2017). This study involved assessing EFL students before and after exposure to the self-directed learning approach. Khodary (2017) observed significant improvements in outcomes after implementing the self-directed learning method, highlighting its positive impact. Khodary (2017) in this study examined the impact of Edmodo which is an online learning platform in improving the self-directed learning abilities of Saudi EFL students and the author measured improvements in self-directed learning before and after the use of Edmodo using the pre-Personal Responsibility Orientation to Self-Direction in Learning Scale (PRO-SDLS). The findings confirmed that students who used Edmodo had a higher score on PRO-SDLS scale as against the students who did not use Edmodo, thus, confirming that using Edmodo had a

positive impact on improving the self-directed learning abilities of the students (Khodary, 2017). Having discussed self-directed learning and CPD, it is important to discuss the Tatweer project and its relevance to this thesis which is presented in the next section.

2.8. General Tatweer Project Information:

Significant additions to CPD in the 20th century included the development of the Guide to Educational Training and Scholarships. Scholarships are integral for student development, and such training is efficient for teachers. Therefore, it is crucial to establish a proper channel for providing students and teachers with these opportunities (Cleland, 2021). However, no proper guide was introduced until the Tatweer project, when Saudi Arabia formulated its own approach to CPD (GDTS, 2013). To shift the responsibility for managing CPD performance to individual schools, the Ministry of Education (MoE) implemented the Tatweer project (Aleasa, 2009; Alkathery & Alnassar, 2010; Tatweer, 2018). The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education noted the Tatweer project enabled teachers to follow individual CPD plans and gain core knowledge relevant to their specific schools and classrooms (Tatweer, 2018). According to the Tatweer project, core knowledge focuses on one specific field of a teacher's expertise, emphasising the development of relevant knowledge, higher studies, and expertise in the area they are professionally pursuing. The Tatweer project aims to encourage innovation, advocates for decentralisation of the system, and aims to give more authority to teachers (Tatweer, 2018).

Previously, the MoE dictated the teacher core knowledge that had to be gained through CPD, such as the use of standardised tests for student assessment. For example, the MoE allowed the use of standardised English proficiency tests for student assessment, which took place yearly to evaluate English language skills and progress of students (Al-Seghayer, 2022). Introducing Tatweer project, however, has started notable changes in conducting English language proficiency assessments as it intended to provide resources and prospects to teachers to improve their assessment practices (Tatweer, 2018). One such initiative is to conduct English language proficiency tests throughout the year as against leaving it till year end and use diagnostic indicators to help students who under-perform in these tests (Al-Seghayer, 2022).

The Tatweer project now allows teachers to prioritise areas of core knowledge that are more relevant to their specific contexts. This is achieved through:

- Increased teaching resources: Tatweer schools receive high-quality equipment and resources, including multimedia projectors, new laptops, and access to high-speed

internet connections (Aleasa, 2009; Allahbi, 2023). The Ministry expects teachers to use these resources to access additional sources of core knowledge, including SNS (Tatweer, 2018). The cone of learning is a useful concept which suggests different retention rates for different learning methods and focuses on the notion that when selecting an instructional method, it is important to involve students in the process to enhance the retention of their information (Dale, 1969). With the help of Tatweer project, teachers can transform teaching resources to align with Saudi Vision 2030's goal of offering interactive and student-centered methods (Abdullateef et al., 2023) for better retention of information (Dale, 1969). Thus, the notion of interactivity and using resources based on students' learning experiences can enable students to retain information which can help language learning and teaching in EFL.

- Teacher participation in making requests: Teachers can submit custom requests for additional resources from the MoE. If an EFL Saudi teacher does not have a tablet or a laptop for using SNS, the MoE will provide such assets (Alkatheery & Alnassar, 2010; Abdullateef et al., 2023).
- Teacher participation in decision-making: Teachers can create custom self-evaluation plans independently of the MoE guidelines, thus empowering teachers and giving agency for their professional development. For example, self-evaluation plans can enable teachers to identify areas of improvement in their instructional strategies, thus taking control of their learning and giving agency (Albiladi, 2022). If an EFL Saudi teacher uses new pedagogic or cultural knowledge (e.g., by conducting free-form discussions with students), the MoE will not mandate any changes to such practices.

EFL teachers engaged in the Tatweer project can utilise SNS for acquiring core knowledge. This thesis seeks to explore whether this approach proves effective in contributing to EFL teachers' CPD and enhancing their core knowledge. EFL teachers across the United Kingdom, the United States, and Europe consider using SNS as a collaborative learning approach that effectively contributes to core knowledge (Johnson & Johnson, 2017; Carpenter & Harvey, 2019; Carpenter et al., 2023). However, Tatweer does not explicitly mention SNS nor provide formal training for Saudi EFL teachers unfamiliar with platforms like Twitter or Facebook (Tatweer, 2018).

The primary objectives of the Tatweer project in the EFL field can be summarised as follows (Assulaimani, 2019):

1. Establishing electronic teacher training networks through platforms like messengers and databases for sharing knowledge (Tatweer, 2018).
2. Enhancing the integration of information communication technologies (ICT) in the teaching practices of EFL teachers (Assulaimani, 2019).
3. Elevating EFL teacher creativity by fostering skills in reflective and critical thinking, including providing knowledge about models of reflective analysis (Aleasa, 2009; Alkatheery & Alnassar, 2010; Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020).

By delivering training interventions to enhance EFL teachers' ICT skills, Tatweer exemplifies a nationwide approach to teacher CPD. All Tatweer schools are mandated to incorporate Learning Management Systems (LMS) in EFL classrooms, notably Blackboard (Alharbi, 2008; Assulaimani, 2019; Furqon et al., 2023). These LMS platforms empower teachers to use digital calendars and databases to monitor their CPD and plan forthcoming activities, including utilising SNS. The Saudi government has also purchased bespoke LMS systems from various providers, including Cengage (SG, 2016, Cengage, 2017). Scholars like Alhajeri (2004), Tayan (2017), and Allmnakrah & Evers (2020) have raised doubts about whether the Tatweer objectives genuinely correlate with significant enhancements in teaching performance. Thus, a gap in research exists concerning whether EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia (including participants in the Tatweer initiative and regular EFL teachers) can enhance their core knowledge through SNS, similar to their Western counterparts. By connecting SNS to teachers' CPD, this thesis aims to address this uncertainty, with the findings potentially advocating increased SNS adoption among Saudi EFL teachers (Roas, 2001; Altrjmi, 2010; Allahbi, 2023).

Table 18 provides a comprehensive overview of the Tatweer project, its objectives, and the role of SNS in the professional development of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia:

Table 18: General Tatweer Project Information

Aspect	Description	References
Research Focus	Examines whether the use of SNS contributes to the CPD and enhancement of core knowledge among EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, specifically those engaged in the Tatweer project.	Johnson & Johnson (2017), Tatweer (2018), Carpenter & Harvey

		(2019), Carpenter et al. (2023)
SNS Usage by EFL Teachers	EFL teachers in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Europe use SNS as a collaborative learning approach to enhance their core knowledge.	Johnson & Johnson (2017), Carpenter & Harvey (2019), Carpenter et al. (2023)
Tatweer's Approach to SNS	Tatweer does not explicitly mention SNS or provide formal training for Saudi EFL teachers unfamiliar with platforms like Twitter or Facebook.	Tatweer (2018)
Tatweer Project Objectives	1. Establishing electronic teacher training networks through platforms like messengers and databases for sharing knowledge. 2. Enhancing the integration of information communication technologies (ICT) in the teaching practices of EFL teachers. 3. Elevating EFL teacher creativity by fostering skills in reflective and critical thinking, including providing knowledge about models of reflective analysis.	Aleasa (2009), Alkathery & Alnassar (2010), Assulaimani (2019), Allmnakrah & Evers (2020)
Use of Learning Management Systems (LMS)	Tatweer mandates the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) in EFL classrooms, notably Blackboard, for monitoring CPD and planning activities, including SNS utilisation.	Alharbi (2008), SG (2016), Assulaimani (2019), Furqon et al. (2023)
Government Investment in LMS	The Saudi Government has purchased bespoke LMS systems from various providers, including Cengage, to support educational initiatives.	Alhajeri (2004), Tayan (2017), Allmnakrah & Evers (2020)

<p>Research Gap and Thesis Focus</p>	<p>Research gap exists regarding the impact of SNS on enhancing core knowledge among Saudi EFL teachers, including those in the Tatweer initiative. The thesis aims to connect SNS to teachers' CPD and address this uncertainty.</p>	<p>Roas (2001), Altrjmi (2010), Allahbi (2023)</p>
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2.9. PD Programmes for EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia

This section focuses on both formal and informal PD programmes available to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. As highlighted in Section 2.1, these PD programs can still be viewed as integral components of CPD and act as sources for natural learning experiences.

2.9.1. Effective PD Programmes Outside Saudi Arabia

This sub-section briefly examines PD programs designed for EFL teachers outside of Saudi Arabia. These serve as benchmarks for comparing PD practices within Saudi Arabia. This study identifies the following types of effective formal PD interventions:

- Establishing Professional Learning Communities: (PLCs) In EFL teachers, learning communities comprise groups of fellow EFL educators who share their core knowledge. However, for these learning communities to be effective, they must simultaneously contribute to pedagogic knowledge, cultural knowledge, and language knowledge. For instance, the effectiveness of such programmes was noted by Iranian EFL teachers, who observed that, if PD did not enhance language proficiency knowledge, it did not effectively boost teacher self-efficacy (Zonoubi et al., 2017). The study of Admiraal & Lockhorst (2012) has explored the sense of community within schools and its effect on professional development and learning experiences of teachers. The study has confirmed that teachers who felt a sense of belonging and teamwork in their school community were more likely to participate actively in professional development initiatives. They also reported higher levels of job satisfaction and were more willing to contribute to the professional development of their colleagues (Admiraal & Lockhorst, 2012). The results of this study suggest that PLCs can provide a platform in form of supportive environment for EFL teachers to discuss ideas,

experiences, exchange best practices and gain a deeper understanding of language teaching techniques which are effective for students with different cultural backgrounds in a EFL classroom (Admiraal & Lockhorst, 2012; Shelton et al., 2023).

The role of PLCs is also effective in addressing the notion of ‘native-speakerism’ in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Holliday, 2006) and PLCs with non-native speakers of English as experts can encourage language and cultural contributions, thus, developing a more inclusive and diverse approach in ELT and intercultural competence in students (Golub, 2014; Mo et al., 2021; Burgess et al., 2022). Shelton et al. (2023) however point out that PD programmes may provide teachers with strategies for regular literacy instruction, but these may not address the unique issues faced by English Learners (ELs) who struggle with reading. Thus, an effective strategy for EFL teachers is to get training in terms of phonological awareness and offer exact and systematic instruction in vocabulary and comprehension and use multisensory methods which can help ELs with reading challenges (Odo, 2021).

The role of PLCs can be effective to offer a dedicated platform in terms of expert training such as early diagnostic reading intervention via coaching (Amendum, 2014) offering literacy interventions such as workshops, having guest speakers who can discuss their experiences, problems and best practices whilst dealing with ELs who have reading problems, thus, can offer collaborative learning environment (Shelton et al., 2023). The use of PLCs as a PD intervention has its own challenges. EFL teachers find it difficult to have ample time to attend meetings via PLCs because of their workloads, commitments and different time zones (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). EFL teachers on PLCs have diverse experiences and competencies due to which they can have difference of opinions and managing such differences constructively can be challenging (Huijboom et al., 2023). This can be a problem as per Stoll et al. (2006) as teachers are not likely to involve in detailed discussions in which they share individual views, experiences or challenges about their teaching practice unless they feel safe.

For example, Schaap et al. (2019) note that if the learning culture in the school and the PLC does not align, it can affect teachers’ involvement in the PLCs and the role of work environment such as work pressure of teachers and lack of shared practices, materials and resources within the school affect the usefulness of PLCs. Thus, the use of PLCs as a PD initiative has limitations for EFL teachers.

- In-service courses. This Professional Development initiative for EFL education involves online resources like webinars, lectures, and videos. To improve their core knowledge, in-service courses for teachers need relevant pedagogical and cultural knowledge. According to Ventista & Brown (2023), in-service courses such as training courses are the most common forms of professional development used by teachers. For example, training workshops regarding differentiated instruction (DI) which is a popular teaching approach intended at meeting the needs of all learners within educationally diverse classrooms (Tomlinson, 2017; Kotay-Nagy, 2023) can be used by EFL teachers to engage diverse learners effectively and can improve their pedagogical knowledge. For example, EFL teachers by learning to identify visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners and adapting their instructional strategies to address these learners (Odo, 2021) using different learning formats such as text, audio, video and may provide additional resources such as podcasts which can become an effective teaching strategy that may enhance the teaching-learning process of EFL (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Pena, 2023). The creation and use of podcasts are helpful for improving linguistic competence, specifically speaking and listening skills of EFL students (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Pena, 2023). Using video-based observation is another useful PD intervention used by EFL teachers. For example, Aslan et al. (2022) state that video-based observation is an effective in-service professional development technique that EFL teachers use for reflective practice to evaluate their teaching, instructional methods, and classroom communication critically. It enables them to understand their strengths, recognise areas for improvement, and adjust their teaching methods accordingly (Aslan et al., 2022). Esperat (2021) suggests the effectiveness of in-service courses as an effective PD initiative by arguing that literacy-instruction coaching can help EFL teachers with individual support, offer research-based strategies and prospects for reflective practice and in-service courses can form a community of practice where EFL teachers can share their experiences, get feedback from colleagues and instructors and can strengthen the development of collaborative learning (Vangrieken et al., 2017). Despite having the usefulness, in-service courses as a PD initiative have their own problems. For example, Tondeur et al. (2016) note that in-service courses may not address the specific learning needs of EFL teachers. The content and methodologies taught may not provide authentic, context-specific, and hands-on training, which can cause teachers feeling inadequately prepared. This lack of context-specific training may impede EFL teachers' successful transition from initial

teacher education to real-life professional practices (Tondeur et al., 2016; Bui, 2022). Another problem is that EFL teachers may have difficulty sustaining engagement in these courses, because these are offered for a limited time, which can cause incomplete integration of the gained knowledge (Bui, 2022). A lack of resources can also be a significant limitation in using in-service courses. For example, Bai & Lo (2018) note that in-service courses advocate for using modern technologies and in reality EFL classrooms may experience lack of resources including access to internet and computers due to which it may remain difficult to integrate modern technologies in EFL classrooms.

- Classroom observations. Merc (2015) defines classroom observations as a tool for understanding the application of instructional methods, classroom organisation, and learner response to the learning environment. Observations are used as a common practices in ELT classrooms to create effective teaching and good English classes which contribute towards professional development of teachers (Martinez-Luengas & Mendez, 2023). Understanding the connection and interaction between teacher education, assessment, and teaching supervision is important, and observations play a crucial role in it, as pointed out by Nguyen & Ngo (2022). Martinez-Luengas & Mendez (2023) state that the observer should follow certain procedures and patterns to ensure the effectiveness of observations. These procedures include having pre-class discussion, doing class observation, having post-class discussion, and doing follow-up of the whole process. This procedure of observation is effective as it offers one way of assisting reflective practices in EFL teachers and motivates them to take part in classroom observations as an aspect of their training (Martinez-Luengas & Mendez, 2023). Teachers can reflect on their teaching methods, try new approaches, and make informed decisions about their teaching through this observation procedure, which also develops their autonomy (Aslan et al., 2022). Consequently, teachers are encouraged to take responsibility for their professional development and modify their teaching practices according to their observations, resulting in increased autonomy among EFL teachers (Dikilitas & Mumford, 2019; Aslan et al., 2022). Observations as a PD initiative are used in EFL as these in-service English teachers rely on external help and expert observers to learn the most from observation and to capitalise on opportunities for improvement (O'Leary, 2020). The workplace or the government as a part of an evaluation programme can implement observations (Martinez-Luengas & Mendez,

2023). Observations can be regulated by a governing body such as the National Education Union, which governs the classroom observation protocol for England and Wales and ensures that classroom observations are performed professionally (National Education Union, 2023). Thus, the institutional support with observers (mentors) and mentees and observation and feedback are primary elements to provide training to in-service EFL teachers. Using observations as a PD initiative has its own limitations. Institutional support is crucial, and coaches should supervise the observation process to ensure that the observation protocol is followed (Visone, 2022). Observations should lead to relevant educational outcomes for both teachers and students, such as increasing collective ownership and encouraging teachers to view colleagues as resources (Visone, 2022). However, there can be inadequate support from coaches or relevant resources needed as a part of improvement may not be provided, which can affect motivation level of teachers (Schaap et al., 2019). Teachers may feel uncomfortable of being observed in classrooms and the feedback which they may receive because of which teachers may be reluctant to engage in observations (O’Leary, 2020). According to Cirocki & Farrell (2019), if school managers do not offer additional compensation for engaging in observations, EFL teachers usually ignore the practice of observing other teachers. This suggests that observations need to be incentivised as EFL teachers have time issues because of hectic schedules, workload which can affect their commitment to engage in classroom observations (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019, Ventista & Brown, 2023). Therefore, it is important to show types of effective formal PD interventions as illustrated in Table 19.

Table 19: Types of effective formal PD interventions

PD Program Type	Description	References
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Groups of EFL educators sharing core knowledge. - Should contribute to pedagogic, cultural, and language knowledge. 	Holliday (2006), Admiraal & Lockhorst (2012), Golub (2014), Zonoubi et al. (2017), Mo et al. (2021), Burgess et al. (2022).

	- Effective for teacher self-efficacy and addressing 'native-speakerism.'	
In-Service Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involves webinars, lectures, and videos. -Need pedagogical and cultural knowledge. - Examples include differentiated instruction (DI), multimedia usage, podcasts, video-based observation. - Challenges include context-specificity, sustaining engagement, and resource availability. 	Tondeur et al. (2016), Tomlinson (2017), Bai & Lo (2018), Esperat (2021), Aslan et al. (2022), Chaves-Yuste & de-la Pena (2023), Kotay-Nagy (2023).
Classroom Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers observe each other's classes for professional development. - Enhance teaching methods, classroom organisation, and learner response. - Encourage reflection and autonomy. <p>Challenges include teacher discomfort, lack of incentives, and inadequate support.</p>	Merc (2015), Cirocki & Farrell (2019), Dikilitas & Mumford (2019), Schaap et al. (2019), O'Leary (2020), Nguyen & Ngo (2022), Visone (2022), Martinez-Luengas & Mendez (2023), Ventista & Brown (2023).

In Asian and Middle Eastern countries, EFL teachers have found the aforementioned PD initiatives effective in acquiring new skills and enhancing students' English proficiency (Yumru, 2015; Zonoubi et al., 2017; El Deen, 2023). However, the studies conducted by Yumru (2015) and Cirocki & Farrell (2019) did not explore the specific impact of formal PD programmes on EFL teachers' core knowledge in Gulf countries. This gap in the literature leaves uncertainty regarding whether Saudi teachers who take part in these courses or engage in professional learning communities actually gain new core knowledge. For instance, Cirocki and Farrell (2019) conducted research involving questionnaire surveys and reflective reports from 250 EFL teachers in Indonesia. Their findings revealed that EFL instructors perceived

professional growth in five distinct ways: school-based learning, academic pursuits, extracurricular activities, outside employment, and government programmes. While these instructors claimed many opportunities for professional development, not all of them fully utilised these chances. The study showed that some forms of professional growth might be more effective than others. The research concluded with recommendations to support ongoing professional development among EFL teachers and suggested avenues for further investigation. However, it did not examine into the precise mechanisms through which formal PD programmes enhance participants' core knowledge.

Introducing new teaching methods and EFL teacher training courses in Turkey prompted Yumru (2015) to explore the effectiveness of self-perceived learning methods among Turkish EFL teachers. The study also sought their input regarding INSETT training courses which are in-service training programs started by the government. Yumru (2015) confirmed that Turkish EFL teachers viewed positively professional learning communities. The results showed a preference for practical and meaningful activities such as video recording and self-assessment of their own lessons to enhance their skills such as self-evaluation skills to analyse their performance. Turkish EFL teachers expressed a desire for greater authority, empowerment, and local platforms for discussing their training. However, this study did not investigate how participation in such PD interventions might influence teachers' core knowledge (Yumru, 2015). Considering Saudi Arabia's rapidly developing education landscape, particularly within the context of Saudi Vision 2030, it is therefore important to examine contributions to core knowledge as a pivotal measure of the effectiveness of various CPD actions and programmes.

2.9.2. Professional Development (PD) Programs Offered by Local Training Centers in Saudi Arabia

This section aims to distinguish between the PD programs offered by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Local training centers typically provide the following PD programmes:

- Briefings on implementing new curricula: These briefings usually comprise lectures, seminars, and the provision of digital learning resources (e.g., FAQ pages) to guide the implementation of new curricula (Alnefaie, 2016; Mohiuddin et al., 2023).

- Formal courses on the use of new teaching materials: These formal courses often establish professional learning communities (e.g. lectures and seminars are used to conduct the courses, which are mandatory for all EFL teachers in a specific region of Saudi Arabia (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017; Mohiuddin et al., 2023).
- Courses on implementing new assessment methods: These courses focus on new types of exams, formal tests, and similar methods for assessing students' learning outcomes (Almazroa & Al-Shamrani, 2015; Almoslamani, 2022).

While Saudi Arabia shares some similarities with other Asian and Gulf countries in implementing mandatory PD programs, it diverges in certain aspects. Although Saudi Arabia establishes professional learning communities, EFL teachers do not embrace some PD programs, such as peer observations (Alnefaie, 2016; Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017; Alghamdi et al., 2023). For instance, Alghamdi et al. (2023) considered Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) as a PD initiative in their study and found that teachers were reluctant to be observed and assessed and the reason for this was teachers felt uncomfortable of being observed and feared that they may get the feedback from peers which they may not like and therefore were hesitant to be observed and assessed, limiting its use as a PD tool.

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education designs all formal PD programmes provided by local training centers solely without seeking input from teachers (Alnefaie, 2016; El Deen, 2023). Other researchers (Almazroa & Al-Shamrani, 2015; Alnefaie, 2016) interviewed with Saudi Arabian teachers and found that EFL (Ahmad & Shah, 2022) and science teachers did not perceive PD in Saudi Arabia as effective. However, there is a lack of empirical data regarding how Saudi EFL teachers address this issue outside formal PD interventions or which Continuing Professional Development (CPD) actions they take, such as independently reading academic articles, to gain new core knowledge.

Each local center has the flexibility to implement PD programmes addressing two types of issues: teacher behaviour and local educational challenges (Almazroa & Al-Shamrani, 2015; Alnefaie, 2016; El Deen 2023). Behaviour-centric interventions aim to gauge teachers' opinions on CPD and raise awareness of its significance in their professional growth (Alshammary et al., 2023). These interventions cover areas such as setting behavioural objectives such as setting specific objectives which are expected to bring improvements in skills, capabilities, knowledge, and behaviours of teachers, assessing student performance, enhancing teaching capabilities, improving educational communication, and managing

classrooms. Behavioural objectives may encourage the use of electronic training networks and integrating ICT in EFL teaching (Alharbi, 2008; Assulaimani, 2019). Typically, various education training centers (ETCs) in the KSA conduct these programmes, and they have short durations, usually less than two weeks.

However, there is a gap concerning the question of whether Saudi EFL teachers use SNS to access teacher core knowledge outside these short-term programmes (Nagle, 2018; Prestridge, 2019; Alzhrani, 2023). Without this information, Saudi EFL teachers cannot make informed decisions about which SNS platforms could effectively complement short-term PD interventions. For example, an EFL teacher learning to use the Blackboard learning system might use Twitter or Facebook to seek additional assistance from developers.

Alharbi (2008), Assulaimani (2019) and El Deen (2023) have highlighted that formal courses, briefings, and seminars, as mentioned above, may have limited relevance to individual schools or regions within Saudi Arabia due to standardisation. For instance, the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) intervention may not suit rural schools where EFL teachers lack reliable internet connections required to access tutorial materials (BA, 2020; Allahbi, 2023). Saudi EFL teachers turn to CPD interventions, including the use of social media, to gain new core knowledge (Allahbi, 2023).

Training centers in Saudi Arabia often face limitations in terms of financial and technical resources, such as personal computers, to provide teachers with access to government-approved briefings, seminars, and lectures on EFL curricula (Carpenter et al., 2019; Allahbi, 2023). This suggests that SNS could serve to acquire new knowledge beyond formal PD programmes. This thesis investigates how the use of SNS can address the limitations of PD interventions in Saudi Arabia.

2.9.3. Professional Development (PD) Programmes in Saudi Arabian Universities and Colleges

PD programmes reach beyond local training centers and get integrated into teacher education. The key distinction between these interventions and programmes offered by training centers lies because teacher education is guided by university or college curricula (Abakah, 2023). Three primary sources of these training interventions exist, namely teacher training colleges, local universities, and the Institute of Public Administration (IPA, 2020). The IPA primarily focuses on school administration and leadership, which has limited relevance to this study.

- **Teachers' Training Colleges:** Teachers' colleges impart fundamental teacher core knowledge to prospective EFL professionals (FoE, 2020; Alshammary et al., 2023). For instance, a teachers' college can provide training to future teachers on the utilisation of standardised tests to assess students' English proficiency (Kliueva & Tsagari, 2018; Cantrell et al., 2023).
- **Local Universities:** Local universities offer bachelor's and master's level courses to both current and aspiring EFL teachers (Accurso, 2020).

While EFL teachers have the option to utilise SNS outside of formal PD programmes to expand their core knowledge (Prestridge, 2019), it remains uncertain whether this source of core knowledge is on par with what colleges and local universities provide. While SNS offered core knowledge on form-focused teaching, student self-determination, and emotional intelligence, Li and Zou (2017) concentrated on investigating the lesson planning strategies employed by EFL teachers through focus groups and interviews. Their results confirmed that expert EFL teachers showed greater efficiency in lesson planning (Vieluf and Gobel, 2019; Bayram & Bikmaz, 2021).

However, these studies did not probe into whether SNS can replicate the core knowledge provided by colleges and universities, or whether SNS can serve as a unique source of core knowledge. This question makes up one of the primary focuses of this thesis. It will assess the perceived value of SNS among EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, establishing a clear ranking of available PD measures for these professionals and their effectiveness in enhancing EFL teachers' core knowledge (Li et al., 2019; Mei, 2019; Carpenter et al., 2023).

2.10. Challenges Facing Teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia

Several challenges impact teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia. These challenges include large classrooms and the absence of standardised development criteria, which have a negative impact on teachers' professional growth (Al-Maatouk et al., 2020). Teachers' agency refers to what teachers do and achieve in their profession rather than something they possess. It reflects the quality of their interactions within the context of their teaching responsibilities, often highlighting their ability to be reflective and creative while sometimes going against societal norms (Biesta et al., 2015; Addae, 2022). According to Vahasantanen (2015) and Dennen et al. (2020), teachers frequently show their identity through their agency. It serves as a measure of their teaching capabilities and effectiveness. However, Ahmad and Shah (2022) note the

absence of empirical evidence that teacher training programmes in EFL contexts actively nurture the concept of teachers' agency. Teachers' agency plays a vital role in their professional development initiatives and classroom outcomes but is often overlooked. Therefore, CPD programmes should aim to develop EFL teachers' educational practices and, potentially strengthen their agency.

The absence of clear institutional policies regarding students' learning can hinder teachers' autonomy and their ability to fully exercise their agency in curriculum design, despite having an extensive array of effective teaching strategies (Biesta et al., 2015). To enhance teachers' professional development, institutions should establish clear objectives, aligning professional development activities with these institutional goals (Moskovsky & Picard, 2019; Ahmad & Shah, 2022). Another challenge affecting teachers' CPD, especially when utilising SNS, is the overwhelming flow of information (Davis, 2015; Bui, 2022). For instance, #Edchat sessions on Twitter can be demanding because of the sheer volume of information to manage. Attempting to follow everything simultaneously can be overwhelming, making it a time-consuming task to filter relevant content from irrelevant content, particularly given the limited time teachers have available during a lesson. This complexity can present a genuine challenge when integrating Twitter into the classroom (Davis, 2015; Du et al., 2023).

However, Greenhow et al. (2021) highlight that the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted education systems worldwide and imposed new demands on teachers' PD as they transitioned to online teaching and learning. The impact of the pandemic on global education systems has prompted an increased need for teachers' PD during the shift to online instruction (Greenhow et al., 2021). The emergence of teachers' professional learning networks (PLN) on social media, such as #Edchat discourse, has proven to be a flexible and valuable resource during the pandemic. These networks go beyond self-promotion, encouraging inquiry and enabling just-in-time professional learning, especially in emergency situations where local professional development resources may be insufficient (Greenhow et al., 2021; Woulfin & Spitzer, 2023). These networks go beyond in various ways, for example, the use of discussions and asking questions about various educational issues on these platforms encourage collaboration, critical thinking and collective problem-solving as against focusing on self-promotion so to enable teachers to learn collectively.

According to Day & Sachs (2004), Molla & Nolan (2020), and Abakah (2023), CPD for teachers is not only essential for driving change in the education system but also for fostering

the academic and professional growth of teachers. However, in Saudi Arabia, a significant challenge arises, as most teachers do not attend professional development training courses. One contributing factor is that school management does not actively monitor teachers' attendance in these courses, often treating it as a mere formality within the educational setup (Ahmad & Shah, 2022; El Deen, 2023). The absence of support from school management and a lack of policies mandating professional development as a part of teachers' training programmes pose significant obstacles to the CPD of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia (Ahmad & Shah, 2022; El Deen, 2023).

Ahmad and Shah (2022) conducted research on the impact of Cambridge English teaching (CET) on EFL teachers' agency and concluded that institutionally introduced professional development courses effectively enhance the professionalism of Saudi EFL teachers. Likewise, Major (2010) noted that teachers may experience uncertainty, anxiety, and a lack of preparedness for teaching online. They frequently do not have the conditions, resources, and tools to integrate technologies, such as SNS, into their teaching syllabuses effectively (Bui, 2022).

A noteworthy challenge regarding teachers' CPD is that they often use SNS solely for personal interactions, such as posting and communicating with family, neglecting their potential for professional growth (Bennett et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2023). Cultural and religious beliefs of Saudi teachers may prevent them from using SNS for professional development (Alqahtani, 2019). Saudi teachers can overcome this challenge by developing more positive perceptions of technology, including SNS. Additionally, they can seek out training and mentorship relationships to explore how SNS can be effectively integrated into curricula, while also easing feelings of information overload (Wenger et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2023). Another highlighted challenge, as identified by Washah (2004) and Ahmad and Shah (2022), is that although teaching is still considered a prestigious profession in Saudi Arabia, however, relatively low salaries which are offered to teachers as compared to other professions have made teaching less attractive to potential teachers. This highlights the need for the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia to offer higher salaries, additional incentives like bonuses, and flexible work arrangements so to enhance the employability of EFL teachers within the Saudi educational system (Ahmad & Shah, 2022; Alshammery et al., 2023).

Because of the increasing number of students, the timely filling of new teaching vacancies becomes a top priority for school management. School management often focuses on filling

these vacant positions rather than offering formal professional development courses, which can have a detrimental impact on teachers' CPD (Misra, 2018). Another significant challenge affecting teachers' CPD, including their use of social networking sites, is the constraint of time (Albaqami & Alzahrani, 2022). Hew & Hara (2007) and Ibrahim et al. (2019) argue that, while using social networking sites can be accessible, scheduled chat times may not always align with teachers' availability. Teachers who lack the choice or necessary support to use social networking sites during their working hours at school may face difficulties in balancing their professional and personal lives. This can discourage teachers, affecting their use of SNS for both pedagogical practices and professional development (Misra, 2018; Carpenter et al., 2023).

Friesen & Lowe (2012) highlight that social media often lacks constructive debate, which can stimulate the conflict. The absence of constructive debate can sometimes result in the mere exchange of data without authenticity. However, Krutka et al. (2019) point out that various social networking sites like Twitter provide platforms for teachers to connect with like-minded peers, potentially exposing them to diverse, opposing, and challenging perspectives and opinions. Another challenge affecting Saudi teachers' CPD when using social networking sites is the absence of formal school policies mandating teachers' use of these platforms for teaching or professional development (Alshaikhi, 2020).

To address these issues, Davis (2015), Chapman and Greenhow (2019), and Alshaikhi (2020) suggest the removal of bans on social networking sites for both teachers and students in schools. They propose the implementation of policies regarding social media use in schools to encourage teachers to integrate them into their teaching practices and beyond their professional development. Such policies, when in place, can blur the boundaries between socialisation, leisure, and learning, fostering relationships between peers, including teacher-teacher and teacher-student interactions. This can contribute to teachers' professional development by enhancing educational outcomes in terms of students' learning and teachers' instructional practices (Anderson, 2009; Greenhow & Galvin, 2020). However, the blurring of boundaries between socialisation, leisure, and learning can also have a negative impact, making it easier for students to gossip about their teachers' personal lives, potentially compromising respect and the traditional classroom environment (Tufekci, 2008; Ventista & Brown, 2023).

Another challenge affecting teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia is the uniformity of content in professional development courses across the country. One-off training events and workshops are the conventional professional development methods available to Saudi EFL teachers, but

Albaqami and Alzahrani (2022) argue that they are often centralised, limited, and less effective. These professional development methods frequently rely on 'one size fits all' training programmes that may not cater to the diverse needs of all EFL teachers, potentially impeding their CPD (Alshaikhi, 2020).

Another significant challenge affecting the CPD of EFL teachers is the persistent disregard for their input in the development of CPD training programmes. EFL teachers are not granted the authority or empowerment to take part in the design or improvement of CPD initiatives (El Deen, 2023). CPD initiatives in Saudi Arabia are planned and allowed by the Ministry of Education, and such exclusionary practices might confine teachers to the role of syllabus implementers and passive technicians, limiting their influence and potentially demotivating them from seeking improvements (El Deen, 2023). Several studies on EFL teachers' perceptions have highlighted these concerns (Alnefaie, 2016; Alshaikhi, 2020; El Deen, 2023).

Other challenges affecting teachers' CPD when using social networking sites are both internal and external, as outlined by Ertmer (2005), Alshaikhi (2020), and Wang et al. (2023). External challenges include inadequate equipment, time constraints, insufficient training, and a lack of necessary support for using various social networking sites. Internal challenges encompass teachers' underlying beliefs about integrating technology into their syllabi (Alshaikhi, 2020; Carpenter et al., 2023).

Teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia is further hindered by a general lack of digital literacy among teachers (Albaqami & Alzahrani, 2022). According to Leaning (2019), digital literacy refers to the discrete capabilities and pedagogical practices that a user should gain to function effectively in a modern digital environment. Within the context of EFL, Saudi EFL teachers exhibit low levels of digital literacy, attributed to infrequent technology use in classrooms, lack of use of smart gadgets and limited engagement with social networking sites such as WhatsApp, even in their spare time for self-directed learning and professional improvement (Al-Harbi & Ahmad, 2022). This has a detrimental effect on teachers' CPD (Albawardi, 2017; Albaqami & Alzahrani, 2022; Al-Harbi & Ahmad, 2022).

This inconsistency in digital proficiency become obvious when considering the idea of 'digital natives' which are defined as young people who have grown up in a digital age and are more proficient in using technology for different purposes (Prensky, 2001; Rahimi, 2023). Unlike these digital natives, Saudi EFL teachers may not have fully integrated digital tools and platforms into their pedagogical practices, which can have a negative effect on teachers' CPD

(Albaqami & Alzahrani, 2022). To address this issue, it is essential to explore practices to improve the digital literacy and technological integration of Saudi EFL teachers so to align their skills with the requirements of modern education (Rahimi, 2023).

Problems related to unavailable or unstable internet connections in classrooms may compromise teachers' CPD resulting from the use of social networking sites. These issues encompass slow internet speeds and unreliable connections, which adversely affect teachers' ability to utilise social networking sites for educational purposes (Albaqami & Alzahrani, 2022; Ventista & Brown, 2023). Rasmitadila et al. (2020) noted that when teachers utilise social networking sites in classrooms, they often face technical difficulties, struggle with diverse learners' needs, and face issues of motivation and learners' engagement. These challenges collectively have a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of using social networking sites to enhance teachers' CPD. Mohalik and Sahoo (2020) and Ventista & Brown (2023) also highlight that unreliable internet connection for accessing various social networking sites and inconsistent electricity supply in schools negatively affect teachers' CPD. These factors lead to reduced confidence and unhappiness among teachers, ultimately impeding their professional development.

It is important to distinguish between using SNS for CPD and using them as a classroom tool, as SNS not only provide teachers with PD sources but also serve as collaborative tools within their classrooms (Winter et al., 2021; Du et al., 2023). During the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers worldwide utilised SNS platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube to exchange resources, participate in pedagogical discourse, and adapt their teaching practices to online environments, making online teaching and learning the new norm in education (Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Winter et al., 2021; Du et al., 2023). This demonstrates that SNS have a dual nature, facilitating professional development and classroom teaching simultaneously.

In PD, for instance, teachers use Twitter, such as #Edchat, to engage in academic discussions, exchange educational perspectives, access an extensive variety of resources shared by teachers globally, and stay informed about contemporary pedagogical trends (Xing & Gao, 2018). This illustrates that the use of SNS (#Edchat) serves as a platform for teachers to develop their professional skills and capabilities, contributing to their professional development (Greenhalgh & Koehler, 2017). Using Twitter can also be beneficial for teachers in the classroom. For example, teachers can employ Twitter to create precise hashtags that facilitate students by

engaging them in online discussions and fostering a collaborative learning environment within the classrooms (Xing & Gao, 2018; Woulfin & Spitzer, 2023).

Similarly, teachers use Instagram to create profiles and follow educational institutions, colleagues, accounts related to language learning and teaching, and various hashtags dedicated to English language education, along with common instructional approaches used particularly in EFL teaching (Erarslan, 2019). This enables EFL teachers to stay current with prevailing pedagogical practices, contributing to the continuing professional development (CPD) of EFL educators. Pujiati & Tamela (2019) observe that teachers utilise Instagram as a classroom tool to engage and motivate students in English learning, thereby enhancing student outcomes. By creating classroom accounts on Instagram, teachers can exchange daily learning progress, conduct assessments, and employ real-life examples from different Instagram accounts to teach the English language. Empowering students to monitor their own learning contributes to the effective use of Instagram as a classroom tool and positively impacts student outcomes (Pujiati & Tamela, 2019). Erarslan (2019) also advocates for the use of Instagram as a classroom tool, as its real-time interaction enhances students' achievement scores. Thus, it is important to outline the challenges facing teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia and these challenges are provided in Table 20 below:

Table 20: Challenges facing Teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia and impact on CPD

Challenges facing teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia	Impact on CPD
Large classrooms and absence of standardised development criteria	Negative impact on professional growth
Lack of nurturing teachers' agency in EFL training programs	Hindrance to teachers' professional development
Absence of clear institutional policies regarding students' learning	Limits teachers' autonomy and agency
Overwhelming flow of information on SNS	Challenge in managing and filtering content
Impact of Covid-19 on teachers' PD and the role of social media	Increased need for PD during the shift to online instruction

Limited participation of teachers in professional development training	Lack of monitoring and support from school management
Teachers' unpreparedness for online teaching	Lack of conditions, resources, and tools
SNS use for personal interactions rather than professional development	Hindrance to leveraging SNS for CPD
Low salaries and attractiveness of teaching as a profession	Impedes recruitment and retention of teachers
Focus on filling teaching vacancies over professional development	Neglects CPD opportunities
Constraint of time for teachers	Challenge in aligning with scheduled chat times on SNS
Lack of constructive debate on social media	Hindrance to meaningful discussion and learning
Absence of formal school policies mandating SNS use	Lack of guidance for integrating SNS into teaching
Uniformity and limitations of content in professional development	Insufficiently tailored to diverse needs
Lack of teacher input in CPD program development	Hindrance to teachers' influence and motivation
Low levels of digital literacy among EFL teachers	Impedes effective use of technology and SNS
Unavailable or unstable internet connections in classrooms	Compromises SNS use for educational purposes

2.11. Development of EFL Teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia

Having discussed the PD in previous sections, this section examines how EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia have been introduced to CPD options over the past few decades. This thesis discusses four primary pathways for EFL teachers' CPD in developed Western countries in detail.

School-based learning: This involves enhancing teachers' core knowledge based on personal classroom experiences. For instance, if students complain about insufficient classroom participation, they may motivate their EFL teacher to engage in inclusive pedagogy or free-form discussions (Okken et al., 2019). One such approach which can encourage inclusive pedagogy and free-form discussions in an EFL classroom is called plurilingual teaching, which promotes the inclusive participation of everyone in the classroom (Galante et al., 2020). The findings from Galante et al. (2020)'s study confirm that when teachers use plurilingual tasks, it encourages students to utilise their diverse language skills. These tasks also connect with students' real-life experiences and challenge teachers' perceptions of different cultures. This shift in perspective empowers students and changes the traditional role of teachers from being experts to facilitators of open discussions. Therefore, the value of the plurilingual approach in EFL teaching lies in its ability to create a more inclusive and collaborative learning environment, ultimately enhancing student outcomes in terms of language acquisition (Erling et al., 2021; Burner & Carlsen, 2023).

- **Academic research:** EFL teachers can access the latest academic articles on pedagogic knowledge, cultural knowledge, and language knowledge through online and physical libraries (Collins & O'Brien, 2011; Lu & Yoon, 2022).
- **Government programmes:** This category encompasses EFL teachers' participation in government-sponsored interventions, including exchange programmes with Western countries (Konuralp & Topping, 2023).
- **Self-directed learning:** EFL teachers utilise non-academic resources such as social media, documentaries, teachers' testimonies, and memoirs to augment their core knowledge (Zhai, 2019; Cleary et al., 2022).

Currently, EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia have access to government programmes such as formal PD programmes, school-based learning, and academic research (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Al-Seghayer, 2014; Ahmad & Shah, 2022). Al-Seghayer (2014), in particular, conducted a systematic literature review and observed that Saudi Arabian EFL teachers tend to prefer government programmes and accessing academic research over relying on self-directed

learning or school-based learning. In his study, he identified four constraints affecting CPD: teacher beliefs, the curriculum, as well as pedagogical and administrative constraints. He noted that the level of English competency among EFL teachers and students remains insufficient and below average. Furthermore, he highlighted the absence of a national strategy for teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, one based on effective teaching theories and clear goals that align with the objectives of macro-national development plans.

A study conducted by Sato & Oyanedel (2019) investigated teachers' attitudes towards combining grammar instruction with communicative teaching in English as a foreign language. Initially, the researchers devised a survey to explore teachers' perspectives on L2 learning theories, grammar instruction, and challenges related to communicative teaching, and then administered it. 498 school-level teachers completed the survey. Subsequently, nine teachers took part in focus groups and interviews. Teaching experiences helped some teachers successfully reconcile conflicting beliefs, while others struggled with this. Teachers held different views on how to learn an L2 compared to how they can teach it.

However, there is limited evidence, according to Al-Hazmi (2003), Al-Seghayer (2014), regarding whether Saudi Arabian EFL teachers incorporate the use of SNS in their CPD. In Western countries, EFL teachers can search for YouTube videos on inclusive pedagogy to complement their school-based learning, resulting in improved language outcomes (Okken et al., 2019; Zhai, 2019). There is limited evidence regarding whether Saudi Arabian EFL teachers use SNS for self-directed learning. This thesis aims to address this research gap by examining the potential contribution that SNS usage might make to the core knowledge of Saudi Arabian EFL teachers.

Similarly, like Western countries, Saudi Arabia has exchange programmes as a means of EFL teachers' CPD, with programmes existing between Saudi Arabia, the US, and the UK (Vangrieken et al., 2017; Zhai, 2019). EFL teachers primarily take part in such interventions to gain new learning experiences, including observing teachers in other schools, learning more about the culture of English-speaking countries, and improving their language proficiency by communicating solely in English with academic colleagues (Collins & O'Brien, 2011; Okken et al., 2019). For instance, a Saudi EFL teacher studying in the UK can compare their language proficiency to that of native English speakers and identify areas needing improvement, such as the use of idioms.

Studies of Vangrieken et al. (2017), Okken et al. (2019) and Zhai (2019) did not investigate whether the use of SNS can lead to a similar increase in teacher core knowledge as exchange programmes in Gulf countries. A quantitative and descriptive study conducted in Pakistan linked the use of SNS to improved faculty performance and found a significant positive correlation between the use of SNS and the development of core knowledge and teacher performance (Khan, 2017). This thesis will address this gap by examining whether Saudi Arabian EFL teachers can effectively use SNS to gain new core knowledge.

While EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia have access to the same CPD interventions as their Western colleagues, there was a noticeable absence of CPD programmes for EFL teachers in this setting until the 21st century. The General Directorate of Training and Scholarships (GDTS) was established only in 1974, making government-backed teacher CPD a relatively recent addition (GDTS, 2013; Hillman, 2013; Carpenter & Harvey, 2019). The current academic consensus suggests that Gulf countries face challenges in using teachers' CPD to implement specific teaching methodologies and paradigms, such as inclusive pedagogy or digitally assisted learning (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017; Henry & Namnhla, 2020). While other scholars (Carpenter & Krutka, 2015; Carpenter & Harvey, 2019) agree that EFL teachers in Europe and other developed Western countries effectively use SNS to gain new core knowledge, as explained in the following sections, there is no evidence to confirm that such an outcome applies to teachers in Saudi Arabia (Loucks-Horsley, 1996). Although SNS are available to Saudi Arabian EFL teachers as a CPD tool, this thesis aims to investigate whether SNS are effective in contributing to EFL teachers' core knowledge in this Gulf country.

2.12. CPD and SNS in Saudi EFL Teachers:

PD programmes in the KSA only incorporate methodologies focusing on lectures, discussions, visiting other schools or classrooms, workshops, programmed learning, brainstorming, role-playing, and case studies (GDTS, 2002; Alzhrani, 2023). According to some studies, the most common methods used by trainers for delivering PD programmes in the ETCs have been lectures and discussion (Abdualjuad, 1996; Alzhrani, 2023). A study was conducted by Alhajeri (2004), which focused on highlighting some issues of 300 teachers working in in-service training programmes in the KSA, they divided these into three sections, specifically administrative, training, and individual). Despite implementing the Tatweer project, formal and informal CPD in Saudi Arabia is still in its early stages when compared to CPD available to EFL teachers in Western countries (OECD, 2020). This thesis illustrates whether EFL teachers

in Saudi Arabia can still gain core knowledge through the use of SNS outside of formal CPD interventions. It is important to provide the statistics about internet access and social media use in Saudi Arabia as shown in Table 21. Table 21 shows internet access and social media use in Saudi Arabia as of year 2023.

Table 21: Internet Access and Social Media Usage in Saudi Arabia (2023)

Metric	Data
Total Population (million)	36.33
Internet Access (million)	35.97 (99% of population)
Household Internet Penetration (2023)	99.9% (Remains same till 2028)
Social Media Users (million)	28.81 (79.30% of the population)
Average Daily Internet Usage (hours: minutes)	7:20
Average Daily Social Media Usage (hours: minutes)	3:01

Source: GMI, 2023

Table 21 reveals that Saudi Arabia has a total population of 36.33 million. Out of this population, approximately 99.9%, or 35.97 million people, have access to the internet. Furthermore, among this internet-connected population, 28.81 million individuals, equivalent to 79.3%, actively use social media. This data highlights the widespread prevalence of social media users within the country.

Table 22 shows top 10 social media platforms in Saudi Arabi as of year 2023.

Table 22: Top 10 Social Media Platforms in Saudi Arabia (2023)

Social Media Platform	Percentage of Users	Number of Users (Million)

WhatsApp	83.70%	22.33
Instagram	76.80%	20.49
Snapchat	68.90%	18.38
Twitter	68.70%	18.33
TikTok	67.60%	18.04
Facebook	66.30%	17.69
Telegram	55.60%	14.83
Facebook Messenger	47.70%	12.73
Pinterest	28.60%	7.63
LinkedIn	25.20%	6.72

Source: GMI, 2023

Table 22 shows the popularity of various social media platforms in Saudi Arabia. Millions of users widely use WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and TikTok. This massive use of these SNS illustrates the technological advancements and digital trends which align with Saudi Vision 2030, whose goal is to transform education by promoting integration of technology in teaching and learning (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020). The high user percentages of these SNS among the Saudi population suggest that teachers and students are also the users of these SNS, which therefore offer substantial prospects for EFL teachers to use these SNS for their CPD (Abdullateef et al., 2023). The data in the above table shows that SNS such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter can be used for educational discussions, exchanging knowledge, and accessing educational resources. These opportunities can contribute to the professional development of teachers according to the goals of Saudi Vision 2030 (Abdullateef et al., 2023). Besides this, since these SNS are highly popular among the Saudi population, these can also serve as effective classroom tools, enabling collaborative teaching practices (El Deen, 2023), specifically in the fast-paced educational developments that Saudi Arabia is currently undergoing.

Research findings from the literature suggest that there may be an incongruence between an EFL teacher's priorities and the objectives of training programmes. For instance, Roas (2001) ran a study on the educational programmes introduced by ETC in the KSA. The author examined the views of 357 trainers and trainees. The most significant finding was the discrepancy between the educational outcomes prioritised by EFL teachers (e.g., increasing student motivation for learning English) and the objectives of training programmes, such as improving standardised test scores (Roas, 2001). The theory of cooperative learning states that cooperative learning environments facilitate the exchange of core knowledge by providing platforms in which teachers can share such insight incurring no unforeseen costs (e.g., paying international associations to take part in formal courses) (Johnson & Johnson, 1975; Johnson & Johnson, 2017). There is limited evidence confirming that EFL teachers effectively use SNS as a means of cooperative learning and gaining new core knowledge (Kamarudin & Aziz, 2023).

The design of PD programmes rarely focuses on the individual learning strategies used by EFL teachers (Hamrun, 2007; Buteal, 2009). For instance, different teachers prioritise varying types of learning during CPD, namely meaning-oriented, application-oriented, and problematic learning (Vermu et al., 2019). PD programmes that focus on increasing ICT efficacy (which was highly relevant to the Tatweer project and English teaching in the KSA) were most frequently application-oriented, meaning that EFL teachers may struggle to find motivation and meaning to take part in CPD (Alt, 2018; Ventista & Brown, 2023). Another limitation is that individual teachers may intrinsically experience difficulties in learning and oppose change (Vermunt et al., 2019; El Deen, 2023). SNS usage is outside formal PD, meaning that teachers are free to use their preferred learning strategies. Despite the significance of this benefit, there is a lack of data on whether SNS could potentially reduce the misalignment between PD design and teacher needs. The uniqueness of this thesis lies in addressing this issue within the specific context of Saudi Arabia.

Presently, professional development (PD) programmes offered by international associations (e.g., the TESOL association) focus on theory rather than practice (IAU, 2018). Academic evidence on this subject suggests that EFL teachers often struggle to align the content of PD initiatives with the individual challenges they face in their classrooms (Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018; Shahri, 2018). International PD programmes for EFL teachers emphasise critical thinking and independent research, while teachers in developing countries struggle with issues

like managing parent-teacher relationships and improving standardised test scores (Friedman, 2019; Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018).

SNS may also help build practical knowledge by allowing EFL teachers to share their natural learning experiences through Twitter feeds or Facebook posts. However, it is uncertain whether EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia can consistently access such benefits from using SNS (Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018; Shahri, 2018). The influence of SNS, however, may extend beyond influencing knowledge. This thesis will investigate whether SNS can affect deeply rooted beliefs regarding EFL teachers' roles and functions, thus influencing teachers' identity. According to the definition of teacher identity, this concept covers the development of one's self-efficacy, motivation, and engagement (Dennen et al., 2020). This implies that identity comprises professional and personal beliefs gained from academic and online sources, including SNS. SNS may contribute to CPD by shaping the identity of EFL teachers (Hayes, 2014; Alzhrani, 2023). However, researchers have not yet clearly established the relationship between SNS and CPD based on the current understanding.

While the rationale for using SNS in PD initiatives is clear, it is not clear which specific social media platforms are currently the most popular among EFL professionals in Saudi Arabia. Moran et al. (2012) mention that Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn are frequently used as SNS in educational settings in English-speaking countries. However, it is unclear which specific platforms are popular among EFL professionals in Saudi Arabia. According to Pedroza (2023), in the UK, Twitter is the most frequently used social media platform by teachers for work-related activities, followed by WhatsApp and Facebook. Since these SNS originated in developed countries, it remains to be seen to what extent Saudi Arabian teachers use these SNS and applications (apps) that are native to Saudi Arabia (Macdonald and Poniatowska, 2011). To determine the potential effectiveness of SNS usage for CPD among EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, this thesis aims to identify whether EFL teachers in this context can use SNS to gain new core knowledge and enhance their CPD.

2.13. Exploring SNS Usage in EFL Teaching

This study aims to explore the various SNS usage in CPD. Teachers use social media platforms to communicate, share ideas, and expand their own professional learning opportunities because of the abundance of online resources and improvements in accessibility. This study on what instructors do with social media has experienced a resurgence in the past five years. However, merely establishing that teachers are networking or gathering materials may overlook the

underlying motivation behind such behavior. This makes it difficult to comprehend social media use as professional learning (Ventista & Brown, 2023).

This study relies on the four-component model originally proposed by Prestridge (2019). Prestridge (2019) employed interviews with teachers from Australia, Belgium, and the United States to establish two dimensions of social media usage: social reasoning and interactivity reasoning. This study identified four types of online teacher engagement: info-consumer, info-networker, self-seeking contributor, and vocationalist. Introducing this new paradigm for professional development has significant implications for understanding the role of social media in teacher professional learning and for redefining what makes up effective professional development (Prestridge, 2019).

Social reasoning refers to the degree to which a social media user seeks interaction with others, while interactive reasoning refers to whether a teacher consumes or contributes to social media content. This two-dimensional model provides four archetypes of social media usage:

- Info consumers rarely interact with other users and consume content without sharing or creating new knowledge. Watching English teaching videos on YouTube or reading Twitter feeds of native English speakers, who are EFL academics, can make EFL teachers info consumers.
- Info networkers use social media primarily to communicate with others and do not generate new content. Saudi Arabian EFL teachers can be info networkers by engaging in communication with textbook publishers and EFL teachers in Western countries or other Gulf nations.
- Self-seeking contributors do not engage in communication with other users and, instead, create new content, including videos or blog posts. Saudi Arabian EFL teachers can create Twitter accounts to share their experiences of teaching English or write blog posts on the same subject.
- Vocationalists are frequent social media users who regularly create new content and engage in communication with others. Saudi Arabian EFL teachers can be vocationalists by establishing new blogs on English teaching and inviting other EFL academics to contribute guest articles.

The model proposed by Prestridge (2019) does not distinguish between the various knowledge gained from social media, including core knowledge, cultural knowledge, or pedagogic knowledge (Nguyen, 2016; Huang & Guo, 2019). This model of Prestridge (2019) overlooks barriers to social media usage relevant to the context of Saudi Arabia, such as poor internet connections or country-wide digital censorship.

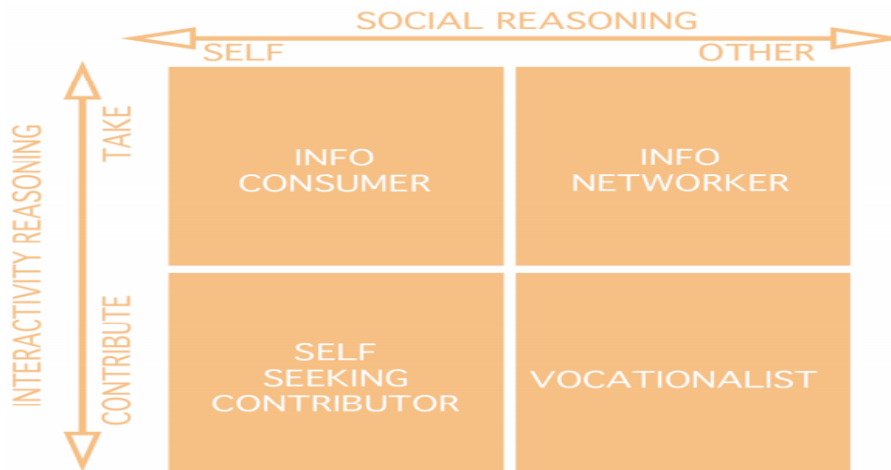


Figure 4. The 4-Component Model of SNS Usage

This framework in Figure 4 suggests that SNS usage is primarily influenced by interactive reasoning and social reasoning. It illustrates that an info consumer is someone who is self-motivated to gain knowledge through the use of SNS but may only gather knowledge without contributing. The info networker is one who socialises with others and builds networks to gain knowledge. The third category is the self-seeking contributor who is self-motivated and employs interactive reasoning for CPD, actively contributing to CPD. Lastly, there is the vocationalist who sporadically uses SNS for CPD and contributes to the knowledge sharing on SNS (Prestridge, 2019).

Other types of SNS usage exist, such as using it to stress relief, as a source of civic literacy, and as a platform for cooperative teacher learning (Damico & Krutka, 2018; Damico & Panos, 2018). Prestridge (2019) did not include such forms of SNS usage in their model (Carpenter & Harvey, 2019). Both Chugh and Ruhi (2018) and Ahmed et al. (2019) conducted systematic literature reviews to establish that SNS usage contributed to EFL teachers' core knowledge by enabling them to share and receive pedagogic knowledge from other teachers and using Facebook as an educational tool potentially offers a wide range of benefits. However, there are a few limitations, such as the prevalent use of informal language, inactive behaviors, and privacy concerns. There is no discussion on how EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia use SNS in the

findings of Ahmed et al. (2019) and Chugh & Rubi (2018). As Saudi Arabian teachers frequently distrust social media or do not have access to a stable internet connection, EFL teachers in this context might not consistently gain core knowledge when using SNS (Alhaddad, 2018).

Highlighting the relevance of the above model to Saudi Arabia, language teachers in the Gulf countries use Twitter to connect with their colleagues and YouTube to view lectures on new teaching and classroom management practices (Fungchomchoei & Kardkarnklai, 2016). For teachers in Saudi Arabia and other countries, SNS is a platform for encountering new natural learning experiences and communicating with their colleagues from other countries (Basoz, 2016). By becoming info consumers and info networkers, EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia gain pedagogic and cultural knowledge.

Prestridge's (2019) model provides useful information on the knowledge gained through social media, but it is unclear how to determine the quality of that knowledge. Evaluating the credibility, reliability and accuracy of knowledge gained via social media is a challenging task (McDougall et al., 2021). According to Edwards et al. (2021), one effective approach is to develop critical thinking and to question the source of knowledge and generate evidence-based arguments which can help individuals to identify credible sources from unreliable ones and offer effective ways to evaluate the quality of knowledge and information got from social media.

Another effective approach to evaluate the quality of knowledge is to engage in System 2 thinking which is defined as slow, critical-rational thinking (unlike System 1 thinking which is quick and intuitive) and is an effective approach in assessing the quality of knowledge on social media (Edwards et al., 2021). Another effective approach to analyse the quality of knowledge gained through social media is to use online games which can expose individuals to various types of misinformation and guide them through the skills needed to make informed judgments about the knowledge (Encheva et al., 2020). Thus, there is a need to promote critical thinking and digital literacy among teachers and students to enable them to judge the quality of knowledge.

This model of Prestridge (2019) does not specify whether social media enhance the language proficiency of non-native users. There is also no information on whether Saudi Arabian teachers regularly use SNS for personal or professional purposes or only occasionally use SNS to search for new information (Damico & Krutka, 2018). This thesis will address these research

gaps by elucidating the link between SNS usage and its contributions to EFL teachers' core knowledge. Table 23 summarises the different types of SNS usage and highlights the identified research gaps.

Table 23: Types of SNS Usage and Research Gaps

SNS Usage Type	Description	Examples	Research Gaps
Cognitive	Purposeful search for SNS content, including pedagogic or language knowledge acquisition.	Reading posts by other EFL teachers for pedagogic insights.	Unclear if cognitive SNS usage enhances language proficiency. Lack of insight into Saudi Arabian teachers' SNS usage.
Hedonistic	Purposeful search for entertaining SNS content, contributing to cultural and language knowledge.	Watching YouTube videos for idiomatic language usage.	No information on the frequency of Saudi Arabian teachers' SNS usage.
Social	Purposeful communication with other SNS users, leading to gains in pedagogic, language, and cultural knowledge.	Engaging in discussions with English teachers on Twitter.	Limited understanding of whether SNS is used for personal or professional purposes.
Info Consumer	Rarely interacts with other users, focuses on consuming content without sharing or creating new knowledge.	Watching English teaching videos on YouTube.	Insufficient data on whether SNS enhances language proficiency.

Info Networker	Uses SNS primarily for communication, especially with others in the field, without generating new content.	Engaging in discussions with EFL teachers from other countries.	Lack of insight into Saudi Arabian teachers' SNS usage.
Self-Seeking Contributor	Creates new content, such as videos or blog posts, but does not engage in communication with other users.	Creating a blog to share teaching experiences.	Unclear if cognitive SNS usage enhances language proficiency. Lack of understanding of Saudi Arabian teachers' SNS use.
Vocationalist	Frequently uses SNS, actively contributing to content creation and engaging in communication with others, resulting in extensive knowledge.	Establishing a blog on EFL teaching and inviting contributions.	No information on the frequency of Saudi Arabian teachers' SNS usage. Lack of insight into the quality of knowledge gained.

2.14. The Role of Online Professional Learning in Teachers' CPD Using Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Prestridge (2019) notes that there are different perspectives in the literature on professional learning and CPD for teachers. Lieberman and Miller (2014) and Prestridge (2019) suggest that structured, school-based in-service training sessions are effective in enhancing teachers' skills and developing proficiency in new strategies, which can contribute to their professional learning and career advancement. (Dennen et al., 2020). This emphasises that professional training programs significantly improve teachers' digital literacy skills, enhance their educational practice, and provide hands-on, experiential, and practical tasks directly relevant to classroom reality. Thus, these programs effectively prepare teachers and enhance their CPD (Al-Hazmi, 2017).

Hence, the role of formal in-service training programs is vital in developing teachers' CPD. Some researchers advocate that professional learning is more informal and self-directed,

contingent upon the professional needs or interests of an individual, and such learning takes place daily in teachers' classrooms (Ambler, 2016; Dennen et al., 2020). A few researchers note that professional learning and professional development are synonymous terms, interchangeably used in educational research, policy, and curriculum, which is why there is no distinction between the two terms as teachers gain both formal and informal learning in different contexts, including face-to-face and online (Prestridge, 2019). According to Lopes & Dambrosio (2016), the role of professional development is essential in providing opportunities for teachers to deviate from the educational syllabus and explore subjects that can connect learners to the real world, as the syllabus can sometimes be irrelevant and demotivating for students.

Some researchers observe that professional learning can result from professional development as a common attribute (Erickson et al., 2017). Therefore, professional development and professional learning are linked, and teachers can view professional learning as a form of informal professional development that allows them to choose tasks that improve their understanding, practice, and sense of purpose. Such learning is accessible to teachers at all times and can be pursued in their own time, which is considered professionally valuable (Prestridge, 2019; Khoza & Biyela, 2020). Ambler (2016) conducted a study focusing on the use of SNS for CPD. She highlighted several advantages of SNS over conventional methods. It is stated that social networking sites are self-autonomous, offer 24/7 accessibility, and are thus considered vital for developing informal professional learning that contributes to teachers' CPD (Ambler, 2016).

According to Khoza (2021), the increased use of mobile devices, including social networking sites, advocates that the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which signifies the ongoing technological transformation in various sectors, addresses individual personal needs. This transformation requires that teachers use digital technologies that first meet their needs and those of their students before addressing their professional and social needs. As stated by Sutherland (2020), the role of social networking sites is crucial in providing academic support to teachers. This support includes discussions, feedback, and the exchange of comments, which offer both emotional and professional support to teachers. Such support is essential for the professional development of teachers.

Therefore, the use of digital technologies, including social networking sites, can be essential in addressing teachers' professional needs, enhancing their professional development, and

tackling the challenges arising in the new teaching and learning environment brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Khoza, 2021). According to Becker et al. (2017), when teachers involve students in group activities such as developing and managing a blog, website, creating videos, or hosting channels through social networking sites like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, and when they design and share their content, it not only offers variety in how students engage with knowledge but also enhances their performance, piques their interest in subject content, and equips them with the digital skills necessary for the job market (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020). The integration of social networking sites into the educational curriculum equips students with digital skills they will require later in their professional careers. Introducing social networking sites to students in schools can reduce their resistance to using them in college, universities, and the workplace (Khoza, 2021).

According to Grossi et al. (2018) and Khoza (2021), teachers employ various LMS established by schools, including Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (Moodle), Canvas, Web Course Tools (WebCT), Blackboard, and others. Educational institutions have implemented these LMS to ensure that content is available from official platforms managed by the institutions (Mpungose & Khoza, 2021). Sutherland (2020) emphasises the crucial role of LMS in delivering content that contributes to teachers' professional identities, imparting institutional knowledge, and shaping societal and personal identities. Conversely, Mpungose & Khoza (2021) argue that, to develop both professional and personal identities, the use of digital technologies, including social networking sites, is essential. In order to address the challenges posed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, teachers are required to harness these digital technologies and social networking sites to enhance their professional development.

Brown et al. (2012) and Prestridge (2019) conducted mixed-method studies on EFL teachers, and they found teachers utilise online apps, social networking sites, as well as other digital technologies such as multimedia and educational resources to nurture and expand their professional growth prospects. One of the primary purposes of teachers using social networking sites is to establish professional networks, allowing them to connect with like-minded peers, exchange knowledge, and share best practices. These interactions help to enhance both the personal learning networks of teachers and their CPD. It enables EFL teachers to stay updated with recent developments in the English language, interact with their students, and provide them with knowledge through social networking sites (Cavus et al., 2021).

Researchers have not extensively studied the use of SNS by Saudi EFL teachers. It is important to look at the Saudi Arabia's context so to investigate the current use of SNS by Saudi EFL teachers, which SNS are widely used, and which challenges are faced by teachers in using SNS. Therefore, this research aims to assess the current extent of SNS usage by Saudi EFL teachers and to highlight the challenges they face, as well as the training required to promote the professional use of SNS. The role of social networking sites such as Twitter, Edmodo, Facebook, and YouTube is crucial in fostering personal learning networks among teachers. For instance, teachers can follow global 'Groups' on Facebook that share similar content and provide ideas and comments related to that content, enhancing their professional development (Prestridge, 2019; Mpungose, 2020). Similarly, the role of 'Twitter's Hashtags' is significant in building personal learning networks, as teachers can follow these Hashtags on Twitter to engage in discussions, exchange ideas on contemporary topics, and informally enhance their learning and professional development (Prestridge, 2019; Santisteban et al., 2020).

Through the use of digital technologies and social networking sites, teachers develop personal learning networks that foster professional connections. These networks serve as platforms for teachers to seek support, engage in assessment and examination activities, and engage in reflection. Teachers rely on these social networking sites to build their personal learning networks, a practice they engage in daily, enriching their teaching practices and deepening their understanding of relevant content and pedagogy (Zhang et al., 2017; Al-Maatouk et al., 2020). According to Tour (2017), teachers' use of personal learning networks significantly contributes to the construction of their professional learning and development. These networks are characterised by being socially generated, personalised, and active, fostering mutual support among teachers, whether during or after school. Conversely, Moreira et al. (2018) state that social networking sites are not originally intended for pedagogical activities. However, the need to integrate social learning activities into LMS, along with the convenience and widespread use of social networking sites in educational institutions, has made them dynamic tools for enhancing teachers' CPD.

Durak (2019) asserts that social networking sites play a pivotal role in enhancing teachers' CPD and provide future teachers, i.e., pre-service teachers, with the opportunity to take charge of their learning. This strengthens their connections with the academic community and fosters collaboration in the learning process. It equips them to address the challenges associated with using social networking sites in their classrooms once they become formal teachers. Similarly, Khoza (2021) emphasises the significance of social networking sites in shaping both the social

and professional identities of teachers. These platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, facilitate the creation of everyday knowledge. They connect teachers with their peers, promote group work and interactivity, ultimately contributing to the development of both social and professional identities, which enhances teachers' CPD (Carpenter et al., 2023).

Therefore, social networking sites play a vital role in establishing personal and professional learning networks among peers and between teachers and students. These networks significantly contribute to teachers' professional growth (Brouwer et al., 2020). A study conducted by Brouwer et al. (2020) addressed the transition from traditional classroom education to virtual classes during the Covid-19 pandemic and concluded that the use of virtual communication tools increased during the pandemic. However, it also highlighted challenges faced by third-world countries because of limited resources. It is therefore important to provide a summary of each perspective about the role of online professional learning using SNS in teachers' CPD and highlights research gaps as shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Role of Online Professional Learning Using SNS in Teachers' CPD

Perspective	Summary	Research Gaps & Saudi Context
Formal In-Service Training	Structured training enhances skills and CPD.	Effectiveness of formal training for Saudi teachers.
Informal and Self-Directed	Self-directed learning based on interests.	Prevalence and impact of informal learning in Saudi classrooms.
Professional Learning vs. Development	The overlap between professional learning and development.	Differences in learning experiences for Saudi teachers.
SNS for CPD	SNS usage for knowledge and network building.	Saudi teachers' SNS usage patterns and challenges.
Fourth Industrial Revolution	Using digital tech, including SNS, to address needs.	Adaptation of Saudi teachers to the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
Academic Support	SNS provide academic and emotional support.	Role of SNS in supporting Saudi teachers.

Digital Tech for PD	Digital tech and SNS for professional development.	Saudi teachers' use of digital tech and SNS for PD.
Nurturing Professional Growth	EFL teachers use SNS for professional growth.	SNS usage and growth of Saudi EFL teachers.
SNS in Educational Settings	Integrating SNS in education to build digital skills.	Integration and outcomes in Saudi education.
Learning Networks	Personal and professional networks via digital platforms.	Development and use in Saudi teaching context.
SNS and Identities	Shaping social and professional identities.	Influence on Saudi teachers' identities.
SNS in Virtual Learning	Increased SNS use during the pandemic, highlighting challenges.	Impact on Saudi education during the pandemic.

2.15. Motivations for Teachers' Use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) in their CPD

Teachers employ social networking sites (SNS) for various reasons to enhance and fortify their Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (Prestridge, 2019). According to Visser et al. (2014), platforms like Twitter facilitate active learning processes, encompassing asking questions, expressing viewpoints, exchanging ideas, sharing resources, and reflecting on practices. The knowledge generated through Twitter is conducive to conversational methods within a social media environment, promoting action-based learning. Another reason teachers turn to social networking sites is to cultivate professional networks. These sites offer the opportunity to engage with fellow teachers globally, allowing them to ask questions and contemplate the knowledge they gain. For instance, communication on Twitter can be invaluable for liaising with peers (Liu & Hung, 2020). These different motivations for teachers' use of SNS in their CPD are provided in Table 25.

However, the Saudi EFL teachers may not have fully integrated using SNS including Twitter into their lessons which shows that there is a lack of using SNS including Twitter as a mean to promote action-based learning and to develop professional networks with peers (Alzhrani, 2023). To address this issue, it is important to analyse the current SNS use among Saudi EFL

teachers so to determine their underlying motivations to use SNS including asking questions, engaging in discussions, sharing resources and ideas, to develop professional networks and to develop critical thinking. This thesis therefore aims to investigate the underlying motivations of Saudi EFL teachers in using SNS so to determine what motivates them the most in using SNS in classroom so to ensure incorporating modern technology into teaching (Rahimi, 2023).

Sharing knowledge is yet another motivation for teachers utilising social networking sites (Prestridge, 2019). Social networking sites align well with social constructivist approaches to learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Abakah, 2023). They provide expansive spaces for discussion with diffuse leadership, where those with expertise in a subject can guide others as needed. This indirect facilitation contributes significantly to teachers' CPD (Jenkins et al., 2009; Prestridge, 2019). Roberts and Butler (2014) assert that social networking sites can harness the communicative and collaborative potential of the web, fostering learner-centric experiences and potentially transforming pedagogical processes, including teacher professional development.

In summary, social networking sites offer an extensive platform for enhancing teachers' CPD. Liou and Daly (2018) and Mohamad et al. (2018) note that students value the flexibility afforded by social networking sites, which feature various communication tools such as comments, discussions, posts, creative expression, and the use of videos, audios, and animations. These interactive elements stimulate students' learning and teachers' teaching, enriching their professional practice. However, Greenhow & Galvin (2020) recommend that teachers establish an appropriate level of presence on relevant social networking sites to address students' needs, such as answering queries, providing feedback, and monitoring and approving content.

Although sharing knowledge is definitely one of the underlying motivations for teachers globally to use SNS, it is important to study the specific Saudi context, where teachers face unique problems and opportunities in their professional development (Rahimi, 2023). Saudi teachers, like their peers globally, can benefit from extensive platforms for discussion and sharing knowledge provided by various SNS (Prestridge, 2019). There are specific factors in the Saudi context which justify a critical evaluation of the potential impact of these SNS on teachers' CPD (Alzhrani, 2023). For example, Saudi Arabia's educational landscape has unique features, such as language issues, cultural and religious beliefs and syllabus needs, which might not correspond with the experiences of teachers in western countries (Liou &

Daly, 2018) and therefore justifies the need to explore the specific Saudi context to determine how these SNS can adapt to address the peculiar requirements of Saudi teachers (Rahimi, 2023). It is also important to study the Saudi context because of unique Saudi ICT infrastructure, availability of internet, and the extent of use of SNS among Saudi teachers and students which again may not follow the same usage patterns as used by teachers and students in Western countries (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020). These differences in availability of digital resources and digital presence must be taken into consideration when analysing the efficiency of these SNS for CPD and justify the need to conduct this research.

Social networking sites can serve as an effective platform for students, even in the absence of teachers, as they facilitate independent learning through study groups and student-to-student interactions via chats, comments, and posts. Peer support is a significant function of social networking sites that contribute to teachers' professional development (Brouwer et al., 2020). Hudson (2012) observes that the use of social networking sites highlights the concept of support from teachers who are socially proximate, considerate, and thoughtful. When teachers have such confidence, they exchange ideas, share resources, and build credible connections, resulting in creating social capital through social networking and relational trust.

Alghasab & Handley (2017) suggest that students are comfortable making errors and learning from them on social networking sites because they do not face the judgement of teachers. As students use social networking sites casually for learning, teachers can provide a valuable opportunity by integrating these platforms into coursework, allowing students to exercise creative freedom and explore new means of communication. This approach expands both students' learning and teachers' professional development (Bokhove & Downey, 2018; Chapman & Greenhow, 2019).

According to Luo et al. (2020), teachers employ a combination of blogs and social networking sites to share knowledge and engage with other teachers, whether co-located or distributed worldwide. Social networking sites such as Twitter prove especially helpful for sharing knowledge with peers and offering support and feedback on their work, all of which contribute to teachers' professional development (Ahmad & Shah, 2022). Although SNS can provide effective platforms for students' independent learning and teachers' professional development (Brouwer et al., 2020), it is important to contextualise this in the pedagogical landscape of Saudi Arabia as Saudi teachers and students might experience various challenges and prospects which might differentiate their experiences from those in western countries (Liou & Daly,

2018). For example, the Saudi education system works as per its specific monitoring, cultural and religious context, which may affect how students and teachers communicate using SNS (Alzhrani, 2023). There are technological issues in terms of digital divide, such as lack of availability of the internet in different regions in Saudi Arabia, which might also impact upon integrating SNS by teachers and students (Alghasab & Handley, 2017). This research is therefore important to understand the technological limitations which are faced by teachers, which may be vital in offering context-related particular suggestions for leveraging the use of these SNS in Saudi Arabia.

According to Hur & Brush (2009), teachers employ SNS for five primary reasons, all of which contribute to their professional development. These reasons include sharing emotions, addressing teacher isolation, fostering friendships and sharing ideas. SNS also provide privacy or distance for teachers seeking resources and support. Since teachers' participation on various social networking sites is voluntary, they do not feel as though they are burdening busy colleagues. Contributing to the teaching profession by sharing resources and virtually mentoring peers can motivate teachers to use social networking sites. Therefore, collective social interaction forms the basis of teachers' learning on these platforms, which contributes to their professional development (Seo, 2013; Brouwer et al., 2020).

Luo et al. (2020) and Al-Maatouk et al. (2020) suggest that social networking sites function as communities of practice (CoP) and offer several benefits. Their unplanned, unstructured nature characterises these CoPs, started by the learners themselves, aligning with the concept of informal learning outside formal structures like classrooms, devoid of predefined goals. In the post-Covid-19 era, teachers worldwide have increasingly turned to social networking sites to enhance their professional development (Luo et al., 2020).

According to Mason & Metzger (2012), online spaces can comprise isolated individuals solely focused on their individual needs. However, online spaces can truly flourish when they form communities that address the social needs of individuals. This is where the concept of CoP comes into play, defined by three common features: a shared interest, a sustained community through frequent communication and activities, and a shared practice (Wenger, 1998; Krutka et al., 2019). These three features are integral to social networking sites, explaining their use in teachers' CPD (Krutka et al., 2019).

Although the literature focuses on the advantages of using SNS for teachers' professional development, it is important to examine how relevant these findings are in Saudi Arabia as

cultural norms, religious beliefs, regulatory guidelines, and educational requirements may affect teachers' engagement with SNS differently as compared to other countries (Hur & Brush, 2009). Keeping in view the digital divide, i.e. the differences in the internet's availability in different areas of Saudi Arabia can considerably impact upon teachers' ability to engage in these CoPs (Al-Maatouk et al., 2020). Thus, this research can be vital in examining how Saudi teachers can adjust CoPs in SNS to match with their specific regulatory, cultural, religious, technological, and pedagogical environments.

Many researchers contend that since the Covid-19 outbreak, online teaching using digital technologies and multimedia tools has become the norm in most educational institutions worldwide (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2022). Teachers have increasingly relied on LMS, video conferencing platforms like Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, and social networking sites to share resources and deliver lessons (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2021).

Social networking sites offer the advantage of action-based learning (Visser et al., 2014), which, as Edwards (2019) and Greenhow & Galvin (2020) argue, are professional development programs equipping EFL teachers with the tools to represent their teaching agency. Therefore, as Luo et al. (2020) suggest that teachers have used social networking sites like Facebook groups, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube to enhance their professional development through collaboration and sharing. These platforms provide students with access to recorded lessons and act as readily available resources for professional development, especially during the Covid-19 outbreak when teachers frequently uploaded screen-casts. Although existing literature has recognised the universal shift towards online teaching and learning to use digital technologies and SNS and especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, online teaching has become a norm globally (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2022), it is therefore important to recognise that in the Covid-19 pandemic, the Saudi Arabia's educational environment may be affected by the technological issues and therefore may impact upon teachers' ability to use the SNS and therefore this research aims to examine which of the SNS are commonly used by Saudi EFL teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic and which technological issues are faced by the teachers so to provide suggestions to address these issues and to improve the use of SNS within the Saudi context.

Duguay & Vdovina (2019) suggest that effective, engaging, and continuous professional development should have its basis in research, content, and relevance. Social networking sites offer these advantages, which is why teachers use them for their professional development. Another crucial aspect of professional development is intellectual motivation and interactivity,

as noted by Duguay & Vdovina (2019). Using social networking sites aligns with the principles of engagement and collaboration. Teachers find contemporary ideas and posts on various social networking sites intellectually stimulating, which is why they employ them for their professional development (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020).

Ellison & Boyd (2013) and Greenhow & Galvin (2019) claim that teachers use the essential features of social media, such as creating individual profiles, providing public networking tools, and creating and sharing content, to facilitate effective professional development. Manca & Ranieri (2016) argue that teachers use social networking sites for their CPD because these platforms extend the context of learning beyond the classroom to broader public networks, facilitating the amalgamation of expertise from past learners and practicing professionals. According to Manca & Ranieri (2016), social networking sites are attractive to teachers for their professional development as they combine different types of information and resources, thereby reshaping the teachers' roles as facilitators and improving their professional growth (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020).

Various social networking sites, such as different Facebook groups, provide valuable learning platforms for students and professional development opportunities for teachers (Luo et al., 2020). For instance, 'Teacher Tech Alice Keeler' is a well-known Facebook group that teachers have extensively used during Covid-19. It serves as a platform for sharing knowledge about Google Classroom, hybrid teaching, Microsoft, and other topics, all of which have significantly contributed to teachers' professional development (Luo et al., 2020). Twitter is another example of a social networking site used by teachers for their CPD (Mpungose, 2020). Twitter's hashtags, such as #HigherEd, #academictwitter, #edutwitter, #elearn, #PhDchat, #research, and #edtech, are valuable platforms for finding and connecting with fellow teachers who share similar interests (McDonald & Carter-Steel, 2017). These collectively contribute to the development of teachers' CPD.

However, it is important to acknowledge that there are some downsides and negative effects associated with SNS, such as the informal language used, inactive behaviour, informal teacher-student interactions, and privacy risks. These constraints can affect the professional use of SNS (Sumeur, 2014). This research can shed light on how the local Saudi context impacts upon the extent to which Saudi teachers use these SNS as per their particular needs and objectives and if there are local variations in how these SNS are used for professional development (Duguay & Vdovina, 2019). Thus, by studying the underlying motivations of Saudi EFL teachers to use

SNS and by examining the potential issues and limitations linked with SNS, this research can be helpful in addressing the gap between the wider literature on SNS and the specific realities faced by the Saudi teachers.

Table 25 provides a summary of teachers’ motivations for using SNS in their CPD.

Table 25: Teachers’ motivations for using SNS in their CPD and research gaps

Motivations for SNS Use in CPD	Research Gaps in Saudi Arabian Context
Active learning	Impact of SNS-driven active learning on Saudi Arabian teachers' CPD
Knowledge exchange	Extent of professional networking among Saudi Arabian teachers on SNS
Fostering professional networks	Knowledge sharing dynamics among Saudi Arabian teachers on SNS
Aligns with constructivist learning	Potential transformation of Saudi Arabian pedagogy through SNS
Support, independence, peer assistance on SNS	Impact of interactive SNS elements in Saudi Arabian educational settings
Creative freedom, blog/SNS integration	Creative freedom impact in Saudi Arabian classrooms through SNS
Communities of practice (CoP)	CoP dynamics within Saudi Arabian educational contexts
Increased SNS use during Covid-19	Long-term effects of increased SNS use for CPD among Saudi Arabian teachers
Empowers teachers to represent teaching agency	Exercise of agency by Saudi Arabian teachers in their professional growth
Stimulates intellectual motivation, engagement	Intellectual motivation effects in Saudi Arabian educators' CPD

Essential SNS features for effective CPD	Alignment of SNS features with Saudi Arabian teachers' CPD goals
Extends learning beyond classrooms	Expansion of learning opportunities for Saudi teachers via SNS
Valuable learning platforms for students	Adoption and impact of SNS-based learning platforms in Saudi Arabian contexts
Constraints: informal language, inactivity, privacy risks	How Saudi Arabian teachers navigate constraints while using SNS for CPD

2.16. Strategies for Teachers to Incorporate Social Networking Sites (SNS) into Teaching

Many studies conducted in various Asian and European countries have identified significant connections between SNS and CPD. According to a study by Al Jabri et al. (2018), teachers can employ various strategies to integrate social networking sites into their teaching methods, enhancing students' learning and teachers' CPD. An effective approach to integrating social networking sites into teaching involves addressing the ethical considerations associated with using social media in education, especially when employing personal profiles (Krutka et al., 2019). This entails considering the technology's design elements, which include establishing transparency regarding data usage and safeguarding privacy when using personal profiles to enhance interactions in remote courses (Krutka et al., 2019).

Krutka & Damico (2020) suggest that teachers should assist students in creating profiles specifically for educational purposes on social networking sites, particularly if students are new to these platforms. When utilising personal profiles, it is crucial to protect students' privacy. Researchers recommend that instead of using students' personal profiles for educational purposes, teachers should leverage platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Basecamp, which allow users to create accounts only for professional or educational engagement within a private group limited to the teacher and classmates (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020). Notably, there is a research gap in SNS and EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Educators can enhance their ability to incorporate social networking sites into their teaching practices by mitigating their resistance to the use of social media in education (Al-Azawei & Alowayr, 2020). Establishing shared norms and expectations for using different social

networking sites in the classroom can mitigate this resistance (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020). For instance, teachers can conduct surveys in their classes to understand students' preferences, including their preferred social media platforms, the type of content they wish to share on social media, and whether they prefer formal or informal language use on these platforms. Aligning social media use with students' interests and needs can help minimise resistance to incorporating social media into the learning process (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Greenhow & Galvin, 2020; Bui, 2022).

Another valuable strategy for integrating social networking sites into teaching is to prioritize relationship building and provide interpersonal feedback. These practices aid in individual identity construction and can significantly contribute to teachers' CPD (Lenhart, 2020; Rahimi, 2023). Social media usage can accumulate social capital, and using social media for teaching, such as incorporating Twitter into the educational process, can lead to increased engagement in learning and relationship building (Gao et al., 2012; Carpenter et al., 2023). Using social media as an informal communication channel can be an effective approach when integrating social networking sites into education (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020; Bui, 2022).

A literature review conducted by Greenhow & Galvin (2020) concluded that the most effective learning environments for students incorporate asynchronous online components that allow students to progress at their own pace, on their own schedules, and offer them some control over their learning experiences. These environments facilitate regular and meaningful interactions among students, teachers, and the subject. For example, creating a Twitter backchannel to stay connected in class and remotely, using common hashtags, tweets, retweets, and replies, and linking these posts to a broader program or module-level Twitter stream can foster connections among teachers, students, and faculty members. Such interactions are crucial for co-creating content that guides and shapes the shared experiences of teachers and students (Tang & Hew, 2017; Greenhow & Galvin, 2020; Carpenter et al., 2023).

Tang & Hew (2017) reviewed 51 research studies and found that Twitter was mainly used for communication and evaluation purposes. Although Twitter has the potential to enhance student-teacher interactions, a definitive link between Twitter's use and academic performance has yet to be established. The most effective use of Twitter in an educational context is for teachers to disseminate critical course materials, homework assignments, test deadlines, and provide a space for peer engagement.

2.17. The Benefits and Limitations of SNS Usage among EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia

Using SNS for CPD has not been extensively studied in EFL teaching, especially in Saudi Arabia. Researchers in Saudi Arabia have attempted to connect these factors, but few studies have been conducted. This section reviews the research on both the advantages and disadvantages of using SNS for CPD among EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

In a study by Fallata (2016), interviews were conducted with female Saudi EFL teachers to explore their use of information technologies. The findings revealed these teachers used Skype and Dropbox but did not gain cultural or language knowledge from social media platforms (Fallata, 2016). However, the study did not investigate why EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia used certain platforms like Skype and Dropbox while neglecting social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, despite the potential benefits of these platforms as effective professional learning communities in other contexts (Atapattu et al., 2019; Allahbi, 2023).

It is likely that the limited digital competencies of EFL teachers may hinder their regular use of SNS. Digital training is becoming increasingly crucial for EFL teachers, but not all teachers in Saudi Arabia are familiar with digital learning tools. For example, Cengage offered an online training course that included speaking and listening exercises for EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. This implies that digital competencies among EFL teachers may need to be developed as part of their CPD. However, the use of SNS remains voluntary, and some teachers might not be well-versed in using these platforms to enhance their core knowledge (Atapattu et al., 2019).

In CPD, online learning has been viewed positively, particularly when viewed through the lenses of social constructivism and adult learning (Powell & Bodur, 2019; Yurkofsky, et al., 2019). However, Powell and Bodur's (2019) research showed that merely having access to online professional development resources and reflection questions was insufficient. These findings have significant implications, especially for how teachers perceive Online Teacher Professional Development (oTPD) design and implementation, and they raise questions about whether these findings hold true in developing countries where EFL teachers may have limited initial digital competencies (Yurkofsky et al., 2019).

Yurkofsky et al. (2019) conducted in-depth interviews with teachers taking part in the Creative Computing Online Workshop (CCOW) to determine which learning outcomes they found most valuable. Participants expressed appreciation for how CCOW encouraged them to explore novel concepts and develop insights into their own teaching practices, as well as their understanding of computer science. However, it remains to be seen whether these benefits of

SNS usage extend to the Saudi Arabian context, given its unique challenges such as regulatory requirements, cultural norms, religious beliefs, and syllabus requirements.

In contrast, Mellom et al. (2018) investigated how EFL teachers conceptualised cultural knowledge. Their interviews revealed that cultural knowledge encompassed not only insights into English-speaking countries but also an understanding of how students' culture influenced English language acquisition. This study, however, did not explore the role of SNS in acquiring cultural knowledge. While EFL teachers use SNS for pedagogical and language knowledge acquisition, there is a lack of data on their use for cultural knowledge (Groschner et al., 2018; Sprott, 2019). This is because the EFL teachers may not have a thorough understanding about the possible advantages of using SNS to acquire cultural knowledge and the focus of EFL teachers are mainly on educational strategies, language acquisition and classroom practices as these directly affect classroom lessons and learning outcomes of students and this is why the aspect of cultural knowledge in SNS may altogether be ignored by EFL teachers (Groschner et al., 2018; Sprott, 2019).

User participation is another reason SNS might enhance the dissemination of core knowledge among EFL teachers. Following the principles of cooperative learning, user participation, openness, and network effects describes SNS platforms (Musser and O'Reilly, 2006). These characteristics can foster the development of English proficiency among EFL teachers, particularly in terms of the meaningfulness and clarity of their written English. While this concept is supported by van Bommel et al. (2020), it remains uncertain whether the same findings apply to the context of Saudi Arabia. As mentioned earlier, Saudi Arabian EFL teachers might be cautious about using SNS or might only use them for personal purposes (Alhaddad, 2018). It is possible that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia could benefit significantly from using SNS to enhance their CPD outcomes, particularly concerning core knowledge, given empirical research (Hayes, 2014; Alzhrani, 2023).

2.18. The Measurement of SNS Usage and Teacher Core Knowledge

While the preceding sections have established the fundamental definitions of SNS usage and teacher core knowledge, the following sections delve into the empirical measurement of these concepts.

2.18.1 Evaluating Teachers' SNS Usage

The evaluation of teachers' SNS usage forms the last component of this study's framework. As discussed earlier, teachers may employ SNS for self-directed learning in various countries, but the specific context of Saudi EFL teaching remains understudied. There are no existing frameworks for SNS usage tailored to the Saudi EFL setting. The aim of this study is to address an existing research gap by directly linking the usage of SNS with the CPD practices of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

As highlighted by Manca and Ranieri (2016) and Chawinga (2017), the core knowledge of EFL teachers, including language proficiency and cultural knowledge, sets them apart. Poecze et al. (2018) observed that users consuming SNS content also gain cultural knowledge embedded in Twitter and Facebook posts. However, this study did not establish a direct link between SNS usage and the cultural knowledge of EFL teachers, which represents a significant distinction between EFL educators and other teachers (Poecze et al., 2018). Alipoor and Jadidi (2016) implied that reading reflective writings by other teachers, including Facebook posts, contributes to cultural knowledge. However, they did not delve into how this occurs through different SNS usage by EFL teachers. EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia do not have adequate practical guidelines on harnessing SNS to enhance their core knowledge outside of formal CPD processes and procedures. Building on the work of Cao and Yu (2019), this thesis distinguishes between cognitive, hedonistic, and social SNS usage among EFL teachers.

- **Cognitive:** This type of SNS usage involves EFL teachers purposefully seeking SNS content, including new pedagogic or language knowledge. For instance, an EFL teacher might regularly read posts by other teachers in EFL groups on Facebook. A study analysing 46 pieces of research on SNS usage for teaching and learning noted a significant increase in using such platforms for pedagogical development (Manca, 2020).
- **Hedonistic:** This type of SNS usage refers to EFL teachers intentionally seeking entertaining SNS content. While this may not always contribute to pedagogic knowledge, it enriches cultural and language knowledge. For EFL teachers and learners, language learning inherently involves cultural learning. Engaging with people from diverse cultural backgrounds can foster interest and a willingness to learn more about language and culture (Cao & Yu, 2019). For example, an EFL teacher watching YouTube videos might discover new contexts for using idioms.

- **Social:** The social category of SNS usage entails EFL teachers purposefully engaging in direct digital communications with other social media users. This interaction can enhance various aspects of EFL teachers' core knowledge. Engaging with Western English teachers through direct messages on Twitter, for instance, can lead to the acquisition of new pedagogic, language, and cultural knowledge. It provides an excellent networking platform and fosters the exchange of ideas, potentially bringing innovation to EFL teaching methods (Poecze et al., 2018).

The above model does not specify particular instances corresponding to each type of social media use. For instance, an EFL teacher may create a Facebook group for EFL professionals from Gulf countries (social SNS usage), use Twitter to contact publishers of EFL textbooks (cognitive and social SNS usage), or share educational videos with their students via Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp (social SNS usage) (Manca & Ranieri, 2016a; Manca & Ranieri, 2016b). This research gap means that Saudi EFL teachers lack data on the effectiveness of their current SNS usage patterns, such as browsing Twitter or YouTube, in enhancing their core knowledge (Alabdulkareem, 2015). To address this limitation, the following table 26 links specific instances of SNS usage to the findings of Cao and Yu (2019) and Prestridge (2019).

Table 26 : Measuring Social Media Usage among EFL Teachers

Variable	Definition	Types of SNS Usage
Info networker (social SNS usage)	The establishment of new relationships through social media.	Participating in online EFL communities
		Contacting English teachers in English-speaking countries
		Approaching the representatives of firms in the education industry
		Developing relationships with students
Self-seeking contributor (cognitive and social SNS usage)	The creation and distribution of new content through social media.	Distributing educational content among students
		Helping other EFL teachers
		Promoting one's EFL products
		Seeking feedback from one's peers

Info consumer (cognitive and hedonistic SNS usage)	The attainment of new knowledge through social media.	Receiving new knowledge of teaching practices
		Following trends in EFL teaching
		Gathering information on the culture of English-speaking countries
		Learning of new teaching technologies
		Reviewing methods for motivating and engaging students

2.19. Framework of this Study

This section summarises Chapter 2 by presenting potential cause-and-effect relationships between SNS usage and CPD through teacher core knowledge. The following figure serves as a graphical representation of the thesis model.

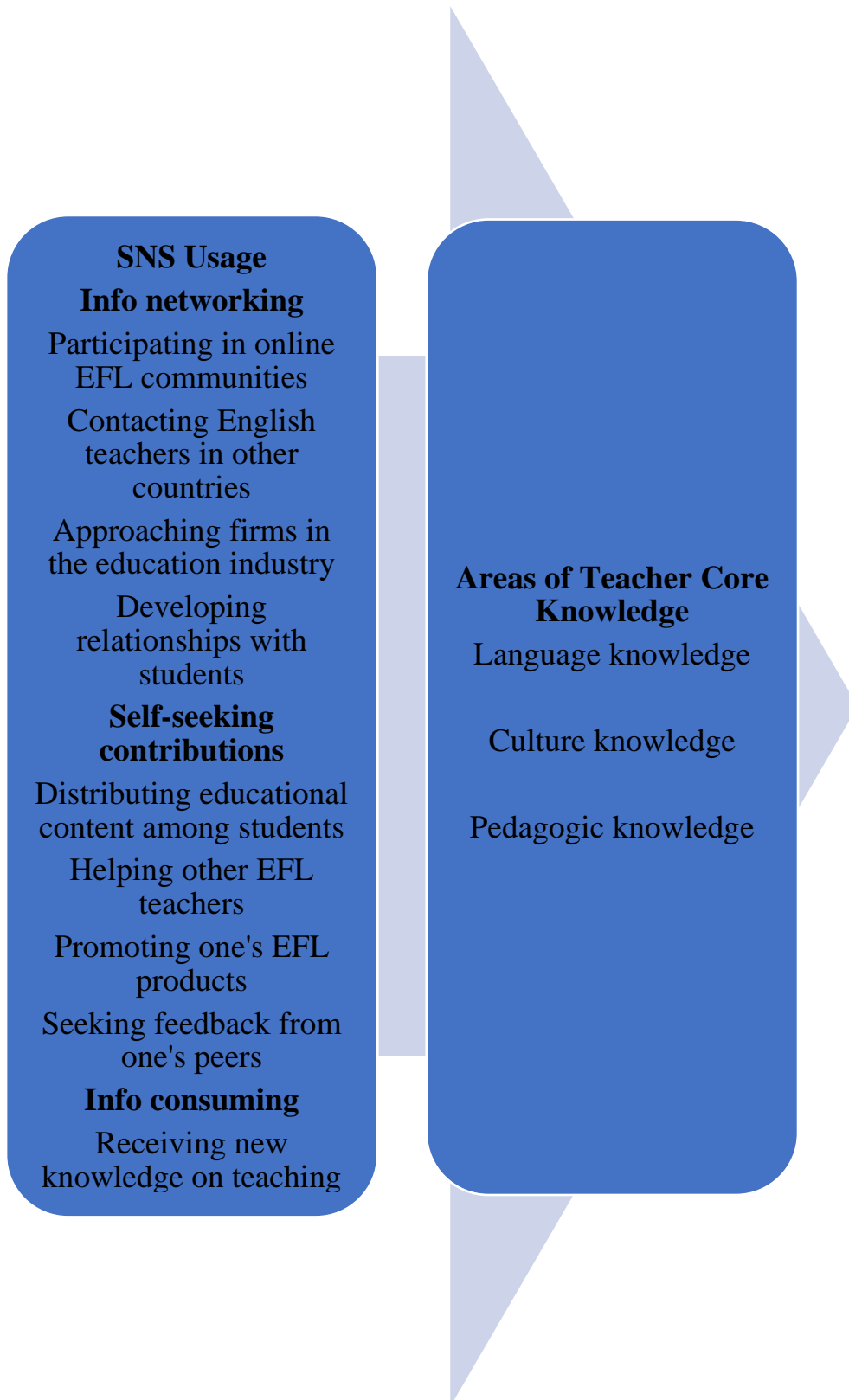


Figure 5. The Framework of this Study

In summary, this thesis regards teacher core knowledge as a measure of CPD improvement. For instance, EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia may opt for the 'info consuming' type of SNS usage, such as reading the Twitter feeds of EFL teachers in Western countries. This could lead to the acquisition of core pedagogic knowledge, consequently benefiting CPD. Conversely, individuals using SNS as 'self-seeking contributors' or 'info networkers' may enhance their language or cultural knowledge. It's plausible that higher levels of SNS usage could result in a meaningful increase in teacher core knowledge. This can be assessed by comparing the levels of core knowledge between EFL teachers who regularly use SNS for professional and personal purposes and all other EFL academics.

Table 27 summarises the key studies discussed in the literature review and highlights the identified research gaps.

Table 27: A Summary of Extant Knowledge and Research Gaps

Reference	Key Research Question	Key Findings	Research Gaps
Topkaya & Celik (2016)	How do EFL teachers' perceptions of PD depend on their career stage?	Regardless of the career stage (survival, adjustment, maturity), EFL teachers used SNS to acquire knowledge of pedagogic practices	Findings do not specify if SNS is used to acquire culture and language knowledge
Mellom et al. (2018)	How do EFL teachers conceptualise their cultural knowledge?	Cultural knowledge is defined not only as knowledge of English-speaking countries but also knowledge of cultures of students	Omits how SNS can provide information on the cultures of students
Sato and Oyanedel (2019)	What are the main perceptions of EFL teachers on teaching grammar?	The pedagogic knowledge of EFL teachers on teaching grammar replicates how these teachers	Misses results on whether SNS can add new pedagogic knowledge

		were taught English	
Chen et al. (2019)	How do EFL teachers use corpora materials?	EFL teachers source knowledge of English (the use of idioms and lexemes in specific contexts) from digital collections of texts	Ignores if SNS can also be a source of language knowledge
Alipoor & Jadidi (2016)	How do EFL teachers' acquire information of vocabulary teaching from reflective writings?	High reflexivity leads to using function-based vocabulary teaching	Findings do not mention if SNS can be a source of core knowledge on vocabulary teaching by showcasing other teachers' reflections
Poecze et al. (2018)	How are social media sentiments indicative of the users' usage intentions?	Users capture not only the content but the perceived emotional sentiment of social media posts	Findings are not linked to EFL teachers and their core knowledge
Manca (2020)	How does social media usage differ among teachers in different countries and teaching areas?	Teachers in the Middle East use WhatsApp more frequently than other SNS	What types of core knowledge are acquired through WhatsApp?

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The focus of the current study is on the use of social media by Saudi EFL teachers. Social media includes websites and online apps that enable users to connect and engage with various communities, offering features like communication, sharing, collaboration, publishing, management, and interaction (Al-Qaysi et al., 2023). This usage results from technological advancements and pedagogical approaches that highlight students as co-producers of knowledge (Al-Qaysi et al., 2023). Standard social media features, such as displaying likes, comments, and recommendations, promote specific individuals through profile pages. Interconnecting with other users via links and news feeds and disseminating user-generated content, including images, ratings, and tags, characterises the essence of social media (Perez et al., 2023). Users can dynamically update pages and embed content like videos. Greenhow & Lewin (2015) and Perez et al. (2023) advocate the advantages of the regular use of Web 2.0 technologies by both teachers and students, both in and outside the classroom. Nevertheless, it is also argued that only a minority of students employ social media in sophisticated ways that educators could find beneficial (Perez et al., 2023).

This study investigates how Saudi EFL teachers use social media to enhance their CPD and benefit their teaching practice compared to their generic CPD practices. This thesis measures the following research constructs.

- EFL teachers' general CPD practices.
- Critical patterns of SNS usage exhibited by Saudi Arabian EFL teachers.
- EFL teachers' usage of SNS for CPD.
- Improvements to teacher core knowledge arising from the usage of SNS.

This study focuses on how EFL teachers use social media platforms to develop their professional knowledge. To achieve these objectives, a mixed methods approach is employed. Mixed methods research, as a research strategy, combines both quantitative and qualitative research techniques within a single study (Plano Clark, 2010). This strategy aims to mitigate the shortcomings of both qualitative and quantitative methods while harnessing their respective strengths (Plano Clark, 2010). By collecting numerical data alongside contextual insights,

mixed methods research seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research subject (Adu et al., 2022). It is particularly valuable for addressing research questions that demand a multidimensional understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Plano Clark, 2010). This approach can be applied to investigate students' perspectives on the learning environment in educational settings, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative research (McChesney, 2020). To ensure the validity and reliability of mixed methods research outcomes, a clearly defined research topic, a well-structured research strategy, and a profound grasp of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are essential (Palinkas et al., 2011; Adu et al., 2022).

This study involves a questionnaire survey to collect quantitative and some qualitative data regarding the most frequently used SNS and the specific purposes for which teachers employ social media for professional development. In order to gather in-depth qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were employed with teachers who have used social media for professional development, and an evaluation of social media posts by teachers, were conducted to ascertain the objectives behind utilising SNS in CPD. This chapter outlines the rationale for adopting this research design, explains the data collection methods, and expounds upon the data collection procedures. The strategies employed to analyse different types of data in this study are also explained. This chapter concludes by addressing the ethical considerations that were relevant to this study.

3.2. Research Questions and Rationale for Mixed Methods

The focus of this study is on answering the following questions.

What are the general CPD practices of Saudi Arabian EFL teachers?

Which social networking sites (SNS) do Saudi teachers use (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)?

To what extent do Saudi English teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD?

For what purposes do Saudi English teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD?

What kind of assistance/training do Saudi English teachers need with using SNS to enhance their CPD?

Most of the research on CPD in the EFL setting is qualitative, with narrative inquiries and semi-structured interviews being the most commonly adopted data collection methods (Topkaya & Celik, 2016; Mellom et al., 2018). This thesis compares the core knowledge of EFL teachers using SNS for professional and personal purposes with other EFL academics in Saudi Arabia (Yilmaz, 2016). The consensus in the current body of knowledge is that quantitative methods, such as questionnaire surveys, are the most suitable for investigating teachers' core knowledge and CPD because the data are collected by closed questions that can be coded and quantified (Chen et al., 2019; Sato & Oyanedel, 2019).

This means that by using questionnaire surveys, researchers can design questions that aim to evaluate teachers' understanding or skills in particular areas of their profession (Chen et al., 2019). These questions are usually structured in a way which allows respondents to present numerical or definite answers, making it easy to measure their knowledge levels (Yilmaz, 2016). For example, including questions in the questionnaire such as 'on a scale of 1-5, how confident do you feel about your knowledge of EFL teaching methods?' or questions like 'how frequently (rarely, occasionally, frequently) do you use professional development resources in EFL teaching?' or 'have you completed any courses or training related to EFL teaching?' These questions enable researchers to assess and compare the core knowledge of EFL teachers by evaluating the quantitative responses and drawing conclusions regarding the levels of knowledge and CPD among teachers who use SNS for professional development and those who do not (Chen et al., 2019). In summary, this thesis will combine qualitative and quantitative data, employing a mixed methods approach to gather empirical evidence to address the research questions.

3.3. Data Collection

3.3.1. Questionnaire Surveys and Rationale

In research, questionnaire surveys are considered the most suitable data collection method when measuring CPD improvement. Questionnaire surveys are a valuable means of data collection when evaluating teacher core knowledge. This is defined as a fundamental component of CPD because it offers an easy, quick, and cost-effective way to collect data from a large sample (Alipoor & Jadidi, 2016; Sato & Oyanedel, 2018). Worldwide, there is a long history of continued professional development (CPD) in teaching English. However, within this history, the predominant method of CPD continues to view teachers as knowledge consumers (Stevenson et al., 2016). CPD often requires instructors to attend one-time seminars where they engage with fresh concepts, knowledge, and valuable guidance (Kirkgoz &

Karakas, 2022). Teachers are then expected to return to their classrooms and apply their learning. In this approach to CPD, the teacher is considered a knowledge consumer; they are provided with material (often referred to as "received knowledge") that was produced externally (i.e., not by the instructors) and expected to implement it (Stevenson et al., 2016). Longer in-service training courses that require teachers to attend lectures, workshops, and complete theoretical and practical assignments follow the same fundamental CPD qualification concept (Kirkgoz & Karakas, 2022). Teachers are primarily consumers (and often producers) of information. While workshops, classes, and other CPD activities are beneficial and contribute significantly to the global development of English language teachers at both the pre-service and in-service levels, many ELT experts have organised input-based courses that create satisfying CPD experiences in both programmes (Kirkgoz & Karakas, 2022). The same fundamental CPD paradigm applies to extended in-service training programmes that require teachers (Kirkgoz & Karakas, 2022). This relates to the concept of teachers as consumers of information because both pre-service and in-service training programmes including extended in-service training programmes focus on the significance of providing teachers with access to applicable and valuable knowledge to facilitate their professional development.

Teachers' core knowledge is assessed through their self-reflective reports of their current pedagogical, cultural, and language learning levels (Stevenson et al., 2016). Therefore, the use of questionnaire surveys to examine the core knowledge of EFL teachers is justified. According to a study, EFL teachers perceive that they are aware of their core knowledge and can accurately identify which areas of core knowledge need further development (Stevenson et al., 2016). Increasingly, the World Wide Web (WWW) is being used as a tool and platform for survey research (Adu et al., 2022). Email and web-based surveys are two forms of electronic or online surveys that are accessible for data collection. Sato and Oyanedel (2019) have successfully used questionnaires to assess teachers' opinions and knowledge of their grammar teaching skills using the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO). Still, it was debatable whether questionnaire surveys were suitable for evaluating SNS usage by teachers. In the literature, it has been observed that most studies use mixed methods involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection through questionnaires and interviews simultaneously. One such study is by Basoz (2016), which examined pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of language learning on social media, involving 120 aspiring EFL teachers. A questionnaire was employed for data collection, revealing that pre-service EFL teachers view social media as a regular part of their foreign language learning experiences (Basoz, 2016).

Nevertheless, questionnaires have been employed to measure SNS adoption by teachers in contexts outside of EFL (Salminen et al., 2016). Isotmina (2016) investigated the learning outcomes and social media experiences of nursing teachers, utilising a pre-post-study design and open-ended questionnaires for data collection.

To distribute the questionnaire survey, this study relied on SNS. Specifically, an online survey platform (SurveyMonkey) was used to host the questionnaire. SurveyMonkey is a well-regarded tool for obtaining data, opinions, and feedback from individuals or groups. Popular teacher groups on Twitter were contacted to disseminate the questionnaire link among their followers through retweeting messages that included a link to the questionnaire form. Specifically, this thesis used @SaudiTeachers, @Saudi_Teachers, @SaudiED, and @TeachersClub55, which have 377K, 175K, 105K, and 82K followers, respectively. Invitations to participate in this study were also distributed among colleges, schools, and universities in Riyadh and Jeddah, two of the largest cities in Saudi Arabia, with a total population of more than 8.5 million.

Other researchers have found it challenging to access a large sample of teachers by distributing hard copies of questionnaire surveys (Basoz, 2016). Reaching out to teachers from diverse backgrounds and different institutes is impractical and time-consuming for researchers (Basoz, 2016). The reason for employing such a data collection method was to gather more responses. This meant that using a digital questionnaire survey partially addressed a potential issue posed by low response rates. Therefore, this study collected data through the online survey questionnaire.

The questionnaire survey design directly follows the framework of this study (see Appendix A for a complete list of questions).

- Questions 1-14 measure the participants' demographics and general SNS usage habits (e.g., 'Which social networking sites do you use for professional purposes?'). The teachers' preferences in SNS usage may indicate SNS relevance to CPD and the availability of individual SNS platforms (Macdonald & Poniatowska, 2011 ; Moran et al., 2012).
- Section 1 of Question 15 ('PD programmes in Saudi Arabia') focuses on teachers' general CPD practices, such as regularly watching educational videos or participating in formal PD programmes (Collins & O'Brien, 2011).

- Section 2 of Question 15 ('I am knowledgeable of the tools for managing classroom behaviours') measures the three areas of teacher core knowledge, specifically culture, language, and pedagogic knowledge (Lan & Fan, 2019 ; Yang, 2019).
- Section 3 of Question 15 ('I use social media to establish relationships with other English teachers') focuses on the critical types of SNS usage, such as info consumption (Prestridge, 2019).

As is the case with all surveys, the success of a web survey is highly dependent on the questionnaire content (Daikeler et al., 2022). It affects various aspects of data quality, ranging from measurement errors to non-response, sampling, and coverage issues (Daikeler et al., 2022). Open-ended and closed-ended questions differ in several ways, particularly in terms of the respondents' roles in providing answers. Open-ended questions allow the responder to express an opinion without being influenced by the researcher, whereas closed-ended questions limit the respondent to the provided options (Reja et al., 2003; Daikeler et al., 2022). The advantages of open-ended questions include the ability to gather spontaneous responses from people and avoid the bias that could result from providing answer choices, which can happen with closed-ended questions (Reja et al., 2003; Daikeler et al., 2022). However, unlike closed-ended questions, open-ended questions can have drawbacks, such as the need for extensive coding and a higher item non-response rate (Reja et al., 2003).

The structure of the questionnaire survey included closed-ended (yes/no) questions, multiple-choice questions, and 'select all that apply' questions. Additionally, some questions included an additional open-ended question for clarification, such as stating, 'Please specify' when the participant selects 'Other' (Dörnyei, 2007). The benefit of relying on such an approach in this study is that it allows the author to measure the context-sensitive perceptions of Saudi Arabian EFL teachers. As noted in Chapter 2, the availability and relevance of specific SNS platforms and the rationale for their use might differ between Saudi Arabia and Western countries (Macdonald & Poniatowska, 2011; Moran et al., 2012).

On the other hand, the questionnaire also required a measure of assessing improvements to teacher core knowledge. Afshar & Farahani (2015) and Sato and Oyanedel (2019) have used three-point and five-point Likert scales to evaluate EFL teachers' core knowledge, with this thesis replicating this approach. In the EFL setting, the benefit of the Likert scale was in measuring teacher behaviors or competencies, indirectly linked to teacher core knowledge and CPD (Sato & Oyanedel, 2019). To measure improvements in teachers' core knowledge, this

thesis compared the answers to Question 15 between teachers who use SNS for professional and personal purposes and teachers who do not use SNS at all.

3.3.2. Online Social Media Exchanges as Narratives

According to research, the integration of social media into learning and teaching environments may lead to new forms of inquiry, communication, cooperation, or have beneficial cognitive, social, and emotional effects (Perez et al., 2023). Despite the increasing amount of research on social media and "informal learning," the form or nature of that learning has received little attention (Perez et al., 2023). These categories are often under-theorised or seen as binary conditions, oversimplifying the complexities of children's actual learning contexts today (Al-Qaysi et al., 2023). Many studies explore the appropriation of social media within "formal" and "informal" learning. According to some studies, using social media effectively can enable the 'seamless' integration of formal and informal learning across various contexts (Perez et al., 2023).

This thesis acknowledges that the number of recent empirical studies evaluating SNS usage for EFL teachers is low, making it challenging to provide a rationale for using online social media exchanges as a data collection method. Nevertheless, many empirical studies employ the narrative methodology to evaluate social media usage, CPD, and changes in teacher core knowledge (Vance et al., 2017; Leigh, 2019). This approach to data collection could be defined as relying on unstructured reflections of teachers' professional practice to elicit findings on their fundamental beliefs and opinions (Leigh, 2019). For example, participants in a narrative inquiry may be encouraged to provide an account of their most recent involvement in a PD programme (Tao & Gao, 2018). One critique of such a methodology was the need to design specific narrative prompts (Tao & Gao, 2018). This was challenging due to a lack of empirical knowledge on SNS usage and CPD in the context of Saudi Arabia, constituting a potential threat to internal validity.

Specific studies have previously been conducted to identify the barriers to using SNS and ICT for CPD purposes. Alhujayri (2018) undertook a study on the challenges of using SNS and ICT for CPD. It was found that a few instructors at each school lacked confidence in their ICT skills and were uncertain about the value of Classera, an educational technology platform used for teaching and learning purposes. Additionally, it was discovered that teachers were reluctant to use Classera in a way that would lead to changes in their pedagogical approach. Some students at the school level were unwilling to use Classera, citing access issues as a hindrance. A few

teachers mentioned feeling pressured by leadership despite the challenges involved. Outside the classroom, teachers felt pressured to complete the assigned curriculum within an unrealistic timeframe, were not always satisfied with the contributions of supervisors, and noted that the Ministry of Education was not utilising Classera. While most teachers were content with the CPD they received, some felt that the training on Classera was insufficient (Alhujayri, 2018). Online social media exchanges provide narratives without the necessity of designing narrative prompts. It is worth noting that the conversations occurring within these exchanges can serve as narrative prompts (Vance et al., 2017; Leigh, 2018). For instance, discussions among Saudi Arabian teachers regarding the Tatweer project could offer empirical evidence for the integration of ICTs into the EFL classroom. EFL teachers can also use platforms like Facebook or Twitter to post about changes in their core knowledge. For example, a teacher might compose a blog entry detailing their interactions with EFL textbook publishers on Twitter. One criticism of this approach is that it can be challenging to categorise such diverse data into meaningful themes that align with the study's framework (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008). For instance, unstructured reflections on CPD may not necessarily align with the adopted framework of teacher core knowledge, such as the cultural component of EFL teaching. To address this limitation, this thesis also relies on qualitative semi-structured interviews.

Conducting the questionnaire survey represents the first stage of the data collection process in this study. After the questionnaire form, the participants are asked permission to provide written social media exchanges. After all completed questionnaire forms are gathered, the participants who have answered 'Yes' are contacted by the researcher with a request to send links or screenshots to their social media posts covering the topics of EFL teaching and their CPD efforts. This is similar to other studies focusing on social media analysis and emphasising individual posts of teachers to evaluate their perceptions of SNS usage and the use of SNS in EFL teaching (Poecze et al., 2018; Manca, 2020). Each submitted social media post is considered to include a specific sentiment on teacher core knowledge and SNS usage. The second stage of data collection is to attain these sentiments from Saudi Arabian academic practitioners. A critique of such an approach was that participants could hide or delete individual social media posts, meaning that the data was potentially biased (Manca, 2020).

The focus is on Twitter posts, Facebook publications, WhatsApp messages, YouTube videos, and social content from MySpace, which includes valuable qualitative data detailing the perceptions held by Saudi Arabian EFL teachers. Social media qualitative data was similar to other types of qualitative evidence, namely interview transcripts (Poecze et al., 2018). This

thesis acknowledges that the questionnaire form also included other types of social media such as YouTube, MySpace, and LinkedIn. Since these platforms are popular with EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, the relevance of their use is high. YouTube allowed posting comments to existing videos, meaning its value as a source of qualitative sentiments was acceptable. LinkedIn and MySpace allowed users to send direct messages to each other.

Extant works analysing social media posts also incorporated SNS metrics, including the number of ‘likes’, followers’ statistics and followers’ engagement (Poecze et al., 2018; Manca, 2020). Other empirical projects also incorporated analysis procedures for the demographic data of the participants who have recently posted on social media (Stathopoulou et al., 2019). Nonetheless, such information was of low relevance to this study. SNS engagement and popularity do not necessarily represent a meaningful increase in teacher core knowledge. While teachers’ demographic data may indicate their social media habits (e.g. younger teachers could use SNS more frequently), this went beyond the scope of this thesis.

Linking the above to CPD, this study only analysed social media communications between EFL teachers or EFL teachers and other stakeholders in the education industry, such as the publishers of EFL textbooks. To ensure relevance to CPD, this thesis uses the following criteria when choosing what social media communications to include in the analysed data.

Criterion	Explanation
Communication participants	Other EFL teachers, school managers, the publishers of EFL textbooks, academic researchers of EFL
Communication age	Not older than two to three months
Keywords appearing in communications	Pedagogy, students, curriculum, teaching, English culture, language proficiency, teacher development

Table 3.1: Inclusion Criteria for Social Media Communications

3.3.3. Rationale and Structure of Semi-Structured Interviews

The current academic consensus on semi-structured interviews as a data collection method is that this technique is vital in studies covering the ‘world of experiences’, subjectively held experiences, conceptual interpretations of events, and normative belief systems (Vattoy, 2020).

This means that interviews broadly apply to the CPD improvement field measured through teacher core knowledge and SNS usage. Supporting this argument, other researchers have successfully used semi-structured interviews to investigate the provision of verbal feedback and interdisciplinary teaching in the EFL context (Li et al., 2019; Vattoy, 2020). Conducting only a single round of interviews do not fully capture how EFL teachers can use SNS from a longitudinal perspective (Topkaya & Celik, 2016; Mellom et al., 2018). For example, an EFL teacher might begin using SNS only to read other teachers' Twitter posts; however, as a teacher gains knowledge of using SNS, they could create blogs and actively contact other EFL academics to learn new core knowledge (Prestridge, 2019). Such development is consistent with cooperative learning theory, according to which teachers are motivated to participate in digital communities to gain new core knowledge (Johnson & Johnson, 2017).

Qualitative analysis is a method used to systematically examine and interpret non-numerical data to understand a phenomenon's underlying meaning, patterns, and relationships (Lester et al., 2020). This method is commonly employed in social sciences, humanities, and other fields where researchers seek to explore the complexities of human behaviour, experiences, perceptions, and interactions (Nowell et al., 2017). It acquires qualitative data through interviews, focus groups, observations, surveys featuring open-ended questions, document analysis (Anderson, 2010), or media content analysis. The gathered data for analysis entails transcribing audio recordings, converting handwritten notes to text, arranging textual information, and immersing oneself in the data to comprehend its contents thoroughly (Anderson, 2010).

Qualitative analysis offers a deeper exploration of intricate subjects that quantitative methods might only partially capture (Anderson, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative research method combining elements of structured and unstructured interviews (George, 2022). In semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a predefined set of open-ended questions and topics to cover, and there is also flexibility for the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and explore unexpected areas based on the participants' responses (George, 2022). Using semi-structured interviews for qualitative analysis is a research approach involving in-depth discussions with participants to gather and examine data (George, 2022). This method enables researchers to explore complex topics, gain insights into individuals' perspectives, experiences, and beliefs, and uncover patterns, nuances, and details that quantitative approaches might miss (Jamshed, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews are a powerful research tool used in various studies worldwide, especially in health and education. Semi-structured interviews are a valuable method in qualitative research, particularly in health and pharmacy services research (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Semi-structured interviews offer focused interviews while still allowing the investigator to explore relevant ideas that may arise during the interview, enhancing understanding of the subject being assessed (Anderson, 2010).

This study has collected data remotely and conducted online/virtual interviews. Remote data collection and online discussions have ushered in a new era in the field of research, offering many advantages that enhance efficiency and widen the scope of investigations (Roberts et al., 2021). One of the most prominent benefits is geographical flexibility; researchers can gather data and insights from diverse participants across different geographic locations and time zones, thus enriching the depth and diversity of their studies (Roberts et al., 2021). This inclusive approach also ensures the involvement of individuals who might have previously been excluded due to location and logistical challenges. Additionally, remote methods substantially reduce travel and accommodation costs, rendering research more cost-effective (Roberts et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the convenience afforded by remote data collection and online interviews is undeniable. Researchers can interact with participants at their mutual convenience, leading to higher participation rates and fewer scheduling conflicts (Lau & Bratby, 2023). This expedites data accumulation and shortens project timelines, and digital platforms enable seamless integration of multimedia elements, augmenting the richness of collected data (Lau & Bratby, 2023). Researchers can seamlessly incorporate visual aids, documents, and multimedia stimuli during online interviews, facilitating a more profound comprehension of participant perspectives (Lau & Bratby, 2023).

The advantages of remote data collection and online interviews extend beyond logistical considerations. Researchers can also mitigate potential biases stemming from face-to-face interactions by minimising the necessity for in-person presence. This fortifies the overall credibility of findings and cultivates a more relaxed environment for participants to share their viewpoints openly (Roberts et al., 2021). In the modern research landscape, these pioneering methodologies are potent instruments, fostering efficiency, inclusivity, and methodological rigour (Lau & Bratby, 2023).

Similarly, the paradigm of interpretative coding is used for analysing interview transcripts. For example, interviewees might focus on how communicating with native English speakers using Twitter has helped their CPD (Bohnke & Thiel, 2019; Worden, 2019). The implication is that qualitative themes represent issues, obstacles, and benefits of SNS usage in EFL teaching. Lee et al. (2019) have also suggested that a similar approach could be successfully applied to social media posts. The qualitative data is loaded into the MAXQDA analysis software as a single text document. This software has been widely used for research purposes. Koseoglu (2017) conducted a study using MAXQDA 12, where the sentence "Social media is like..... because..." was included in the semi-structured interview form, and participants were then prompted to finish the sentence. Findings of this study have confirmed that 30.43% of teachers considered social media harmful and 66.67% of teachers viewed social media quite helpful for pedagogical purposes, thus, highlighting their use for learning and teaching purposes (Koseoglu, 2017). Several studies have been conducted on the subject of EFL using MAXQDA. Bal & Savas (2022) conducted a study in Türkiye using MAXQDA to reveal the attitudes and behaviours of EFL state schoolteachers about teaching international languages and hosting international students in their classrooms (Bal & Savas, 2022). MAXQDA in this study offered benefits such as classifying the codes and illustrating the common themes (Bal & Savas, 2022). Coding involves assigning descriptive labels or codes to data segments based on their meaning or significance. These codes can be deductive, aligned with research questions or existing theories, or inductive, emerging from the data (Bal & Savas, 2022). The codes are grouped into categories and themes that capture commonalities and patterns, types encompass broader concepts, while articles highlight specific emergent ways, and this step organises the data for further analysis (Bal & Savas, 2022). This justifies the use of MAXQDA in this study as a qualitative data analysis method to analyse common themes in interviews.

MAXQDA is a qualitative software for analysing mixed methods data and qualitative findings in various fields, including applied linguistics, library and information science, and maternal health. It facilitates data analysis, coding, and organisation and supports content and thematic analysis (Consoli, 2021). MAXQDA is recommended for researchers in these fields to enhance the quality of their studies and improve their understanding of social and cultural phenomena. It is beneficial for narrative analysis, allowing researchers to write stories and analyse large datasets and data sources. MAXQDA is a qualitative software for analysing mixed methods data and qualitative findings in various formats such as text, video, and photo (Marjaei et al., 2019).

MAXQDA also aids in researcher reflexivity, contributing to the rigour of narrative methodology. Researchers can benefit from using MAXQDA as a leading software in their studies, as it mediates between data and analysis, facilitating the codification of information (Woolf & Silver, 2018). The Five-Level QDA™ Method enables qualitative data analysis, and Level 1 is about organising data, data import, coding, and applying basic data reduction techniques, Level 2 is about creating descriptive summaries of the data by sorting codes and themes to get a summary of the content (Woolf & Silver, 2018). Level 3 includes initial analysis by exploring associations between themes and codes and generating initial analysis or theories on the basis of data, and Level 4 involves developing comprehensive frameworks which originate from the data (Woolf & Silver, 2018). Lastly, Level 5 is about integrating different theories into a coherent narrative, resulting in a thorough analysis of qualitative data (Woolf & Silver, 2018). Thus, the use of MAXQDA for qualitative data analysis is justified in this study.

However, one limitation of thematic coding is that this approach has only had moderate reliability. This thesis admits that the opinions of the participants on SNS usage and CPD may change following the introduction of new CPD programmes or beginning to rely on new social media (e.g. Twitter after using Facebook).

The rationale for using semi-structured interviews as the second core method of data collection is to enable the participants to delve deeper into their experiences of using social media for CPD purposes, and it will illuminate how this usage has impacts and benefits for them as professionals. To be congruent with the framework of this study, the interview questions cover the following areas.

- The relevance and availability of specific SNS for EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.
- The informal use of SNS by EFL teachers.
- The use of SNS to address the limitations of PD in Saudi Arabia.
- The perceived benefits and limitations of SNS as an instrument of CPD.
- The perceived impacts of SNS usage on teacher core knowledge.

It is acknowledged that the validity and reliability of semi-structured interviews in the EFL context are ultimately limited (Leigh, 2019). EFL teachers in developing countries typically face a conflict between the global demands of CPD (the focus mentioned above on creative or digitally-assisted teaching) and the requirements of individual schools that frequently

emphasise standard test scores and formal student performance (Vance et al., 2017; Leigh, 2019). Therefore, some teachers might struggle to gain any core knowledge, regardless of their patterns of SNS usage. Because of the John Henry effect (Saretsky, 1972), some participants may also exaggerate the intensity of their SNS usage.

The following table summarises Section 3.4. by matching individual research questions to the types of data gathered by this study.

Research Question	Questionnaire	Interview	Social Media Posts	Explanation
Which social networking sites (SNSs) (e.g. Facebook et al.) do Saudi teachers use most to enhance their CPD? Why? (RQ1)	•	•		Questions 7 and 12 of the questionnaire survey gather information on SNS generally used by EFL teachers and SNS used specifically for CPD.
To what extent do Saudi English teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD? Why? (RQ2)	•	•		Question 15 of the questionnaire survey measures teacher core knowledge and SNS usage to establish any statistically significant relationships.
For what purposes do Saudi English teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD? (RQ3)	•	•	•	Question 15 of the questionnaire mentions specific purposes for using SNS (e.g. watching educational videos and tutorials).

What kind of assistance/ training do Saudi English teachers need with using SNS to enhance their CPD? (RQ4)		•	•	Interviews prompt the participants to discuss the challenges encountered using SNS for CPD.
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Table 3.2. Matching data collection instruments to research questions.

3.4. Data Analysis

Research data analysis is the deliberate and structured examination of gathered data using various methods and instruments to identify trends, patterns, and anomalies (Cassell et al., 2020). Data analysis is essential in research because it allows researchers to come to conclusions, make claims supported by evidence, and add new knowledge to their subject. In this study, data analysis was done with the help of MS Excel, IBM SPSS and MAXQDA.

3.4.1. Questionnaire Survey

Questionnaires are an unbiased way to gather data about people's knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. Existing research on EFL teaching and CPD in the educational context has typically relied on descriptive statistics or statistical tests to answer their research questions (Alipoor & Jadidi, 2016 ; Sato & Oyanedel, 2019). The above Table 3.2 shows that the questionnaire data will answer the following research questions.

- Which social networking sites (SNSs) (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter.) do Saudi teachers use most to enhance their CPD? Why? (RQ1)
- To what extent do Saudi English teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD? Why? (RQ2)
- For what purposes do Saudi English teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD? (RQ3)

Basoz (2016) has successfully used descriptive statistics (means and percentages) to show teacher preferences for using specific social media. A similar point could be made for RQ3 (Basoz, 2016). However, research question 2 required establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between SNS usage and measurable CPD outputs. This causes the use of regression or similar techniques for data analysis. One vital acknowledgment is that SNS usage represents an area where the research variables (e.g. the intensity of social media use) are highly

correlated. As Sato and Oyanedel (2019) implied, teachers using at least one SNS are more likely to rely on other social media platforms.

The survey was shared on Saudi teachers' Twitter accounts, such as @SaudiTeachers, which have over 521,000 followers; @ksa_teacher, which has over 161,000 followers; @almaydanedu, which has over 166,000 followers; @rt_teachers, which has over 136,000 followers, @Teachers__ksa, which has over 125,000 followers, and @TeachersClub55, which has over 55 thousand followers. The survey was completed by 207 people in total. The questionnaire was created to make sure that the respondents gave accurate information. 182 of the 207 participants responded to each question correctly and completely, choosing "Professional purposes" or "All of the above" in response to Question 8. 51 participants were disqualified because they either showed that they only use social networking sites for personal purposes or did not adequately reply to the questions. The other 26 professors who selected the response option "Personal purposes" completed the questionnaire form."

The collected data was then analysed using IBM SPSS 22, descriptive analysis involving mean, median and frequency was done for demographic variables and the practices of Saudi Teachers for CPD were analysed using frequency and percentage.

3.4.2. Social Media Posts

Question four which is for what purposes do Saudi English teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD, examined the objective and justification of SNS usage for CPD by EFL in the third section of this mixed-method study. Ten tweets were copied from the Twitter accounts of ten different EFL instructors. Prior to this, approval from the professors was obtained in the questionnaire's final notes. Because of their concerns, many teachers reject allowing this. Based on the consent, the teachers were asked to provide a link or screenshot of their post on social media that applies to the English language. After receiving consent, the researcher considered only 10 Tweets and collected one tweet from each account. The goal of the evaluation of the tweet was to look into the content teachers share on social networking sites and see if this content is enhancing students' knowledge of EFL and aiding in teachers' professional development.

Interpretive thematic coding is the most widespread method for analysing qualitative data in the current body of knowledge on EFL teaching and CPD (Ozdil & Hoque, 2017; Sato & Oyanedel, 2019). The rationale for coding is that such an approach allows participants to establish their significant themes relevant to SNS usage in EFL practice. For example,

Facebook posts by Saudi Arabian EFL teachers may cover whether the teachers have recently observed a meaningful increase in their core knowledge. To facilitate the analysis, each social media post is placed in an Excel table, documenting the social media platform used to make this statement and the corresponding participant. This thesis admits that no other studies have used thematic coding to analyse teachers' social media communications. The social media exchanges of the participants may be influenced by contextual factors, such as their dissatisfaction with school conditions and emotions experienced during classroom management (e.g. frustration or high job satisfaction) (Sato & Oyanedel, 2019). To address this, this thesis will assign two or more codes to individual pieces of qualitative data. For example, a statement highlighting the benefits of Facebook for teachers could show the effects of SNS on CPD and the usage of SNS as a cooperative learning environment.

It is challenging for researchers to analyse the social media posts of individuals. Patton et al. (2020) conducted a study to evaluate this challenge using the Contextual Analysis of Social Media (CASM), which considers and criticises the discrepancy between limitations in natural language processing techniques and variations in geographic, cultural, and age-related social media use and communication. In order to analyse social media data, CASM takes a team-based method that is expressly influenced by local knowledge, and Patton et al. (2020) used CASM to examine tweets. A set of tests was used to compare the effectiveness of a support vector machine using CASM hand-labelled posts to a remote model. It discovered that the hand-labelled data that CASM had educated outperformed baseline remote labels, demonstrating that CASM labels can capture additional information dimensions that content-only approaches cannot analyse. This method is still developing, and the validity and reliability of the method have not been evaluated. So, this study used the coding method (Patton et al., 2020).

The challenge in this study is participants giving the researcher all requested social media data and the choice of tweets or social media posts by participants can be influenced by personal bias. The second major problem can occur during the coding process. It might be challenging to categorise EFL teachers' heterogeneous opinions and perceptions into a set of formal codes. Existing works on social media in education have circumvented this by either relying on descriptive statistics (such as the total number of social media posts) or using new technologies (e.g. machine learning) for analysing large sets of qualitative data (Bal & Bicen, 2017; Poecze et al., 2018). The establishment of links between SNS usage and teacher core knowledge shows that this study needed qualitative data explaining the choices made by EFL teachers when relying on SNS.

3.4.3. Semi-Structured Interviews

The samples for this study were approached using social media sites, and they completed a survey questionnaire, in the last question, the participants were asked for their consent to take part in a virtual interview. From the sample, five females and ten males took part in interviews. These interviews were semi-structured, and leading questions were used to gain the participants' perspectives. The interviews began with questions about CPD, Saudi EFL teachers' education, and experience. They were then asked about general CPD practices, the use of SNS for CPD, the most frequently used SNS for CPD, the use of SNS by Saudi teachers for CPD, problems and barriers in using SNS for CPD, and their recommendations. Using software, the interview content was transcribed and closely analysed. A qualitative research approach was employed to evaluate the interview data, with MAXQDA used for qualitative analysis. Initially, the researcher imported the transcribed interviews into the software as a single document. Codes were generated based on the major themes, resulting in seven themes, each with corresponding codes.

The first theme related to the general CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers and had three codes: familiarity with CPD, qualifications, and years of experience teaching English. Familiarity with CPD was further sub-coded as yes or no. The three levels of education are Graduation, Master's, and Ph.D. The researcher coded experience based on the number of years. The second theme explored the SNS platforms used by Saudi EFL teachers for CPD and consisted of three codes. The first code signifies if Saudi teachers employ SNS for CPD, classified as Yes or No. The second code categorised the most prevalent SNS for CPD, sub-coded according to participant responses, and the third code evaluated if SNS is suitable for CPD, sub-coded as Yes or No.

In the third theme, Saudi EFL teachers were asked about the reasons for using a particular SNS for CPD. Based on the four most frequently used SNS for CPD, sub-codes were generated according to teachers' responses. The fourth theme examined the use of SNS for CPD, such as how often they are used and the reasons behind their growing popularity for CPD. The frequency code was sub-coded as daily, weekly, or less often, and the reasons mentioned by participants were sub-coded as 'Saudi Vision 2030' and 'COVID-19.' The fifth theme highlighted problems and barriers in using SNS for CPD. Sub-codes were generated based on the participants' responses. The sixth theme focused on participants' suggestions for effectively using SNS for CPD, while the seventh theme asked if participants had received recommendations to use SNS for CPD and if they had recommended it to others. For themes six and seven, responses were recorded as yes or no.

Once the themes and codes were formulated, they were applied to the interview content. Each interview was thoroughly reviewed multiple times to ensure that it included all critical points mentioned by the participants in the codes. After finalising the coding, MaxMap was used to identify linkages, the frequency of responses, and the impact of specific answers. The researcher presents the data in Chapter 5, where the responses were weighed based on their frequency and included graphs to illustrate the significance of factors mentioned by interviewees. The qualitative data was then compared with the quantitative data and the social media posts of the participants to generate the final results of this mixed-method study. Table 3.3 summarises these key themes:

Themes	Code	Sub-code
General CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers	Familiarity of CPD	Yes
		No
	Qualification	Graduation
		Masters
		PhD
	Experience	Years of teaching English as a Foreign Language
	SNS Saudi English teachers use to enhance their CPD	Do Saudi teachers use SNS for CPD
Most used SNS for CPD enhancement Frequency of using SNS		Twitter
		YouTube
		Facebook
		WhatsApp
		ResearchGate
		Telegram
		Instagram
		LinkedIn
		Skype
		Google Plus
Is SNS valid for CPD		Yes
	No	
Purpose of using particular SNS for CPD	Twitter	Convenient
		Professional growth
		Socialising
	YouTube	Learning
		Class activities
	Telegram	Helpful for teaching practices
		Learning
	Facebook	Socialising

The Extent of Usage by Saudi Teachers	How often do you use SNS for CPD	Daily
		Weekly
		Less often
	The reason of using SNS for CPD	Covid Pandemic
		Saudi Vision 2030
Barriers & Problems in Usage	Problems while using SNS	SNS are not backed by the government.
		Shortage of time
		Authenticity
		Distracting
		Difficult in use
	Barriers	Limited knowledge and time
		Lack of Internet accessibility
		Expensive
		Hesitancy
		Absence of basic training
Training	Got any Training	Yes
		No
	Need of training	Yes
		No
Recommendations	Recommended by someone	Yes
		No
	I will recommend it to someone.	Yes
		No

Table: 3.3 Summary of key themes from interviews

3.5. Participants and Sampling

This study relies on convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling strategy used in research to collect data from a group of people or subjects who are readily available to or easily accessible to the researcher (Andrade, 2021). This approach is frequently used due to its ease of use and simplicity, but it may not necessarily represent the more significant population, potentially skewing the results (Andrade, 2021). Instead of utilising a random or structured sample strategy, the researcher has selected individuals based on their accessibility and proximity. This can involve selecting people randomly from a particular area, using friends and acquaintances, or gathering information from people who can be easily reached online or through social media (Sedgwick, 2013). The critical benefit of convenience sampling for EFL

research was that this method allowed to capture the opinions of a high (50 or more) number of teachers (Ozdil & Hoque, 2017). The primary drawback of convenience sampling is that it is not representative, and results may be skewed or impossible to generalise if the readily available individuals do not adequately reflect the characteristics of the entire community (Andrade, 2021). This makes it difficult to draw broader conclusions or generalisations from data obtained through convenience sampling.

Online data collection is the procedure of obtaining data, responses, or information from people using tools and platforms based on the Internet. (Roberts et al., 2021). Due to its accessibility, convenience, and capacity to reach a sizable and diverse audience, this technique has grown in popularity (Roberts et al., 2021). Using social media to contact the representatives of the sample meant that only teachers with at least some experience in using social media could participate, fulfilling a significant inclusion criterion. Online data collection may soon replace paper-and-pencil surveys and questionnaires in academic research, these may not be as appealing to everyone as formerly thought, despite their ability to reach massive, geographically dispersed audiences and yield speedy results. (Roberts et al., 2021). Reaching the desired population sample is still challenging for traditional and online data collection (Lefever et al., 2007). This study did not face this issue (Lefever et al., 2007). On the other hand, the use of convenience sampling meant that the generalisability of this study to the general population of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia remained questionable. While convenience sampling may be appropriate for preliminary data collecting or exploratory research, most researchers choose more rigorous sampling techniques, like random sampling or stratified sampling, to ensure their findings can be generalised to a broader population with more confidence (Andrade, 2021). The findings were only relevant to people who spent sufficient time on social media to notice the link distributed by the accounts mentioned above. This potentially limited the generalisability of findings to individuals with notable social media experience.

3.6. Pilot Study

This section describes the pilot study. The pilot study aims to establish the preliminary patterns of SNS usage among Saudi Arabian EFL teachers and identify the general CPD interventions these teachers participate in as a first step in developing the main study, the pilot study aimed to answer the following research questions.

- What essential CPD programmes do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia participate in?

- For what purposes do Saudi Arabian EFL teachers typically use social media?
- How do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia evaluate their current levels of core knowledge?
- Do Saudi Arabian EFL teachers discuss their core knowledge with other EFL teachers when using social media?

3.6.1. The Pilot Study Procedure

The pilot study involved a small sample of the target population, comprising 10 Saudi EFL teachers who were asked to complete a questionnaire survey and provide feedback on the questionnaire items and the research procedure. As noted above, qualitative methodology aims to comprehend complex realities and the significance of actions in specific situations (McChesney, 2020). In contrast, quantitative methodology aims to obtain accurate and reliable measures that allow for statistical analysis (McChesney, 2020).

The researcher personally contacted 10 EFL teachers employed in Saudi Arabian schools using WhatsApp and provided them with a link to a digital questionnaire form. The questionnaire form was hosted on the Qualtrics platform, where the participants' responses were recorded. This approach enabled the rapid distribution of questionnaire forms, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions. These restrictions prevented the researcher from personally distributing hard copies of the questionnaire survey, as noted by Basoz (2016).

However, this approach did not include any semi-structured interviews. Among the ten teachers, only one respondent agreed to provide their social media communications (two tweets). In WhatsApp communications with the author, the others provided the following reasons for refusing to provide such data.

- It is about sharing private social media communications.
- I do not have the time to participate in semi-structured interviews.
- They are inadequate to contribute any valid data to this study.

According to the feedback, the questionnaire survey took an average of eight minutes.

The following table summarises the data collection tools and provides a rationale for the chosen measurement scales.

Question Numbers	Measured Information	Scales Used	Rationale	Research Question Answered
1-3	Participants' demographics	N/A	To attain the participants' general information.	N/A
4	EFL teachers' general CPD practices	Adapted from Topkaya & Celik (2016)	To establish general CPD practices.	What critical CPD programmes do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia participate in?
5-10	EFL teachers' general usage of SNS Participants' social media posts	Adapted from Poecze et al. (2018) and Manca (2020)	To evaluate EFL teachers' patterns of SNS usage.	For what purposes do Saudi Arabian EFL teachers typically use social media?
11-15	EFL teachers' usage of SNS for CPD EFL teachers' core knowledge	Adapted from Manca and Ranieri (2016a), Manca & Ranieri (2016b), Mellom, Straubhaar et al. (2018), Sato and Oyanedel (2019), Chen et al. (2019), Prestridge (2019)	To establish whether EFL teachers know that SNS can be used to gain core knowledge. To measure EFL teachers' core knowledge.	Do Saudi Arabian EFL teachers discuss their core knowledge with other EFL teachers when using social media?

Table 3.4. Questionnaire Structure and Scales

3.6.2. The Participants of the Pilot Study

All 10 participants of the pilot study were Saudi EFL teachers who were personal acquaintances and friends of the researcher and were employed by schools in Saudi Arabia at the time of the pilot study. The following table reviews the respondents' demographic information and teaching experience.

Question	Response Options	Number of Participants
What is your gender?	Male	8
	Female	2
What is your age?	Younger than 25	1
	25-34 years	6
	35-44 years	2
	45-54 years	1

	55 years or older	0
How long have you been teaching?	Less than one year	0
	1-3 years	1
	4-10 years	6
	11-20 years	3
	21-30 years	0
	31-40 years	0
	41 years or more	0

Table 3.5 : Pilot Study Participants’ Demographics and Teaching Experience

Most respondents (six teachers) were 25-34 years old and had at least four years of teaching experience. The pilot study was not able to attain a balanced sample regarding gender, age, and teaching experience. While the researcher contacted ten respondents, only seven teachers answered ‘Professional purposes’ or ‘All of the above’ when faced with Question 8. The remaining three teachers chose the response option ‘Personal purposes’, ending the questionnaire form. The pilot study, therefore, only gathered data from teachers who reported using SNS for professional and personal purposes or only for professional purposes. Of the seven teachers, no one respondent agreed to be interviewed as they did not have an opportunity to provide qualitative data.

3.6.3. The Data Analysis Procedure

Following the example of Basoz (2016), this study only used descriptive statistics, namely choice counts, means, medians and standard deviations, to analyse data from the pilot study. All primary data was exported from Qualtrics using the ‘Export document’ function; Qualtrics automatically provided information on choice counts, means and medians. The pilot study did not apply any other methods of data analysis.

3.6.4. Key Findings of the Pilot Study

The surveyed Saudi EFL teachers did not regularly use digital resources, such as digital versions of printed academic articles or blogs, to search for new knowledge in EFL teaching. This extends the findings of Alipoor and Jadidi (2016), who did not provide information on digital tools and platforms for EFL teachers' CPD. Addressing this gap, the pilot study revealed that physical sources, specifically library books, were frequently used to acquire new knowledge in EFL teaching. Seven teachers confirmed visiting a physical library at least

several times a year. Therefore, this sample of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia frequently relied on physical sources as a means of CPD, as illustrated in Figure 6 below.

#	Field	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
1	At least several times per year, I attend professional courses, seminars and lectures.	0.00% 0	30.00% 3	50.00% 5	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10
2	I am subscribed to academic journals on EFL teaching (e.g. TESOL Quarterly).	20.00% 2	80.00% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10
3	I read non-academic digital sources (e.g. blogs on Medium) on EFL teaching.	0.00% 0	70.00% 7	0.00% 0	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10
4	I read academic articles on EFL teaching at least three-four times a month.	0.00% 0	50.00% 5	10.00% 1	40.00% 4	0.00% 0	10
5	I use services such as Google Books to search for new information on EFL teaching.	0.00% 0	30.00% 3	10.00% 1	60.00% 6	0.00% 0	10
6	I use Skype or Zoom to communicate with other EFL teachers.	0.00% 0	80.00% 8	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10
7	I use Google Docs or similar services to share knowledge of EFL teaching with my colleagues.	0.00% 0	80.00% 8	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10
8	At least two-three times a month, me and my colleagues meet in person and discuss our knowledge of EFL teaching.	0.00% 0	90.00% 9	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	10
9	At least several times per year, I visit a physical library and read books and articles on EFL teaching.	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	20.00% 2	70.00% 7	0.00% 0	10

Figure 6: Pilot Study Participants’ General PD Practices and Behaviours

Only three of the surveyed teachers used SNS exclusively for personal purposes.

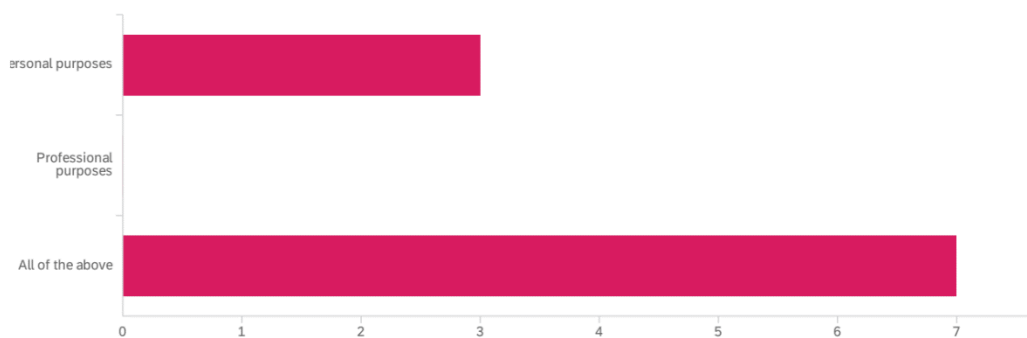


Figure 7: What Do You Use Social Networking Sites For? (Number of Participants)

Seven EFL teachers used SNS for personal and professional purposes simultaneously. This means that even when EFL teachers used SNS without explicitly aiming to acquire new cultural knowledge or improve their language proficiency, these professionals could still gain such insights when reading Twitter or Facebook posts made by native English-speaking SNS users (Mellom et al., 2018). While van Bommel et al. (2020) did not establish links between SNS

usage and EFL teachers' core knowledge, this finding addresses a significant research gap. The following figure contributes to this by evaluating the popularity of different SNS when used for teachers' CPD.

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Facebook	0.00% 0
2	Twitter	36.84% 7
3	WhatsApp	15.79% 3
4	YouTube	31.58% 6
5	Instagram	10.53% 2
6	LinkedIn	5.26% 1
7	Myspace	0.00% 0
8	Prezi	0.00% 0
9	Pinterest	0.00% 0
10	SlideShare	0.00% 0
11	Snapchat	0.00% 0
12	Other. Please specify	0.00% 0

Figure 8: Which Social Networking Sites Do You Use for Professional Purposes?

Although Poecze et al. (2018) and Alipoor and Jadidi (2016) defined teachers' use of Twitter (teachers' sentiments) and Facebook (teachers' reflective writings), respectively, these authors omitted any specific benefits and limitations of Twitter, Facebook, and other SNS for Saudi EFL teachers. As suggested by Alhaddad (2018), Saudi Arabian teachers tend to distrust SNS and can be reluctant to implement new technologies through CPD. In contrast to Alipoor and Jadidi (2016), the participants ignored other teachers' reflective writings on Facebook and used Twitter (seven respondents) and YouTube (six respondents) for professional purposes. Twitter and YouTube provided specific benefits to Saudi EFL teachers; however, as the pilot study did not conduct any interviews, this data lacked definitions of the advantages of using these two SNS platforms. To further address the outlined research gap, the following figure reviews SNS usage as a method of CPD.

#	Field	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1	My awareness of new trends in classroom instruction (e.g. digitally-assisted learning) is high.	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	28.57% 2	57.14% 4	0.00% 0	7
2	I am highly knowledgeable of methods for managing the behaviours of my students (e.g. providing verbal feedback).	0.00% 0	28.57% 2	42.86% 3	28.57% 2	0.00% 0	7
3	I know what PD programmes are provided by the government and what the entry requirements are.	0.00% 0	57.14% 4	14.29% 1	28.57% 2	0.00% 0	7
4	I know how to conduct independent research (e.g. searching for academic articles on EFL teaching).	0.00% 0	71.43% 5	14.29% 1	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	7
5	My English proficiency is higher than the requirements posed by my current place of employment.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	85.71% 6	0.00% 0	7
6	I am aware of how linguistic phenomena in the English language (e.d. idioms) may be a result of cultural phenomena.	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	85.71% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7
7	I use social networking sites to contact other English teachers from English-speaking countries.	0.00% 0	100.00% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7
8	I follow the accounts of educational officials to be aware of what is going on.	0.00% 0	85.71% 6	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	7
9	I use social networking sites to answer students' questions and give feedback.	0.00% 0	28.57% 2	0.00% 0	71.43% 5	0.00% 0	7
10	I find social networking sites useful for searching educational videos and tutorials.	14.29% 1	85.71% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7
11	I use social networking sites to share knowledge and materials with other EFL teachers.	14.29% 1	28.57% 2	42.86% 3	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	7
12	I use social networking sites to collect feedback from colleagues.	0.00% 0	42.86% 3	14.29% 1	42.86% 3	0.00% 0	7
13	I use social media to search for new ideas about teaching methods and practices.	0.00% 0	57.14% 4	28.57% 2	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	7
14	I use social networking sites to scan for recent news about EFL teaching.	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	42.86% 3	42.86% 3	0.00% 0	7
15	I use social media to discover new ways of motivating my students (e.g. funny pictures, educational games, motivational phrases, etc.).	0.00% 0	71.43% 5	28.57% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7

Figure 9: SNS Usage as a Method of CPD

Although cultural knowledge is defined as a unique component of EFL teachers' core knowledge by Nguyen (2016) and Lam (2019), six participants were undecided about whether they knew how culture shaped idiom usage and similar linguistic phenomena. The pilot study respondents did not explicitly seek to acquire new cultural knowledge to address this gap. Only one teacher agreed with using SNS to share knowledge and materials with other EFL teachers.

All seven respondents who completed the questionnaire disagreed with using social media to communicate with English-speaking EFL teachers to improve their cultural knowledge. The pilot study indicated that cultural knowledge was either not prioritised when using SNS for CPD, or Saudi EFL teachers lacked the skills (e.g. knowledge of using direct messages on Twitter) to use SNS to enhance their core knowledge.

3.6.5. Participants' Feedback

Participants' feedback was collected through WhatsApp messages and phone calls between the researcher and the respondents. One respondent, who wished to remain confidential, suggested that Question 16 ('How frequently do you use social media to aid your teaching?') should be removed from the survey. Their reasoning was that their SNS usage behaviour was sporadic and challenging to categorise using the provided answers. Therefore, the author removed Question 16 from the survey. Another respondent mentioned that the questionnaire contained unfamiliar abbreviations such as PD, CPD, and SNS. Consequently, the survey form was modified to use these terms in full (e.g., professional development instead of PD).

3.7. Analysis of Social Media Communications during the Pilot Study

As stated in Section 3.6.1, one participant agreed to provide two tweets as a part of the final study. These are presented in the following figures.

The image shows a tweet with the following text: "Technologies have both to facilitate communication and foster creativity @TESOLacademic #TESOL scottthornbury.wordpress.com/2011/05/01/t-i...". The text is displayed in a clean, sans-serif font. The first line is in black, and the subsequent lines are in a blue color, matching the Twitter branding.

Figure 10. Teacher's First Tweet Shared during the Pilot Study.

The teacher agreed that communication and creativity were vital for teachers. This implicitly referred to language knowledge, such as using English to communicate with other teachers, and the cultural knowledge required for greater creativity (Freeman & Johnson, 1998;

Richards, 1998). However, the Tweet did not reference any specific rationales for using SNS (e.g., hedonistic reasons) (Manca & Ranieri, 2016a; Manca & Ranieri, 2016b).

Top tips for using social media to improve teaching and boost #CPD
[gu.com/p/4h3zd/stw](https://www.theguardian.com/p/4h3zd/stw)
[@TESOLacademic](https://twitter.com/TESOLacademic) #TESOL #ELT



Figure 11. Teacher's Second Tweet Shared during Pilot Study.

The tweet referenced a non-academic article about using SNS to improve teaching and boost CPD. The teacher, therefore, was willing to search SNS and English websites for new materials on pedagogic knowledge; this corresponded to the cognitive pattern of SNS usage (Manca, 2020). As the participant also mentioned the '@TESOLacademic' account, the tweet demonstrated the teacher's desire to share newly acquired knowledge with others. The Tweet omitted references to specific types of core knowledge that could be gained via SNS usage.

3.8. Changes to the Main Study as a result of the Pilot Study

The following list summarises how the primary outcomes of the pilot study inform the main study.

- Many EFL teachers use SNS both for personal and professional purposes. Therefore, Saudi Arabian EFL teachers know the benefits of SNS as a means of CPD.
- The pilot study participants did not use SNS to communicate with native English speakers and EFL teachers in Western countries. When using SNS, Saudi Arabian EFL teachers might not gain cultural or language knowledge.

- Saudi Arabian EFL teachers prefer to use YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter for personal and professional purposes. This primary study expects these SNS to retain their popularity in the entire research sample.
- Saudi Arabian EFL teachers still distrust digital learning resources such as electronic resource hubs. Therefore, SNS could be one of the few digital means of learning core knowledge actively used by EFL academics in Saudi Arabia.

Based on the pilot study, this study anticipates that SNS will contribute to pedagogic and language knowledge but not necessarily add to EFL teachers' cultural knowledge. Additionally, this study expects EFL teachers to consciously use SNS as a means of CPD to compensate for the lack of core knowledge provided during their participation in formal PD programmes.

3.9. Ethical considerations and procedures

Confidentiality and anonymity were the most significant ethical concerns for researchers (Silverman, 2015; Alfaisal, 2020). Participants were informed of their right to complete confidentiality. All members of the sample were briefed on the purpose of this study and the adopted data collection and storage measures. It was emphasised that consent could be withdrawn at any point during the research project. This study adhered to the principles of the Research Ethics Code of the University. When analysing interview transcripts and social media posts, this study employed pseudonyms (e.g. 'Participant 1'). These pseudonyms were randomly assigned (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Compliance with the Data Protection Act of 1998 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation was ensured. Ethical procedures were as follows: Participants received a letter (the first page of the questionnaire) outlining the objectives and nature of this study and the conditions of their participation (see Appendix A). This letter clarified the research questions and the aim to investigate perceptions and opinions regarding social media usage among EFL teachers. It explicitly stated that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw without any negative consequences.

The letter assured participants that their identities would remain confidential in published material and that no information specific to them would be disclosed to anyone other than the researcher. Participants were informed that their responses would be transcribed from recordings and that any notes or transcriptions would be stored securely. It was made clear that their answers would remain confidential unless they pertained to child abuse or the abuse of another individual at risk. Contact details for the researcher's supervisor, as well as those of

the Ethics Committee, were provided. Participants were encouraged to reach out to these supervisory functions if they had any concerns. Subsequently, participants signed a consent form, confirming their understanding and agreement to the aforementioned terms (see Appendix A).

3.10. Methodological Limitations

This study uses a mixed-method research design. Utilising a variety of research techniques can be time- and resource-consuming, requiring researchers to plan, implement, and analyse both quantitative and qualitative components, which may necessitate a larger study team and budget (Roberts et al., 2021). Combining quantitative and qualitative data and findings can be challenging. To reconcile any disparities between quantitative and qualitative results, researchers must decide how to integrate the data, whether to assign equal weight to both types of data and how to do so (McChesney, 2020). Upholding validity and reliability in mixed-methods research can be more challenging (Palinkas et al., 2011). While quantitative approaches might be criticised for oversimplification, qualitative methods are frequently criticised for subjectivity (McChesney, 2020).

Combining these approaches might make it more challenging to ensure the accuracy of both types of data. Researchers need to be proficient in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to effectively plan and conduct mixed-method studies. Achieving this may require multidisciplinary collaboration or additional training for researchers more accustomed to a specific method (Roberts et al., 2021). Selecting suitable samples for both the quantitative and qualitative components can be challenging. Different sampling techniques may affect the generalisability of the results from each component. The time required to collect and analyse both types of data can extend the overall research timeline, which could be a drawback in situations where obtaining results quickly is crucial (Queiros et al., 2017).

The sampling technique used in this study is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling often leads to sampling bias, where the sample collected is not truly representative of the larger population (Stratton, 2021). This bias arises from the possibility that those who are easily accessible may not accurately reflect the population in terms of desirable traits, beliefs, or behaviors. Because the sample was not randomly selected from the population, it is challenging to extrapolate the results from a convenience sample to the entire population. Thus, the external validity of this study is limited. While individuals may be easily reachable, they may choose not to participate, potentially leading to nonresponse bias, where participants differ in

characteristics from those who decline to participate, further affecting the representativeness of the sample (Stratton, 2021).

The researcher's positionality represents a potential methodological limitation in all research, including this study. The researcher may have been influenced by their CPD portfolio, including the extent of social media usage among EFL teachers, when deciding to include them in this study. This implies that the researcher holds their own subjective opinions regarding the usefulness of SNS in the CPD process. While this poses a potential threat to validity and reliability, Wolff & De Costa (2017) observe that issues of positionality are often unavoidable in educational research. Their argument suggests that it remains ethical for a researcher with a background in the topic area to analyse data or assist participants in the data collection process (Wolff & De Costa, 2017).

Chapter 4

Quantitative Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will focus on the quantitative data analysis collected through a virtual questionnaire. The data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS. As per the objectives of this study, this section will focus on the most used SNS by EFL teachers and the correlation between CPD and SNS.

4.1.1. Number of responses received

The questionnaire was shared on Twitter through the accounts of popular Saudi teachers, like @SaudiTeachers (521k followers), @ksa_teacher (161k followers), @almaydanedu (166k followers), @rt_teachers (136k followers), @Teachers_ksa (125k followers), and @TeachersClub55 (90k followers). 207 participants completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire was thoughtfully designed to ensure data reliability. Out of the 207 participants, 182 provided complete and appropriate answers, selecting either 'Professional purposes' or 'All of the above' in response to Question 8. The researcher excluded 51 participants who confirmed using SNS for 'Personal Purposes' or provided inadequate responses to the questions. Rest of the 26 participants selected 'Personal Purposes' which ended their participation in the questionnaire.

4.1.2. Preparation of SPSS data analysis

Data from the questionnaire was manually entered into IBM SPSS. First, the variable values were set according to the scope of the question, selected the type of variable as the Nominal, assigned values to different groups, and wrote complete statements in labels. Next, the data was manually entered into 'Data view' one by one.

Section A: Demographic background of the participants

In Section A of the questionnaire, there were few questions related to the demographic background of the participants such as age, gender, and teaching experience of the participants. The analysis of the data involved calculating frequencies. In 'analyse' window of SPSS, descriptive analysis and frequencies were selected.

Question 1: Gender of the participants

In question one of section A, the researcher asked participants about their gender and calculated the frequencies of recorded responses on SPSS. Results are summarised in Table 4.1.

Gender	Frequency (%)
Male	113 (62.1%)
Female	69 (37.9%)
Total	182 (100%)

Table 4.1 Gender Distribution of the participants

As seen from Table 4.1, out of 182 participants, 113 were males (62.1%) and 69 were females (37.9%).

Question 2: Age of the Participants

In the second question of section A, the participants were asked about their age. The questionnaire included age groups ranging from under 25 to over 55. The frequencies of answers were recorded and summarised in Table 4.2.

Age	Frequency (%)
Younger than 25	7 (3.8%)
25-34	64 (35.2%)
35-44	85 (46.7%)
45-54	24 (13.2%)
55 and above	2 (1.1%)
Total	182 (100%)

Table 4.2 Age distribution of the participants

Based on the collected data, 7 of the participants (3.8%) were younger than 25 years, 64 (35.2%) participants were aged 25-34 years. There were 85 (46.7%) participants aged 35-44 years, 24 (13.2%) were between 45-54 years old, and 2 (1.1%) of the participants were older than 55 years.

Question 3: Teaching experience of the participants

Further in question 3, the participants were asked about their EFL teaching experience. The teaching experience was sub categorised in less than a year to over 30 years. The frequency of responses is summarised in Table 4.3.

Experience (years)	Frequency (%)
1-3 year	12 (6.6%)
4-10 year	88 (48.4%)
11-20 year	67 (36.8%)
21-30 year	14 (7.7%)
31-40 year	1 (0.5%)
Total	182 (100%)

Table 4.3 Experience in years of the participants

There were a total of 182 participants, out of which 12 (6.6%) participants had 1-3 years of experience, 88 (48.4%) participants had 4-10 years of experience, 67 (36.8%) participants had 11-20 years of experience, and 14 (7.7%) participants had 21-30 years of teaching experience. Only one teacher had over 31-40 years of experience, accounting for 0.7% of the total.

The analysis shows there were more males than females as males were 62.1%. Mainly, the participants aged from 35 to 44 years and their teaching experience was mainly between 4-10 years. From the general data collected, it can be said that the Saudi EFL teachers are mainly males. The EFL teaching community consists mostly of middle-aged individuals (35-44 years old) who have been serving the department for four to ten years.

4.1.3. Correlation between teaching experience and age of EFL teachers

As per the data shared in section A of questionnaire, the correlation of age was derived from the experience of Saudi EFL teacher, results are summarised in Table 4.4.

Teaching Experience	Age of Saudi EFL teacher	
	Pearson correlation	0.84
	Significance	0.00

Table 4.4 Correlation between age and teaching experience

4.2. Section B

4.2.1. Introduction

In section B, the EFL teachers were asked nine different questions to assess their general practices for CPD. Responses to questions were recorded on 5-points Likert scale. Every point on the 5-point Likert scale was given a value, with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2

representing disagree, 3 representing neither, 4 representing agree, and 5 representing strongly agree.

The descriptive analysis calculated median of the responses (Analyse- descriptive-frequencies). The following table shows that data from all 182 participants were complete, and the median values ranged from 2 to 3, as displayed in Table 4.5.

	At least several times per year, I attend professional courses, seminars and lectures	I am subscribed to academic journals on EFL teaching (e.g. TESOL Quarterly).	I read non-academic digital sources (e.g. blogs on Medium) on EFL teaching.	I read academic articles on EFL teaching at least three-four times a month.	I use services such as Google Books to search for new information on EFL teaching.	I use Skype or Zoom to communicate with other EFL teachers	Google Docs or similar services to share knowledge	At least two-three times a month, me and my colleagues meet in person	several times per year, I visit a physical library for EFL books
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Median	2	2	3	2	2	2.5	2	2	2

Table 4.5 Median of responses for general CPD practices

The median value from table 4.5 shows that there was no missing data, every participant answered this section of questionnaire. The median value suggests that most participants disagreed with the questions, indicating that Saudi EFL teachers did not primarily follow the nine general CPD practices.

4.2.2 General CPD practices of Saudi Arabian EFL teachers

The first research question to be assessed was to find out the general CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers. In the second section of the questionnaire, nine questions were asked from the participants in order to gather this information and to analyse their general practices regarding CPD. Appendix A provides the questions that were asked.

4.2.2.1 Frequencies of responses

The frequency analysis of section B was done, and the data of all questions is summarised in Table 4.6.

Section B	Statement	Items	Frequency and percentile				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q1	Professionals Courses, Seminar and Conferences for CPD	Frequency	4	100	35	32	11
		Percentage	2.2	54.9	19.2	17.6	6.0
		Cumulative Percentage	2.2	57.1	76.4	94.0	100
Q2	Subscription of EFL journals	Frequency	5	145	14	16	2
		Percentage	2.7	79.7	7.7	8.8	1.1
		Cumulative Percentage	2.7	82.4	90.1	98.9	100
Q3	Reading of Non- academic digital source	Frequency	2	76	32	70	2
		Percentage	1.1	41.8	17.6	38.5	1.1
		Cumulative Percentage	1.1	42.9	60.4	98.9	100
Q4	Reading of EFL Academic articles	Frequency	7	90	48	33	4
		Percentage	3.8	49.5	26.4	18.1	2.2
		Cumulative Percentage	3.8	53.3	79.7	97.8	100
Q5	Google Book- Searching for new information	Frequency	5	121	8	40	8
		Percentage	2.7	66.5	5.2	22	4.4
		Cumulative Percentage	2.7	69.2	73.6	95.6	100
Q6	Use of Zoom or Skype	Frequency	5	86	35	48	8
		Percentage	2.7	47.3	19.2	36.4	4.4
		Cumulative Percentage	2.7	50	69.2	95.6	100
Q7	Sharing knowledge by Google Docs	Frequency	3	128	10	31	10
		Percentage	1.6	70.3	5.5	17	5.5
		Cumulative Percentage	1.6	72	77.5	94.5	100

Q8	In-person meetings to share knowledge	Frequency	5	119	23	32	3
		Percentage	2.7	65.4	12.6	17.6	1.6
		Cumulative	2.7	68.1	80.8	98.4	100
		Percentage					
Q9	Visiting Physical Library	Frequency	4	109	23	39	7
		Percentage	2.2	59.9	12.6	21.4	3.8
		Cumulative	2.2	62.1	74.7	96.2	100
		Percentage					

Table 4.6 General CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers

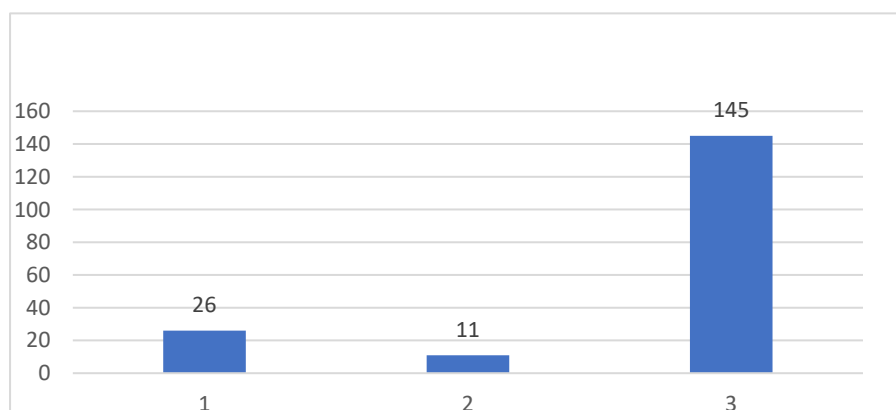
The data collected was analysed and reviewed from section two of the questionnaire. EFL teachers have different CPD practices, such as attending seminars and courses, reading academic articles, using search engines and non-academic sources, organising Zoom meetings, and visiting libraries. Nearly half of the participants disagreed with the utilisation of these methods in all the questions. The category of participants reading non-academic digital sources had the highest agreement, around 39%. Approximately 40% agreed to arrange Zoom meetings.

4.2.3. Correlation between teaching experience and general CPD practices

The Pearson bivariate correlation test was applied to examine the potential relationship between the teaching experience of EFL teachers and their general CPD practices. Table 4.7 summarises the correlation between teaching experience and general CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers.

How long are you teaching		At least several times per year, I attend professional courses, seminars and lectures	I am subscribed to academic journals on EFL teaching (e.g. TESOL Quarterly).	I read non-academic digital sources (e.g. blogs on Medium) on EFL teaching.	I read academic articles on EFL teaching at least three-four times a month.	I use services such as Google Books to search for new information on EFL teaching.	I use Skype or Zoom to communicate with other EFL teachers	Google Docs or similar services to share knowledge	At least two-three times a month, me and my colleagues meet in person	several times per year, I visit a physical library for EFL books
	Pearson correlation	0.886	0.728	0.849	0.904	0.783	0.887	0.757	0.788	0.833
	Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table 4.7 Correlation between experience and general CPD



Based on the results of the correlation analysis, it is evident that the general CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers exhibit a positive correlation with their experience. The greater the experience of EFL teachers, the more they engage in the specified general CPD practices. Therefore, in response to research question one, the findings suggest that Saudi EFL teachers with more teaching experience tend to prioritise their CPD practices.

4.3. Section C: Usage of SNS for CPD

Introduction

Section C of the questionnaire was designed to assess whether Saudi EFL teachers were utilising SNS for their CPD. If they were, this section aimed to determine which SNS platform was the most commonly used and the reasons behind its popularity among Saudi teachers. The degree of SNS use for CPD was measured by assessing the mean of the frequency and duration of SNS use for professional purposes. This section addresses the second and third research

questions of this study, which involve analysing the most frequently used SNS platforms for CPD among Saudi EFL teachers. The extent of SNS use for CPD made up the third research question, and the data for this was collected in section C of the questionnaire. The differences in SNS usage for CPD might be attributed to the level of educational institutions of the participants. Because there might be variations in the responses and behaviours of participants based on if they were from primary, intermediary, and secondary educational institutions as opposed to those from higher education (HE) institutions like universities.

Question 1. Use of SNS

The participants were asked about their use of SNS, and all of them responded as 'yes.' Subsequently, participants were asked to specify the purpose of their use of SNS. Out of the total 182 participants, 26 selected 'personal use only' and, as a result, they were excluded from this study. The remaining 156 participants indicated they used SNS for professional purposes or for both personal and professional use, therefore, additional questions were asked to these participants.

4.3.1. Most used SNS

In this study, the 156 participants who indicated using SNS for professional purposes were asked to specify which particular SNS platforms they used for their CPD. Ten different sites were listed, including Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, WordPress, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, SlideShare, and LinkedIn. Participants were also given the option to specify any other site not listed. They could select more than one site from the provided options. The results revealed Twitter was the most commonly used SNS, with 143 participants selecting it, followed by YouTube with 97 participants. 45 participants indicated WhatsApp, 17 were using Instagram, 7 reported using LinkedIn, 5 marked Facebook, 1 participant chose Myspace, 3 selected Prezi, 10 opted for Pinterest, 3 chose SlideShare, 12 indicated Snapchat, and 8 reported using other sites. The data is summarised in Table 4.8.

SNS	Frequency
Twitter	143
Facebook	5
Instagram	17
LinkedIn	7
Snapchat	12

WhatsApp	45
Prezi	3
YouTube	97
Myspace	1
Pinterest	10
Others	8
SlideShare	3

Table 4.8 Frequency of use of Social Networking Sites

The most frequently used SNS, as indicated by the frequency table, is Twitter. Out of the 156 participants, a substantial majority of 143 (91.6%) reported using Twitter for their CPD. Second, in terms of popularity is YouTube, with 97 participants (62.8%) using it for CPD, followed by WhatsApp, with 45 participants (28.8%) using it for CPD.

Further insights into the reasons for choosing a specific SNS platform are provided in detail within the interviews, and these findings are summarised in Chapter 5.

4.3.2 Frequency of the use of SNS for CPD

In Section C, the participants were questioned about their use of SNS and the frequency of their visits to particular sites. Responses regarding the frequency of use were categorised into the following groups: Every day, once a week, once every two weeks, once a month, or less often.

Table 4.9 summarises the calculated frequencies of responses.

Use of SNS	Frequency (%)
Everyday	62 (39.7%)
Once a week	73 (46.8%)
Once every two weeks	19 (12.2%)
Once a month	2 (1.3%)

Less often	-
Total	156

Table 4.9 Frequency of use of SNS for CPD

Among the 156 participants, 46.8% (73) participants reported using SNS once a week for their CPD, 39.7% (62) stated they use it daily, while 12.2% (1) participant mentioned using SNS once every two weeks, and two participants claimed to use it once a month. Therefore, based on the quantitative data analysis for research question three, it can be inferred that Saudi EFL teachers use SNS for CPD at least once a week.

4.3.3. Duration of use of SNS

To assess the extent of SNS use and the trend of its use, participants were asked about the duration for which they have been using SNS. Responses were collected based on the provided options: less than a year, 1-2 years, 2-4 years, 4-6 years, 6-8 years, or more than 8 years. The marked answers to these questions are summarised in Table 4.10.

Duration of SNS use for CPD	Frequency (%)
1-2 years	5 (3.2%)
2-4 years	20 (12.8%)
4-6 year	62 (39.7%)
6-8 years	40 (25.6%)
More than 8 years	29 (18.6%)
Total	156 (100%)

Table 4.10 Duration of use of SNS for CPD

Based on the collected data, the most chosen option was 4-6 years, with 62 participants (39.7%) indicating that they have been using SNS for the last 4-6 years. 40 participants (25.6%) stated

that they have been using SNS for the last 6-8 years, while 29 participants (18.6%) reported using SNS for more than 8 years. Only 20 participants (12.8%) chose the option 2-4 years, and the remaining 5 participants (3.2%) mentioned that they have been using SNS for the last 1-2 years.

4.3.4. Teacher Core knowledge

In Section C, six questions were designed to assess the participants' core knowledge regarding class management and new classroom trends. Teachers' core knowledge was evaluated based on their own perspectives, using a 5-point Likert scale. The median values for the responses to these six questions were calculated through frequency analysis using SPSS. The summary of the median values for teachers' core knowledge is presented in Table 4.11.

Teachers' core knowledge		My awareness of new trends in classroom instruction	I am highly knowledgeable of methods for managing the behaviours of my students	I know what PD programmes are provided by the government	I know how to conduct independent research	My English proficiency is higher	I am aware of how linguistic phenomena works.
	Missing	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Median	4	4	3	4	3	4

Table 4.11 Median value of teachers' core knowledge

Furthermore, IBM SPSS (Analyse- Descriptive -Frequencies) was used to perform the calculations for the frequencies and percentile of the collected data, as demonstrated in Table 4.12.

Section B	Statement	Items	Frequency and percentile				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q1	I am aware of new classroom trends	Frequency	1	32	37	76	7
		Percentage	0.7	20.9	24.2	49.7	4.6
		Cumulative Percentage	0.7	21.6	45.8	95.4	100
Q2	I know methods of	Frequency	1	16	33	95	8
		Percentage	0.7	10.5	21.6	62.1	5.2

	managing student behaviors	Cumulative Percentage	0.7	11.1	32.7	94.8	100
Q3	I know PD programs and entry requirement	Frequency	0	49	43	59	2
		Percentage	0	32	28.1	38.6	1.3
		Cumulative Percentage	0	32	60.1	98.7	100
Q4	I know how to conduct independent research	Frequency	0	11	18	117	7
		Percentage	0	7.2	11.8	76.5	4.6
		Cumulative Percentage	0	7.2	19	95.4	100
Q5	My English proficiency is higher	Frequency	0	73	50	25	5
		Percentage	0	47.7	32.7	16.3	3.3
		Cumulative Percentage	0	47.7	80.4	96.7	100
Q6	I know English linguistic phenomena	Frequency	1	8	72	67	5
		Percentage	0.7	5.2	47.1	43.8	3.3
		Cumulative Percentage	0.7	5.9	52.9	96.7	100

Table 4.12 Frequency of responses - Teachers' core knowledge

The section on core teaching knowledge reveals several insights. In question 1, which assesses a teacher's awareness of new classroom trends, the median score was 4, with 49.7% (76%) of participants in agreement. Question two, which focuses on a teacher's knowledge of student behaviour management, also had a median score of 4, with 95 (62.1%) EFL teachers agreeing that they possess the necessary knowledge for managing student behaviour in the classroom. For question three, which pertains to awareness of Government-initiated PD programmes and the enrolment procedure, the median was 3, with 59 (38%) participants indicating that they have some idea about these programmes. On the other hand, 117 participants agreed that they know how to conduct independent research, resulting in a median value of 4 for this question. Question 5 had a median value of 3, suggesting that the majority of teachers did not consider their English proficiency to be above the required level. Lastly, participants were asked about their understanding of English linguistic phenomena, with 67 participants agreeing and 5

participants strongly agreeing. This indicates that the majority felt they had a grasp of English linguistic phenomena.

Overall, this section of the questionnaire highlights that EFL teachers generally perceive themselves to possess core teaching knowledge. The analysis shows that most teachers have knowledge related to classroom management, classroom trends, PD programmes, and the required skills. However, the area where teachers believe they lack sufficient proficiency is English language proficiency, and they believe that SNS could potentially help in this regard.

4.4. SNS usage in EFL teaching and CPD

In the previous section of the questionnaire, it was established that the majority of EFL teachers use SNS for professional purposes. They have been using SNS for a minimum of 2-4 years and typically use it once a week. In alignment with the research question of this study, this segment of the questionnaire is designed to assess whether participants use SNS for their CPD. To evaluate their use of SNS for CPD, ten questions were asked, and responses were gathered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree.' The frequencies and median values of these responses were analysed using SPSS, and the data is presented in the following Table 4.13.

		Social Networking.	Follow educational officials	To answer student queries	To watch educational content	Share knowledge with EFL teachers	Feedback from colleagues	Search new ideas	Scan news	Motivating Students	Inspiration and creativity
Purpose of the use of SNS	Missing	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Median	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Table 4.13 Median calculation of responses-Purpose of using SNS

The frequencies of responses are calculated by the help of SPSS analysis and are illustrated in Table 4.14.

Section	Statement	Items	Frequency and percentile				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q1		Frequency	2	6	5	133	7
		Percentage	1.3	3.9	3.3	86.9	4.6

	SNS to connect with professional	Cumulative Percentage	1.3	5.2	8.5	95.4	100
Q2	SNS to follow educational officials	Frequency	0	31	1	111	10
		Percentage	0	20.3	0.7	72.5	6.5
		Cumulative Percentage	0	20.3	20.9	93.5	100
Q3	SNS to answer student feedback	Frequency	0	20	17	109	7
		Percentage	0	13.1	11.1	71.2	4.6
		Cumulative Percentage	0	13.1	24.2	95.4	100
Q4	SNS to search educational videos	Frequency	0	0	0	138	15
		Percentage	0	0	0	90.2	9.8
		Cumulative Percentage	0	0	0	90.2	100
Q5	SNS to share knowledge with colleagues	Frequency	0	2	9	130	12
		Percentage	0	1.3	5.9	85.0	7.8
		Cumulative Percentage	0	1.3	7.2	92.2	100
Q6	SNS to get colleague feedback	Frequency	0	7	19	116	11
		Percentage	0	4.6	12.4	75.8	7.2
		Cumulative Percentage	0	4.6	17.0	92.8	100
Q7	SNS to find new teaching method	Frequency	0	4	4	127	18
		Percentage	0	2.6	2.6	83	11.8
		Cumulative Percentage	0	2.6	5.2	88.2	100
Q8	SNS to scan for recent news	Frequency	0	15	14	115	9
		Percentage	0	9.8	9.2	75.2	5.9
		Cumulative Percentage	0	9.8	19	94.1	100
Q9		Frequency	0	3	3	133	14
		Percentage	0	2.0	2.0	86.9	9.2

	SNS for motivating students	Cumulative Percentage	0	2.0	4.0	90.8	100
Q10	SNS for creativity and inspiration	Frequency	0	7	19	116	11
		Percentage	0	4.6	12.4	75.8	7.2
		Cumulative Percentage	0	4.6	17	92.8	100

Table 4.14 Frequency of responses- Purpose of using SNS for CPD

This section of the questionnaire aimed to address Research Question Four in this study. Question Four sought to investigate the purposes for which EFL teachers use SNS in their CPD. The participants were presented with ten scenarios, and their responses were analysed accordingly.

In the first question, the participants were asked if they use SNS to connect with other EFL teachers. The median response value was 4, with 133 participants (86.9%) in agreement, and 7 (4.6%) strongly agreeing. In the second question, participants were asked if they use SNS to follow educational officials. A total of 111 participants (72.5%) agreed, and 10 participants (6.5%) strongly agreed that they use SNS to stay updated with educational professionals. For question three, the calculated median value was 4, with 109 participants (71.2%) agreeing, and 7 participants (4.6%) strongly agreeing that they use SNS to gather feedback from their students. In question four, which focused on using SNS to watch educational videos and tutorials, the median value was 4. Here, 138 participants (90.2%) agreed, and 15 participants (9.8%) strongly agreed.

Question five inquired about the use of SNS for sharing knowledge with fellow EFL teachers. In response, 130 participants (85%) agreed, and 15 participants (7.8%) strongly agreed. Question six examined into whether professionals use SNS to seek feedback from their colleagues on their work. A total of 116 participants (75.8%) agreed, and 11 participants (7.2%) strongly agreed. For question seven, 127 participants (83%) agreed, and 18 participants (11.8%) strongly agreed that they use SNS to discover new teaching methods. In question eight, 115 participants (75.2%) agreed, and 9 participants (5.9%) strongly agreed that they use SNS to stay updated with recent news. Regarding question nine, an overwhelming 96% of EFL teachers stated they use SNS to motivate their students. Lastly, 83% of the EFL teachers agreed that they use SNS for inspiration and creativity.

The data analysis reveals that most EFL teachers utilise SNS for their CPD practices. This involves using social media to improve professional development, exchange knowledge with peers, stay updated on research and teaching methods, and foster creativity in teaching.

4.5. Correlation between SNS usage for CPD with duration of usage

In IBM SPSS, the Pearson correlation test was employed to investigate the connection between CPD practices and the frequency and duration of SNS use. To conduct this specific test in the SPSS ‘analyse’ window, the correlate option was selected, and the bivariate correlation test was applied. In the statistics window of the bivariate correlation, Pearson correlation was selected, and the results are presented in Table 4.15 below.

	CPD Aspect	Pearson Correlation	Significance
How often you use SNS for CPD	SNS to connect with professionals	0.418	.000
	SNS to follow educational officials	0.662	.000
	SNS to answer student feedback	0.665	.000
	SNS to search educational videos	0.497	.000
	SNS to share knowledge with colleagues	0.499	.000
	SNS to get colleague feedback	0.535	.000
	SNS to find new teaching methods	0.541	.000
	SNS to scan for recent news	0.605	.000
	SNS for creativity and inspiration	0.601	.000

Table 4.15 Pearson Correlation

Based on the correlation table (Table 4.15), it is evident that there is a significant positive correlation between the use of SNS for CPD and the frequency of use. ‘CPD Aspect’ column in Table 4.15 represents a specific use for which SNS is used for professional development. ‘Pearson Correlation’ column in Table 4.15 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient for each aspect of CPD. A positive correlation coefficient (e.g., 0.418, 0.662, 0.665, 0.497, 0.499, 0.535, 0.541, 0.605, 0.601) shows a positive relationship. This means that as the frequency and duration of SNS usage increase, the engagement in that particular CPD aspect also tends to increase. ‘Significance’ column in Table 4.15 shows the significance level, i.e. p-value associated with each correlation coefficient and all the p-values in Table 4.15 are shown as ‘.000’ which suggests that the correlations are highly significant. This means that teachers who

use SNS daily tend to use it more for CPD purposes compared to those who use SNS once a week or less frequently. This suggests that an overall increase in the extent of SNS use among Saudi EFL teachers can also lead to a greater utilisation of SNS for CPD.

4.6. Conclusion

There are five primary research questions addressed in this study, and the data from the questionnaire has provided insights into several of them through quantitative analysis. Regarding the first research question, it was observed that the general CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers included arranging Zoom meetings with knowledgeable individuals, exchanging knowledge, and reading non-academic digital blogs. However, other CPD practices mentioned in the questionnaire were not significantly followed by Saudi EFL teachers. Concerning the second research question, it was found that the majority of Saudi EFL teachers use SNS for CPD. Twitter emerged as the most commonly used SNS by Saudi EFL teachers (143 teachers), followed by YouTube as the second most used (97 teachers), and WhatsApp as the third most used (45 teachers). While the questionnaire did not capture the reasons for selecting a particular SNS, this information was obtained through interviews.

In response to the third research question about the extent of use, it was noted that most teachers use SNS once a week for CPD. Saudi EFL teachers primarily employ SNS for professional purposes, significantly contributing to their CPD and professional growth. Most Saudi teachers possess core knowledge related to their course and classroom management. The fourth questionnaire inquired about the purpose of using SNS, with ten reasons provided. Approximately 80% of the participants agreed with all of these, and all teachers concurred they use SNS to access videos for classroom content. While the fifth research question was not explicitly addressed in interviews, it is summarised in Chapter 5. Lastly, the duration and frequency of SNS usage were found to be factors contributing to the enhancement of CPD among Saudi EFL teachers.

Chapter 5

Results of Interviews

5.1. Introduction:

The findings of interviews are presented in this chapter. The purpose of interviews in this study is to obtain Saudi EFL teachers' viewpoints about using SNS. Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions of SNS constitute one type of qualitative data. The information centres on the use of SNS by Saudi EFL teachers for CPD. The professionals shared their opinions regarding SNS in the findings. The professionals' expectations of potential benefits from SNS are examined. The challenges associated with adopting SNS for CPD among EFL teachers are also discussed. Participants offered insights about the training they would like to receive for potential solutions. EFL teachers were asked about the extent to which their social media posts contributed to networking and information sharing, as well as their willingness to allow their posts to be used for this research. Some teachers granted permission to evaluate their social media posts, and these were included in the study. Appendix B contains the transcripts of the interviews.

5.2. Findings from the Semi-structured interviews:

This study looks at how Saudi EFL teachers use social media for professional growth. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used to gather the data. 182 people were given an online questionnaire in the first round of data collection. They were also queried about their strategies used to advance their professional development. Further questions were posed to the participants regarding their use of SNS for CPD. In Chapter 4, the questionnaire data is evaluated. Participants were asked if they were open to taking part in a virtual interview at the end of the questionnaire. EFL teachers were asked if they would be prepared to participate in discussions after the questionnaire. Participants who agreed were interviewed using Zoom; ten were men, and five were women. The participants underwent a semi-structured, open-ended interview. Questions were asked in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of working EFL teachers who are already using SNS to advance their careers. While there were several semi-structured questions, where answers were ambiguous, teachers were also prompted with leading questions to better understand their perspectives.

The interview responses were transcribed and reviewed by the researcher. The interviews were transcribed and compiled in a document in sequential order. The qualitative analysis of the interview data was carried out using MAXQDA software. The transcribed interviews were

added to the MAXQDA document section; then, codes were formulated based on the questions asked by the interviewees. Seven themes were generated according to the interview questions, and based on these themes, codes and sub-codes were developed. Maxmaps and tables were designed to illustrate visually the strength of specific principles and subcodes. The qualitative research process and analysis results are described extensively in this chapter. In the third phase, the social media accounts of ten participants were analysed to see if they use SNS for professional growth. The analysis of Tweets and posts by EFL teachers is presented in Chapter 6.

5.3. Themes, Codes and Sub-Codes:

Qualitative data gathered through interviews were assessed and analysed using thematic analysis. For the thematic analysis of the data, the MAXQDA software was employed. The transcribed interviews were uploaded to the software. Then, the codes were generated by selecting particular sentences of the interviewees. The researcher categorised the open-ended responses from the fifteen participants into principles, sub-codes, and significant themes. Teachers who used SNS for their CPD were selected and asked multiple questions. The themes designed were based on the research questions and objectives of the study. Table 5.1 summarises the themes generated through the interviews.

Table 5.1: Summary of themes generated via Interviews

Themes	Code	Sub-code
General CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers	Familiarity of CPD	Yes
		No
	Qualification	Graduation
		Masters
		PhD
	Experience	Years of teaching English as a Foreign Language
SNS Saudi English teachers use to enhance their CPD	Do Saudi teachers use SNS for CPD	Opinion based on participant perspective
	Most used SNS for CPD enhancement Frequency of using SNS	Twitter
		YouTube
		Facebook
		WhatsApp
		ResearchGate
		Telegram
		Instagram
		LinkedIn

	Is SNS valid for CPD	Skype
		Google Plus
		Yes
		No
Purpose of using particular SNS for CPD	Twitter	Convenient
		Professional growth
		Socialising
	YouTube	Learning
		Class activities
	Telegram	Helpful for teaching practices
		Learning
	Facebook	Socialising
The Extent of Usage by Saudi Teachers	How often do you use SNS for CPD	Daily
		Weekly
		Less often
	The reason of using SNS for CPD	Covid Pandemic
		Saudi Vision 2030
Barriers & Problems in Usage	Problems while using SNS	SNS are not backed by the government.
		Shortage of time
		Authenticity
		Distracting
		Difficult in use
	Barriers	Limited knowledge and time
		Lack of Internet accessibility
		Expensive
		Hesitancy
		Absence of basic training
Training	Got any Training	Yes
		No
	Need of training	Yes
		No
Recommendations	Recommended by someone	Yes
		No
	I will recommend it to someone.	Yes
		No

The thematic framework output by MAXQDA is displayed in Figure 5.1 below. The Maxmap utilised the covariance model, where the intersecting lines represented the covariance, and the sequence number indicated the frequency of variance.

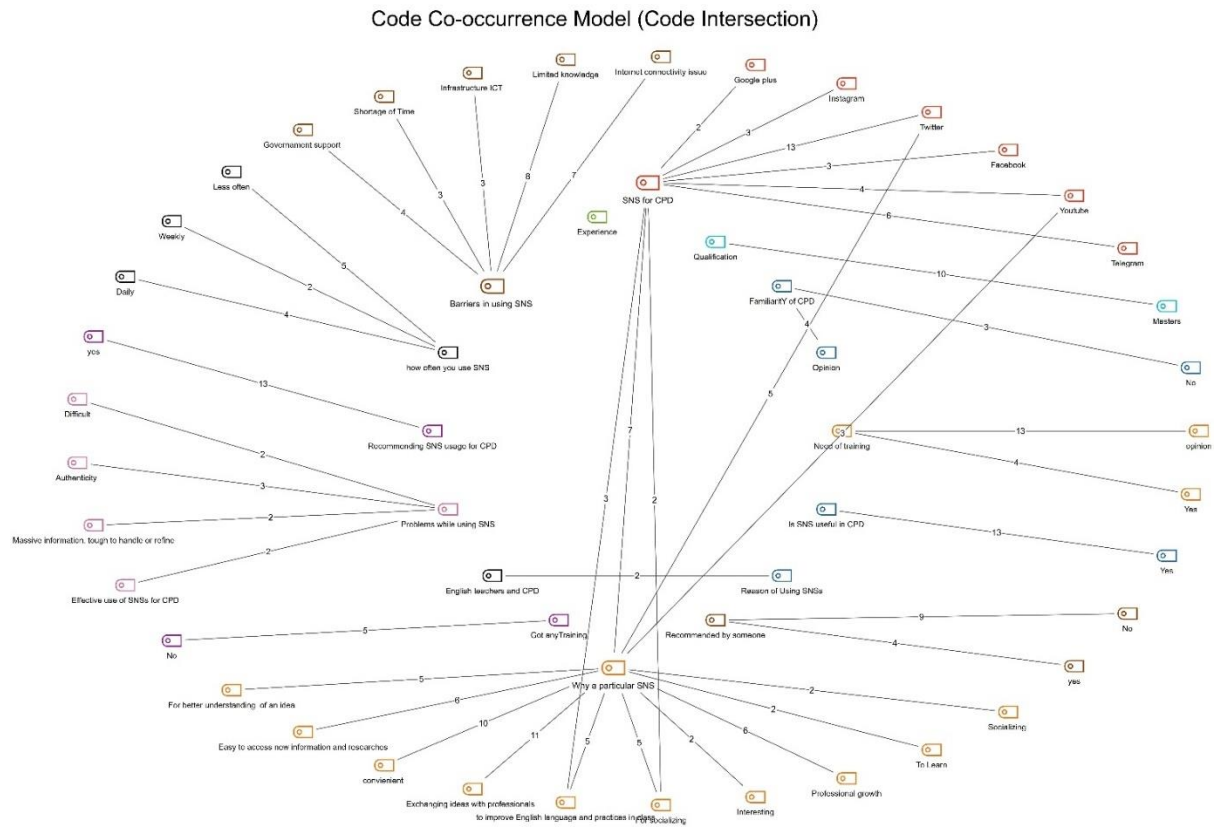


Figure 5.1 The summary of themes, codes and sub-codes of thematic analysis

The qualitative analysis was conducted using MAXQDA, as depicted in the figure above. This figure shows the connections between the interview themes and the reference statement. The size of each dot corresponds to the number of references related to a particular theme. A larger dot shows more comments related to a specific theme.

5.4. General CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers:

This section focuses on the first theme from the interviews, which includes the opinions and views of all participants. It focuses on the general and routine practices of Saudi EFL teachers for their CPD, addressing research question one of the study. The general rules are categorised into three groups: 1) General familiarity with CPD, 2) Level of Education, and 3) Teaching Experience. The theme and sub-categories are summarised in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2. Overview of General CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers

Theme 1: General CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers			
Code/Subcode	Definition	Source	Reference

Familiarity of CPD	Comments which refer to the general knowledge of CPD	Interview	15 participants
Qualification	Comments which refer to the importance of higher education in CPD	Interview	15 participants
Experience	Comments which refer to the importance of Teaching experience in CPD	Interview	15 participants

5.4.1. Familiarity with CPD:

This research primarily focused on the continuing professional development (CPD) of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. It assessed their approach to CPD, the methods typically employed, and the current role and use of SNS for CPD. The researcher asked the interviewees about their knowledge of CPD in order to establish an understanding of their familiarity with it. The results are depicted in the figure below.

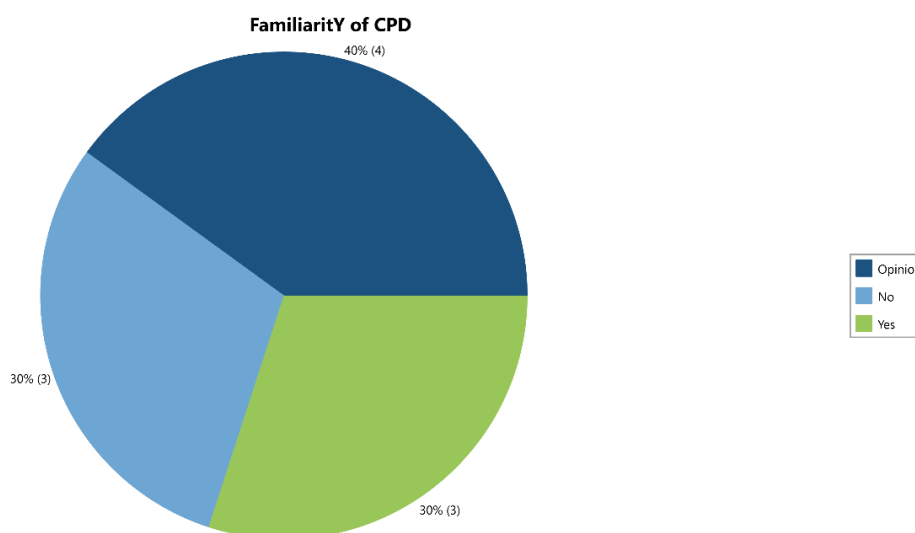


Figure 5.2. The graphical representation of familiarity of CPD of EFL Teachers

Ten out of fifteen participants replied to the question of their familiarity with CPD. As per the recorded responses, four teachers said they had no idea about CPD; one responded only as yes, he had an idea, and the other five gave their opinion on their understanding of SNS. A respondent said, “Yes, CPD relates to constantly updating skills and core competencies, and in my opinion, both formal and informal training has a tremendous role in improving one’s CPD” (FP2, Interview content, Pos. 558). Another respondent quoted it as, “Yes, I believe it is about how to excel professionally and to equip teachers with vital skills needed to progress in their teaching career” (FP4, Interview content, Pos. 613). The opinion of the male participant stated, “I believe CPD is a practice to become an expert in the teaching profession by continuously developing and updating one’s skillset and competencies” (MP6, Interview content, Pos. 344). Another reported it as “I guess to refine one’s skills and capabilities in their professions (MP9, Interview content, Pos. 457).

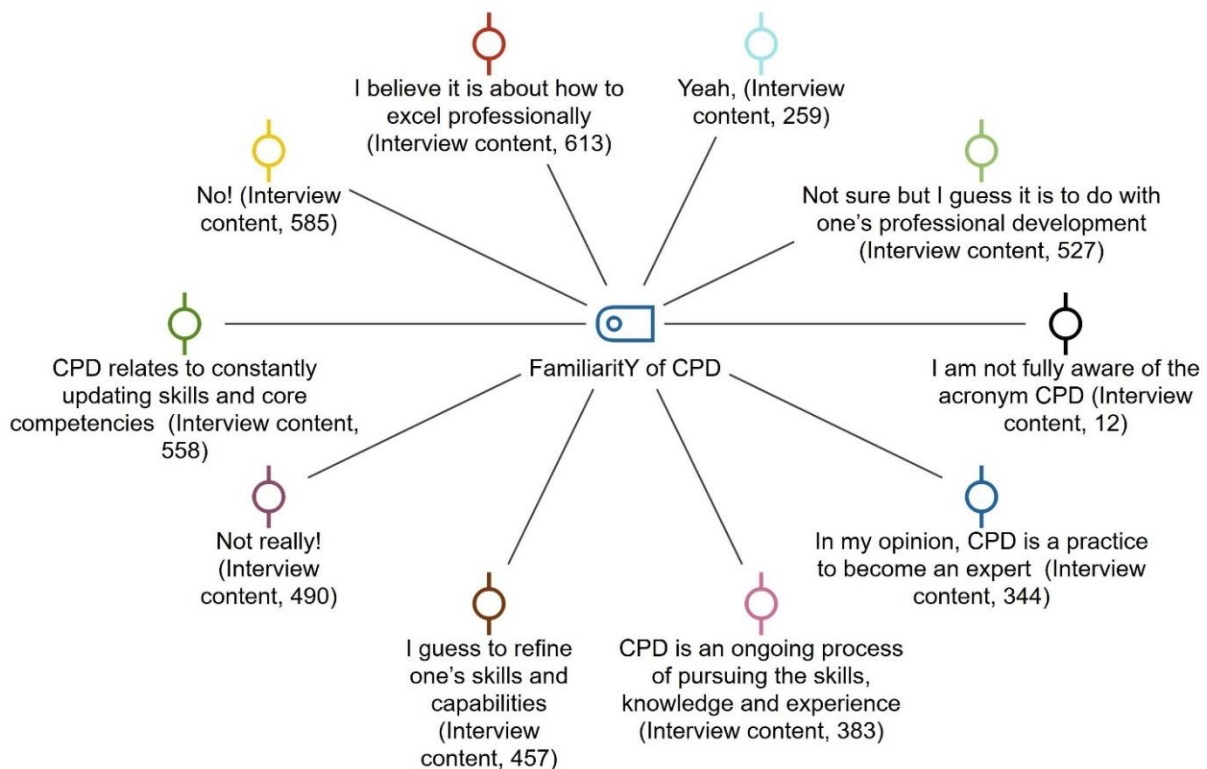


Figure 5.3. Maxmap of the code- familiarity of SNS for CPD

5.4.2. Qualification of Saudi EFL teachers:

The familiarity question was the first question of this study and researcher interviewed fifteen EFL teachers based on their consent provided in the questionnaire. After the salutations and

greetings, the next question asked of the participant was related to their qualification. The results are shown in the figure below.

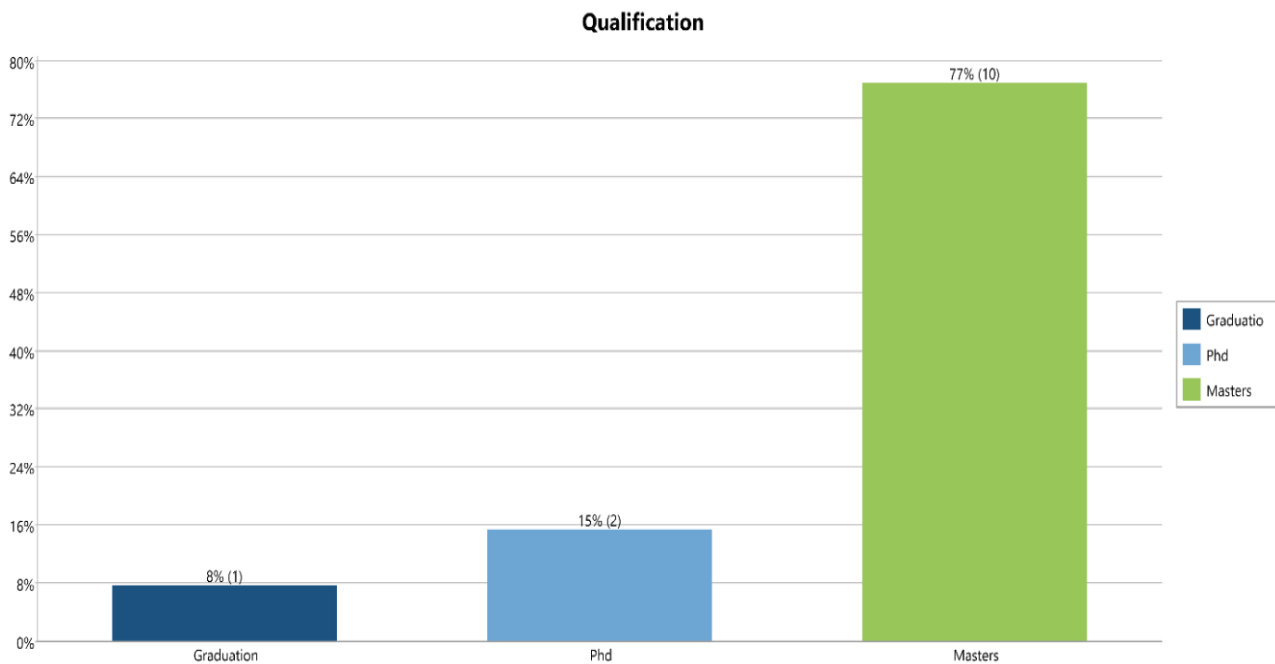


Figure 5.4. Qualification of Saudi EFL teachers

Out of the fifteen participants, ten had a master's degree in English, two had a PhD, and one had a bachelor's degree. Two participants did not disclose their qualification details. The data has been presented as a Maxmap, where the thickness of the line shows the frequency of responses and the most commonly mentioned code. The map shows that many Saudi EFL teachers pursue master's degrees to enhance their English language abilities. When inquiring about CPD practices, only one participant mentioned obtaining official certification, as stated, "I have also got TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate." (FP3, Interview content, Pos. 589). The teachers' teaching experience and qualifications can help determine their level of expertise in EFL and can also be linked to their general CPD practices.

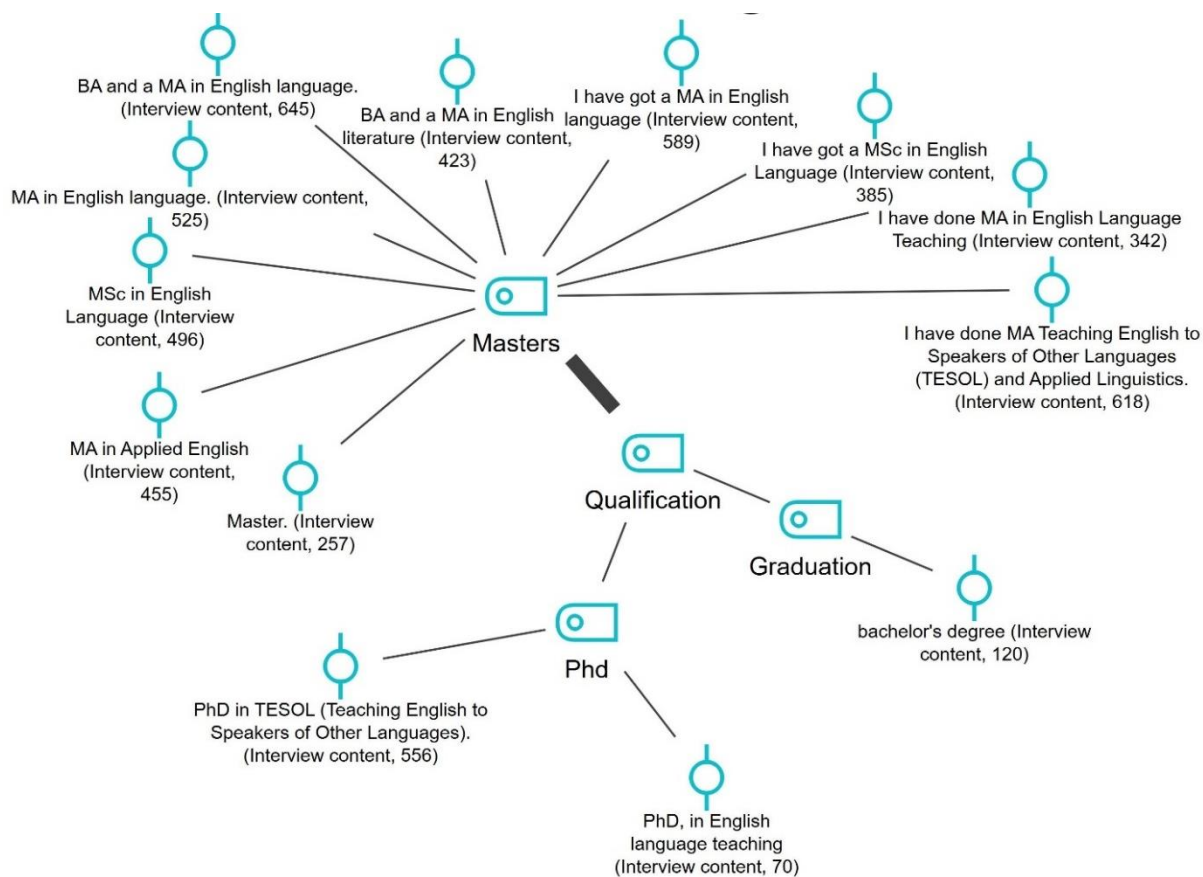


Figure 5.5 Maxmap of qualification of Saudi EFL teachers

5.4.3. Teaching Experience in Years:

To understand EFL teachers' English language teaching expertise, the researcher asked about their years of teaching experience. Out of the 15 participants, only 10 provided responses to this specific question. The least experienced EFL teacher had one year of experience, while the most experienced had nine years. One teacher had 1 year of experience, another had 1.5 years, one was in their second year, three had 3 years, two had 4 years, one had 8 years, and only one had 9 years of experience. The data is presented in Figure 5.6.

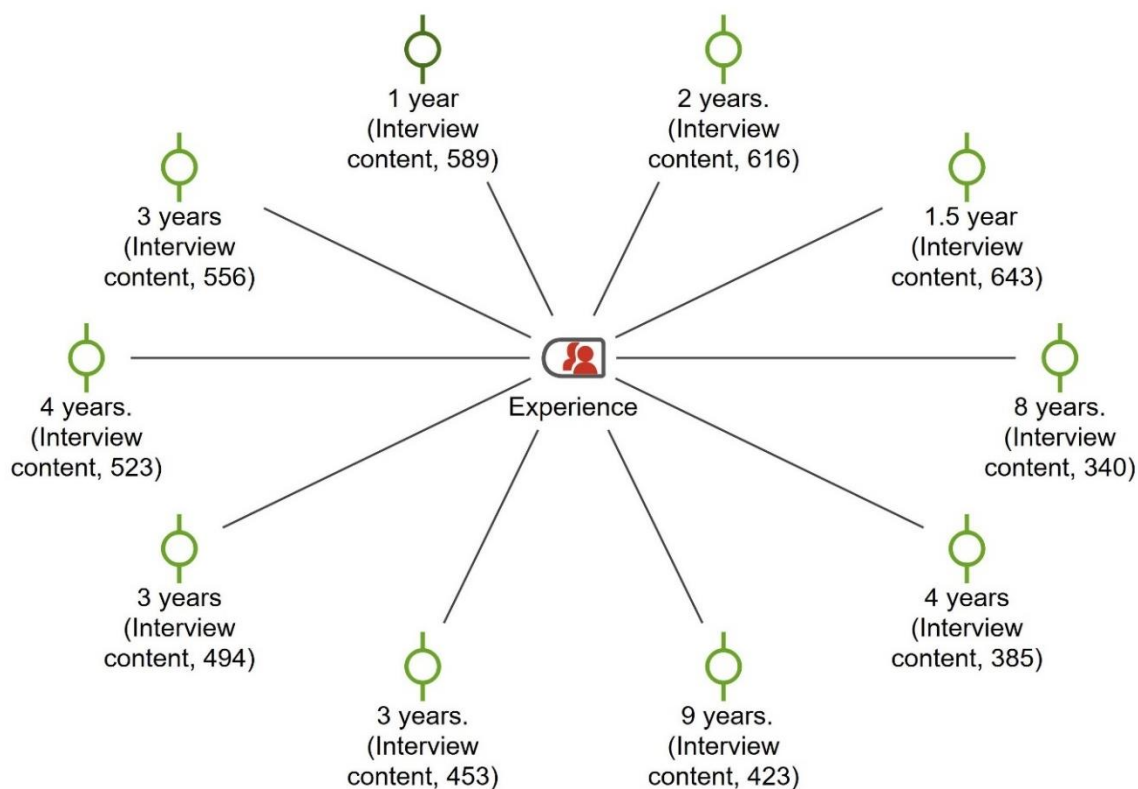


Figure 5.6 Maxmap of Teaching experience of Saudi EFL teachers

5.5. SNS used by Saudi English teachers to enhance their CPD

The second theme arising from the interviews concerned the use of SNS by EFL teachers to enhance their CPD. Researcher asked the participants which SNS they used to enhance their CPD. In this category, all participants responded positively, stating that they use SNS in some capacity for their CPD. This theme was further categorised into two sub-themes: 1) opinions regarding the use of SNS by Saudi teachers, and 2) the specific SNS platforms they utilise for CPD. These codes are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Overview of SNS used by Saudi English teachers to enhance their CPD

Theme 2: SNS used by Saudi English teachers to enhance their CPD			
Code/Subcode	Definition	Source	Reference
General use of SNS by Saudi EFL teachers for CPD	Comments which refer to the use of SNS by Saudi EFL teachers, especially for CPD	Interview	15 participants

The most commonly used SNS in CPD	Comments which refer to the use of SNS, especially for CPD	Interview	15 participants
The usefulness of SNS in CPD	Comments which refer to the benefit of SNS, especially in CPD	Interview	15 participants

5.5.1. Overview of the use of SNS

Various social networking sites can be valuable for CPD. When asked, professionals had different views on Saudi EFL teachers' use of SNS for CPD. Most participants believed that EFL teachers are now relying on social media for their professional development, but there were varying viewpoints expressed. The results are summarised in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4 The comments of interviewees for the use of SNS

Code	Beginning	End	Segment
English teachers and CPD	44	44	If teachers have a networking site, I post my findings in a specific area to that account. And when that account is shared with my colleagues, it can be helpful.
English teachers and CPD	393	393	I cannot be definite in saying the same about other teachers. Still, based on my experience, there is a growing trend in my school and specifically, English language teachers use Twitter, Google Plus, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.
English teachers and CPD	465	465	I am still trying to figure that out. There is a general hesitancy among the English language teachers.
English teachers and CPD	502	502	I will say there was much resistance a few years back as a digital mode of teaching,
English teachers and CPD	502	502	Due to COVID-19, when traditional classroom teaching was replaced by online education, SNS have been widely used by teachers, including English language teachers, since then.
English teachers and CPD	535	535	My male colleagues are more experienced in using SNS, and the reason for such a statement is that the number of male teachers in schools is higher than that of female teachers.
English teachers and CPD	564	564	I don't think so.
English teachers and CPD	566	566	I don't think that SNS are extensively used by Saudi English language teachers.
English teachers and CPD	595	595	The Saudi Ministry of Education has introduced various reforms so schools can comply with the goals stated in 'Saudi Vision 2030.'
English teachers and CPD	595	595	In a few years, the usage of SNS for teachers' CPD will increase, but I am not definite about the current use.

English teachers and CPD	622	622	I think so! Saudi English language teachers are still learning to use multimedia and social media technologies.
English teachers and CPD	622	622	English language teachers are both educators and administrators. They suggest discussion topics and share links to teaching materials.
English teachers and CPD	649	649	I cannot be definite about that. I mean, Saudi English language teachers use SNS, but not sure how extensively do they use these SNS.

5.5.2. Most used SNS for CPD:

Upon inquiring about which SNS is used most frequently by the participants, they primarily provided a list of social media platforms. Almost all of them mentioned Twitter as the preferred choice, as it is commonly used by Saudi EFL teachers for their CPD. According to the professionals, Twitter is a versatile platform that aids in expanding their reach. Twitter was the most commonly used platform among participants, although other apps and sites were mentioned. Some other SNS mentioned included YouTube, Facebook, Telegram, and ResearchGate. The results are presented in Figure 5.7 below.

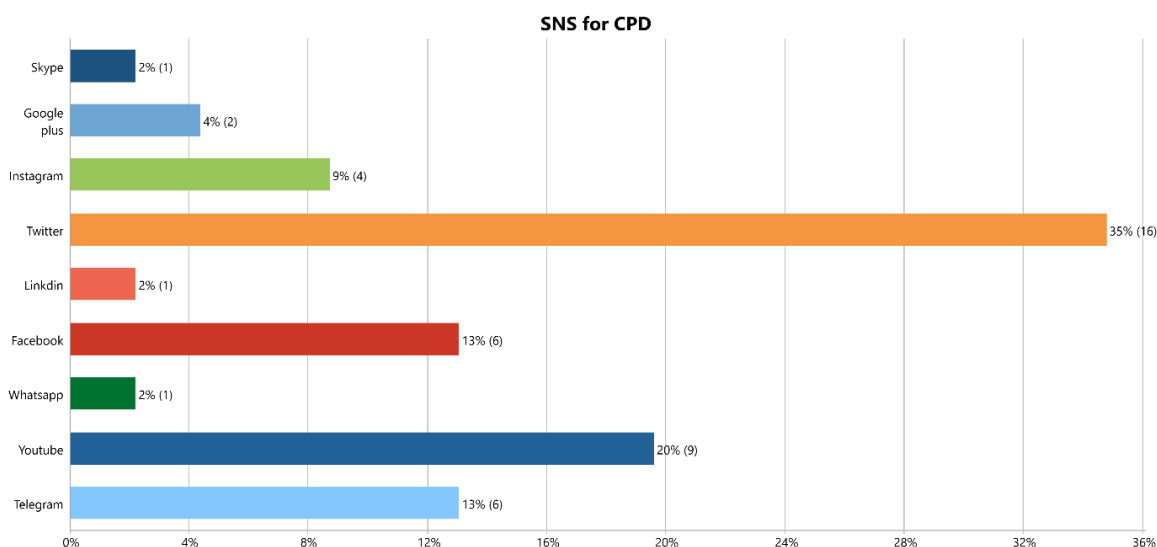


Figure 5.7 Graphical representation of SNS that are used by Saudi EFL teachers for CPD

Upon conducting an in-depth review of interviews with Saudi EFL teachers, it was evident that Twitter is the most commonly used SNS for CPD, and all professionals find it to be more practical than any other SNS. The frequency of responses was assessed, and the results, as depicted in the Maxmap, showed that all 15 participants utilised Twitter as a primary source for CPD. This finding aligns with the results of the quantitative analysis presented in Chapter 4. Additionally, nine participants mentioned using YouTube, six mentioned Facebook and

Telegram, four mentioned Instagram, two mentioned Google Plus, one mentioned WhatsApp, one mentioned Skype, and only one participant mentioned using LinkedIn as a source for CPD.

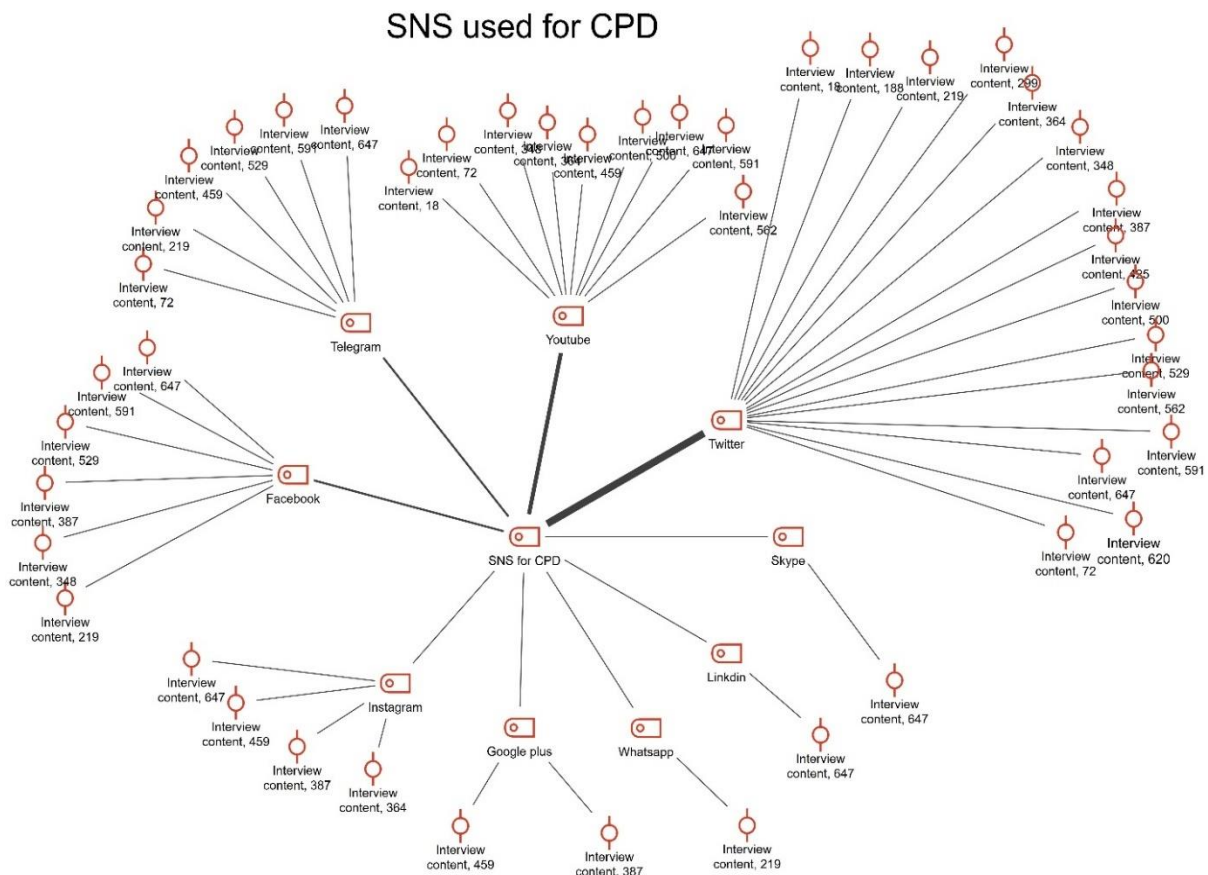


Figure 5.8 The Maxmap of the most used SNS for CPD

5.5.3. Usefulness of SNS in CPD:

In this theme, the researcher asked the participants if they believed SNS is useful for CPD. Building upon the previous findings that all participants are using SNS, it was determined that 13 participants believed it to be beneficial, one responded no, and one participant did not provide an answer.

It has lots of helpful information. I used it for my professional development and found it very useful. Because I can easily access it anytime and anywhere if there is internet [laughs], and that's one of its advantages (MP3, Interview content, Pos. 136).

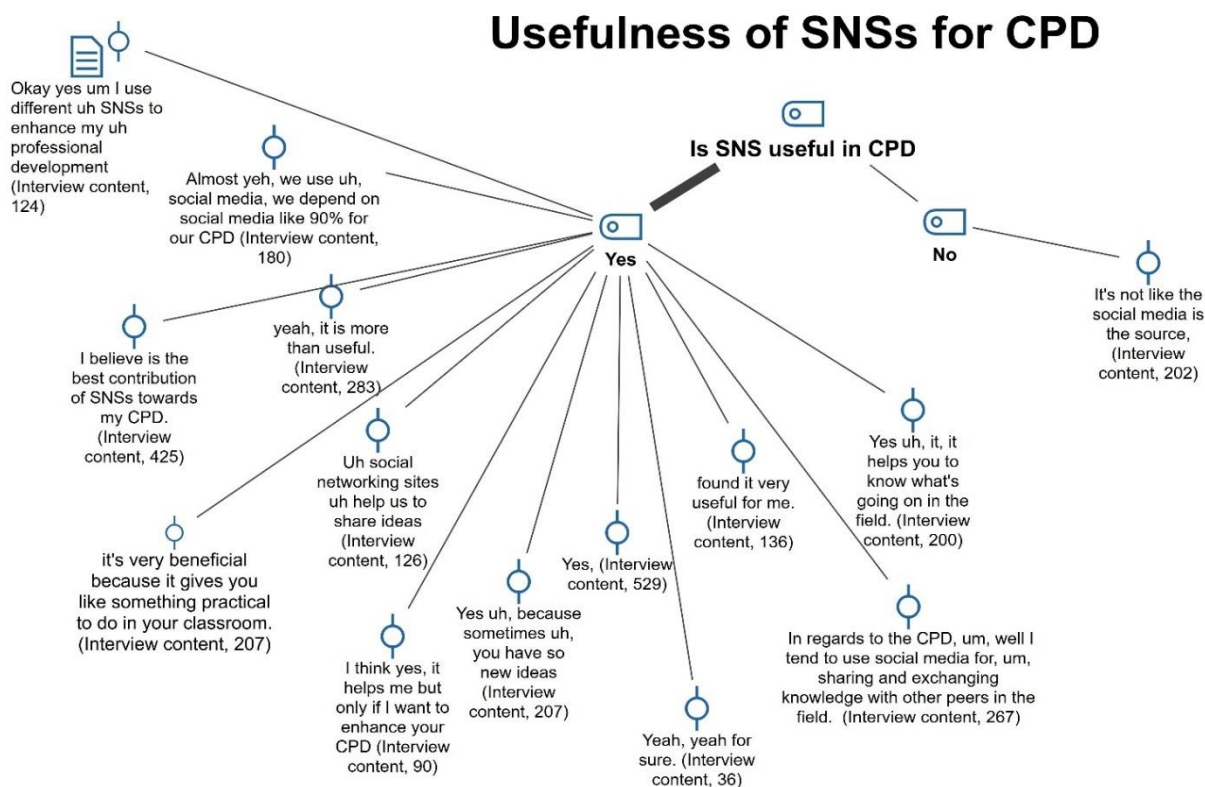


Figure 5.9 Maxmap of the usefulness of SNS for CPD as stated by Saudi EFL teachers

5.6. Extent of SNS usage:

This theme focused on the extent of EFL teachers' usage of SNS for CPD. Within this theme, two codes were identified: Code 10, which examined how often they use SNS, and Code 20, which investigated why they use particular SNS for CPD. In terms of the frequency of SNS usage, it was further sub-coded as daily, weekly, or less often. Building upon the previous theme, the second code aimed to uncover the reasons behind the more prominent use of Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook for CPD. The data is summarised in table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5 Overview of the extent of SNS used for CPD by EFL teachers

Theme 3: The extent of SNS use to enhance CPD			
Code/Subcode	Definition	Source	Reference
Frequency of SNS use	Comments which refer to the frequency of use of SNS, especially for CPD	Interview	15 participants
Reason for using SNS	Comments which refer to the basis of the use of SNS, especially for CPD	Interview	15 participants

The frequency of the use of SNS was quite varied among the participants; there were the participants who were using SNS daily and those who were using SNS once in a while. There were a variety of answers for frequency of use. The results are illustrated in the figure below. A participant rationally summarised the use of SNS as, “I don't think if it is this way, no daily or weekly or something. It depends, for example, Twitter; it depends on the timeline” (MP2, interview content, Pos. 53). Out of the fifteen participants, eleven participants responded to the question. Five participants were using SNS daily for CPD purposes. Only two participants used SNS weekly, whereas four said they used SNS less often.

I would use it at the beginning of each semester; when I prepared for the semester as an extended period, I would stay with my timetable. The first week I had this lesson, I prepared myself for the second and the final week. (MP1, Interview content, Pos. 22)

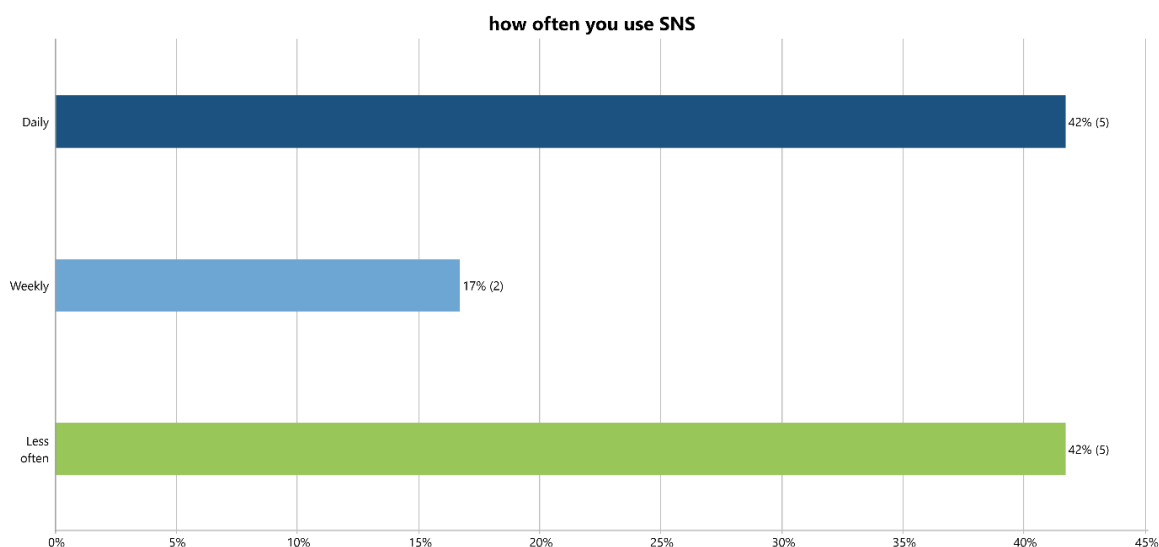


Figure 5.10 Graphical representation of the frequency of use of SNS for CPD

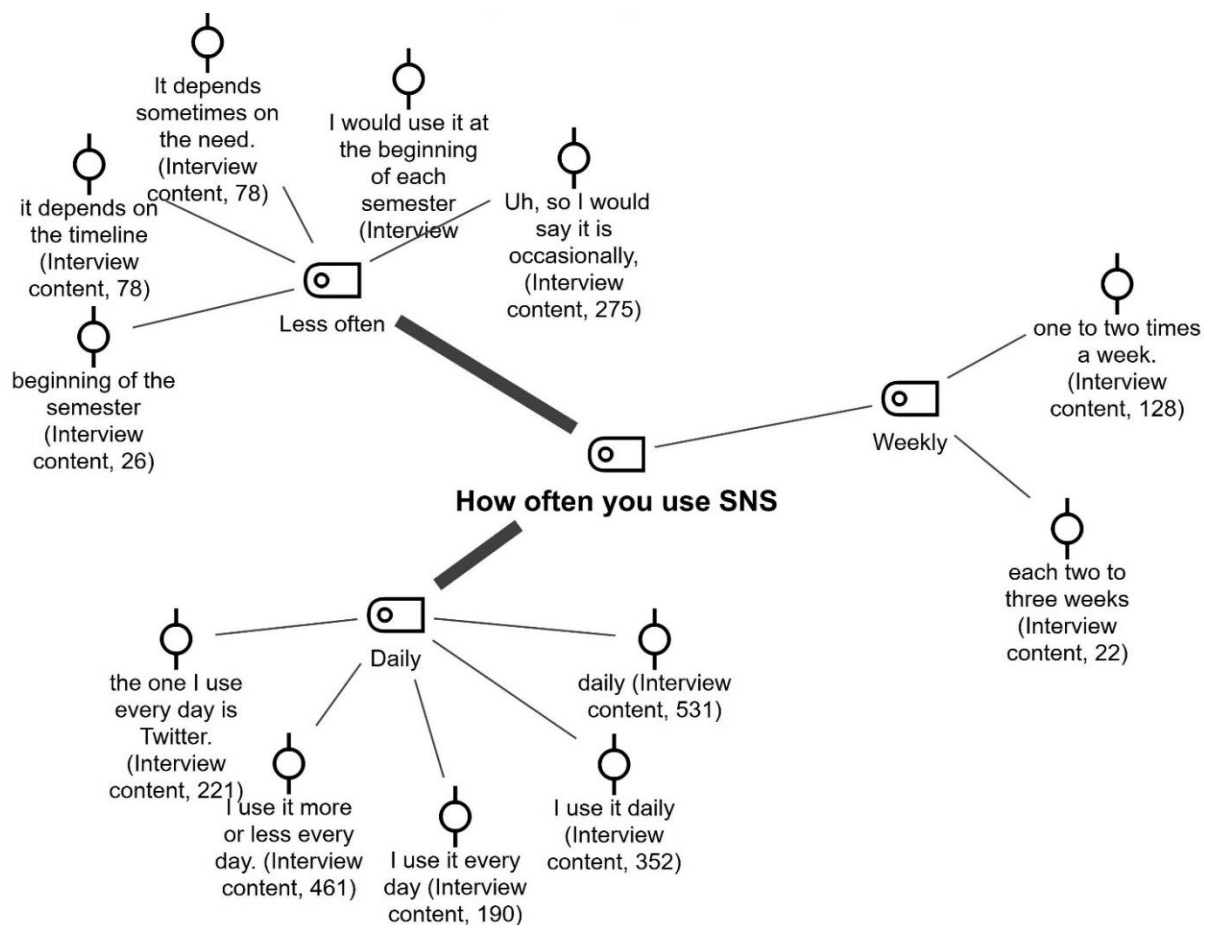


Figure 5.11 Maxmap of the extent of SNS use for CPD by Saudi EFL teachers

5.6.1. The use of SNS for CPD in Saudi Arabia

The question which was asked from the participants was to specify reasons to use SNS for CPD which led to this data that the primary teaching objective of EFL teachers is the English language, and they consistently need to enhance their core subject knowledge. This field is in a constant state of development, requiring EFL teachers to adapt to new changes. The results are depicted in the figure 5.12 below.

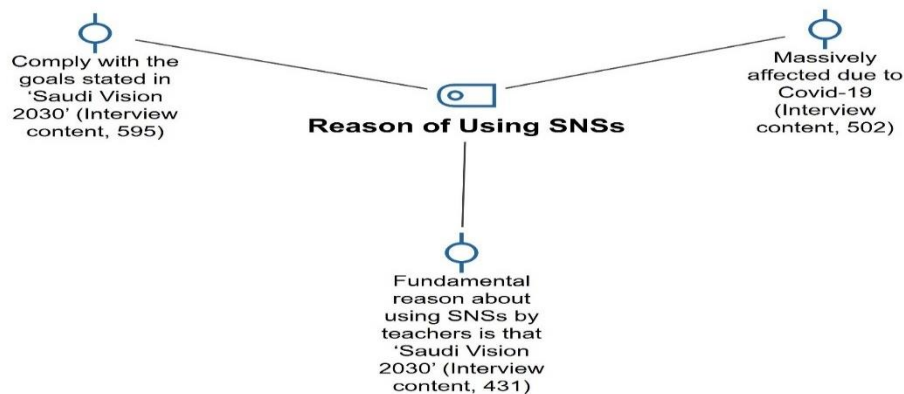


Figure 5.12 Maxmap of the reason of using SNS

5.6.2. Saudi Vision 2030

A probing question posed by the researcher uncovered another aspect: Why is the usage of SNS increasing among Saudi EFL teachers? Three participants shared interesting insights. According to one interviewee, this surge in SNS usage is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recalling the times when the pandemic swept across the globe, the EFL teacher believed that the shift to virtual classrooms directed EFL teachers towards using SNS for CPD. Furthermore, two interviewees suggested that this increase is a result of the Saudi Vision 2030 initiative, which aims to propel the country towards technological and economic success within the next decade.

The prevalence of social media has witnessed significant growth among Saudi teachers in recent years due to government plans and emphasis.

All I know is that one such goal of ‘Saudi Vision 2030, which aims at developing and improving digital literacy in the Kingdom to transform the economy and to shift the excessive reliance on the oil and gas industry as being the main contributor of the GDP to non-oil sectors such as ICT. (FP3, Interview content, Pos. 612)

5.6.3. Covid Pandemic

Another reason that has influenced the increase in the trend of social networking sites in the field of education is the shift from a traditional classroom to an online classroom:

There was much resistance a few years back as a digital mode of teaching, i.e. online teaching and using social media and multimedia, was not very commonly used by Saudi teachers. However, this trend has changed in the last few years, and the whole concept of teaching has been massively affected due to COVID-19, when traditional classroom

teaching was replaced by online teaching. Since then, SNS have been widely used by teachers, including English language teachers. (MP10, Interview content, Pos. 502)

5.7. Reason for using particular SNS for CPD

This theme delved into the reasons behind using a specific SNS more frequently than others for CPD. The researcher posed a leading question regarding why participants preferred a particular SNS, and their responses were carefully analysed. Accordingly, the most commonly used SNS platforms, such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Telegram, were assigned codes, while the rationales for their usage were treated as sub-codes. The codes are summarised in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6 Overview of the reasons for the use of particular SNS for CPD by EFL teachers

Theme 4: The reason for using a particular SNS for CPD			
Code/Subcode	Definition	Source	Reference
Twitter	Comments which refer to the frequency of use of Twitter, especially for CPD	Interview	15 participants
YouTube	Comments which refer to the reason for the use of YouTube, especially for CPD	Interview	15 participants
Telegram	Comments which refer to the reason for the use of Telegram, especially for CPD	Interview	15 participants
Facebook	Comments which refer to the reason for the use of Facebook, especially for CPD	Interview	15 participants

Eight participants stated that Twitter was easy to use and found it conducive to their professional growth. They also appreciated its role in connecting with native English-speaking professionals, gaining insights for new research, and enhancing their English language skills. The concise word limit of a Tweet was also seen as an attractive feature by professionals. In the case of YouTube, three participants reported using it to gain a better understanding, improve their English language proficiency, and plan classroom activities. Regarding Telegram, only two respondents shared their views, indicating that it was helpful for learning purposes. Lastly, with Facebook, EFL teachers mentioned that it facilitated social interaction with fellow professionals. The results are illustrated in Figure 5.13 below.

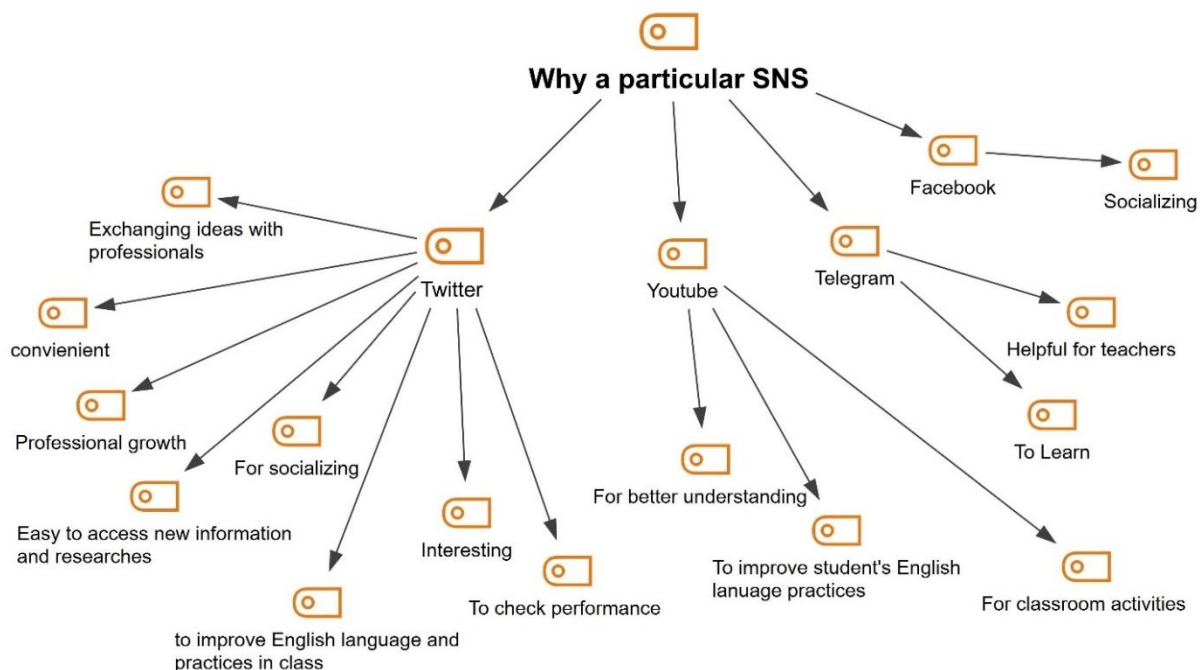


Figure 5.13 Maxmap of the use of particular SNS for CPD by Saudi EFL teachers

Many EFL teachers emphasise that their connections with international and native speakers can assist them in their CPD. Through virtual means, they can easily collaborate with their colleagues to exchange ideas in no time. One female participant stated

Most EFL teachers are now interested in making social connections and using virtual means to reach their fellow professionals. This shows that selected participants actively use social networking sites to enhance their exposure and knowledge to improve CPD (F5, interview content, Pos, 684).

5.7.1. Twitter as a source of CPD

Talking about Twitter, male interviewee 7 (MP7) said, “Twitter contributes towards my professional growth and equally expands my social network within a few minutes” (MP7, interview content, Pos. 396). Twitter is regarded as a tool for sharing knowledge with colleagues and students by Saudi teachers. The professionals were using SNS to impart updated knowledge to their students. Professional development is based on continually introducing new trends. As MP9 narrated, “I strive to improve my teaching by comparing it with the best practices across the globe”. The primary reason for keeping Twitter on preference is that it is easy to get intended content and contains concise descriptions” (MP9, interview content, Pos. 504).

The EFL teachers stated that SNS helps them to liaise with international professionals and their colleagues to improve English teaching. One of the respondents narrated it as

Twitter offers direct access to the professionals in the field, for example, Zoltan Dornyei (renowned linguist who passed away last year in 2022); we can have Tomlinson, any famous person in the field; you can get direct access to them. (MP1, Interview content, Pos. 32)

From the EFL teachers' perspective, it appears to be a means of professional networking. An EFL teacher said, "I follow different teachers on Twitter, read their content, watch the teaching videos and tutorials which teachers on Twitter upload, and try using them in my lessons" (MP9, interview content, Pos.475).

Social networking sites have improved the process of acquiring knowledge. One does not need to roam around the library to find a book for professional improvement; instead, they only need to dedicate some time to their SNS. It's an easy way to access relevant material as it's readily available, concise, and cost-effective. This was mentioned by a male participant, "Twitter is far more accessible and user-friendly, and this all has made a reasonable contribution towards my CPD. (MP8, interview content, Pos. 424)."

One interviewee believed that Twitter helped him better understand where he stands in his field: "I think, sometimes, about trying to go to, to develop myself more, trying to continue my study (MP2, interview content, Pos. 105).

5.7.2. YouTube as a source of CPD

Another prominent SNS was YouTube, described by one of the interviewees as "As far as YouTube is concerned, I use lessons, lectures, tutorials, and videos regarding English language teaching" (FP3, interview content, Pos.593). Different channels on YouTube were mentioned as helpful for teachers to enhance their professional attributes. Another respondent said, "I use YouTube to revise some of the things that I need to know in a short period" (MP2 interview content, Pos.96). An EFL gave examples of a few channels on YouTube to enhance CPD.

Channels such as 'Viola' offer different resources to aid learners in learning English. A channel called 'English Online is a great channel for elementary level students, and it offers daily language analysis of vocabulary and its use via various posts from quotations and stories" (FP3, interview content, Pos. 594)

5.7.3. Telegram as a source of CPD

SNS has been used by EFL teachers for their professional growth, as stated

I use Telegram and follow various channels, such as 'English of the Day', 'English for Tomorrow', and 'Grammarfy'. These channels are helpful for learning grammar, idioms, and different parts of speech as these have various quizzes and exercises to help me learn spoken English and also help in my CPD (FP1, interview content, Pos. 540).

Telegram is used by Saudi EFL teachers and is thought to be useful for CPD. One of the respondents answered.

Telegram is the primary resource for teachers in general, including English teachers. As I mentioned, there is a yearly test, and they require specific grades to maintain their license. So, they use Telegram to access examples of the required books easily, rather than searching for them on Google or other platforms. (MP2, Interview content, Pos. 96)

5.7.4. Facebook as a source of CPD

Saudi EFL teachers primarily use Twitter and YouTube, but some also use Facebook. One of the main reasons for using Facebook is to connect with fellow EFL teachers.

When I visited the UK, I noticed that Facebook is commonly used there. I already had a Facebook account, but initially, I used it for social purposes, similar to how I use Twitter. However, now I use it to keep up with what people in the UK are interested in, as it's more popular in the UK than Twitter. So, I use Facebook to read about various groups and accounts. Those are the top social networking sites I use (MP4, Interview content, Pos. 219).

I use Facebook to interact with my peers, and I utilise it to practice English by exchanging messages and status updates on Facebook. As far as YouTube is concerned, I use lessons, lectures, tutorials, and videos regarding English language teaching, and all these SNS have helped me in my professional role (CPD). (FP3, Interview content, Pos. 593)

Another teacher reported using Facebook: "I follow different 'Groups' on Facebook where I can find English language teachers across the globe and read the content they post, comment on various posts" (MP6: Interview content, Pos. 348).

5.8. Barriers in Using SNS for CPD

In this theme, the barriers to using SNS were analysed. During virtual interviews, the researcher posed two questions to the interviewees. Firstly, the researcher inquired about the challenges faced by EFL teachers themselves when using SNS, and the second question pertained to the barriers encountered in SNS usage. The data is summarised in Table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7 Overview of the Barriers in using SNS for CPD

Theme 5: Barriers in using SNS for CPD by Saudi EFL teachers

Code/Subcode	Definition	Source	Reference
Problems while using SNS	Comments which refer to the Problems faced while using SNS for CPD	Interview	15 participants
Barriers to the use of SNS	Comments which refer to the barrier in using SNS for CPD	Interview	15 participants

5.8.1. Problems while using SNS

The EFL teachers shared their views on their problems while using SNS. As per the qualitative analysis, seven issues were highlighted by Saudi EFL teachers. Data is summarised in the table 5.8 and figure 5.14 below.

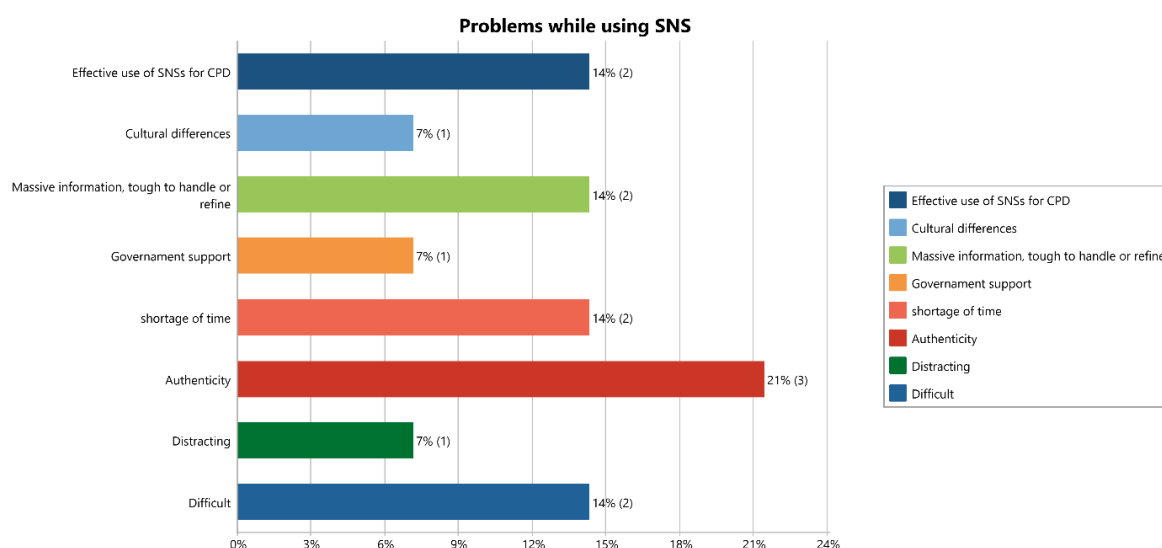


Figure 5.14 Graphical representation of problems faced by Saudi EFL teachers in using SNS

Out of the fifteen participants, three English teachers believed that SNS has an issue in terms of authenticity of information. Two participants mentioned they require more time to use SNS for CPD, while two others stated that SNS provides an overwhelming amount of information. One stated, “There can be an extreme flow of information on various SNS, so refining such information for teachers can be daunting (FP5, Interview content, Pos. 651). One of the participants said there is no government support for using SNS, and another responded that SNS is distracting. Another view shared was that SNS is difficult to use. EFL teacher said, “It’s a difficulty that you have to make sure of everything that is written before you can rely on it” (MP4, Interview content, Pos. 209).

ICT issues are pretty rampant in schools, and teachers are primarily overworked and short of time, so ICT issues in terms of poor internet connectivity, inadequate equipment and ICT infrastructure, and lack of policy by the Saudi Ministry of Education to use SNS for teachers' CPD are the main problems in my opinion. (MP8, Interview content, Pos. 433).

One of the participants said that the problem while using SNS is basically because of cultural differences. The cultural difference was related to women's role in Arabian society. It was stated that “female teachers lack a considerable knowledge of using technology in everyday lessons due to which female teachers are quite reluctant to use technology including SNS” (FP1).

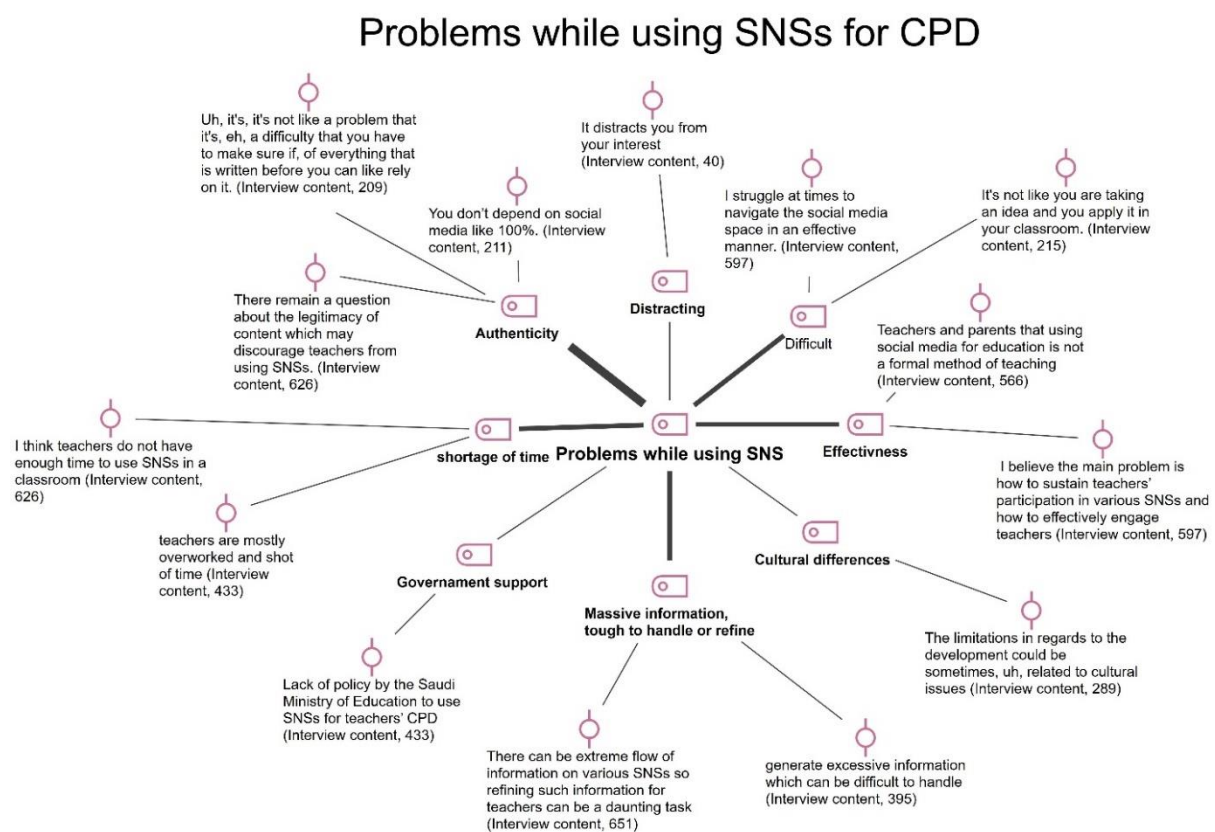


Figure 5.15 Maxmap of the Problems faced by Saudi EFL teachers

5.8.2. Barriers in using SNS for CPD

As previously stated in interviews, it has been mentioned that Saudi EFL teachers are using SNS for CPD. They were further asked about the significant barriers in using SNS for CPD. Data is summarised in table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8 Overview of the barriers to use SNS in CPD for Saudi EFL teachers

Theme 5: Barriers to the use of SNS in CPD of Saudi EFL teachers			
Code/Subcode	Definition	Source	Reference
Lack of infrastructure and Internet connectivity	Comments which refer to the lack of infrastructure as a barrier to using SNS for CPD	Interview	15 participants
Lack of Governmental support	Comments which refer to cultural differences as a barrier in using SNS for CPD	Interview	15 participants
Limited Knowledge	Comments which refer to the little knowledge as a barrier in using SNS for CPD	Interview	15 participants
Hesitation	Comments which refer to Hesitation as a barrier in using SNS for CPD	Interview	15 participants

The fifteen participants answered this question in a varied way; even in one response, they gave two to three options. Data is illustrated in the figure 5.16 below.

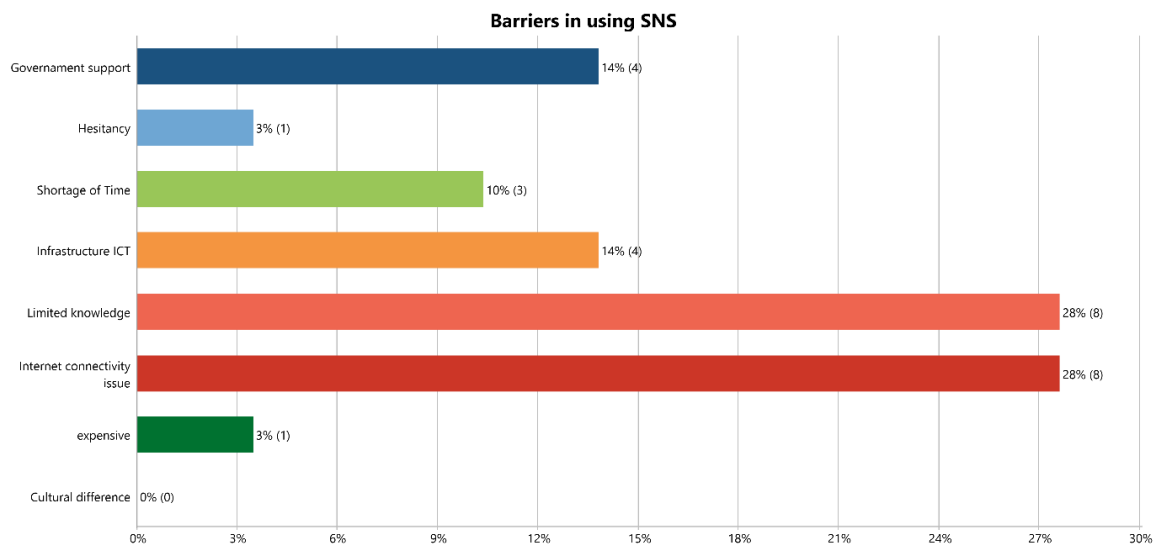


Figure 5.16 Graphical representation of the barriers in using SNS for CPD faced by Saudi EFL teachers

As per the analysis of codes, it was concluded that nine participants believed the major problem was the lack of knowledge of teachers to use SNS for CPD. They thought that Saudi EFL teachers needed to learn the usefulness of SNS for their CPD. As the interviewee described, “I believe it is a general problem that all teachers view different SNS differently and use these SNS if they offer ease of use and accessibility (MP9, Interview content, Pos. 504). As Saudi Arabia is still evolving in the race of technology and connectivity, six participants shared that internet connectivity is a problem faced by EFL teachers, preventing them from using SNS for CPD. One of the teachers said, “I have had quite a slow internet connection, which again can consume a significant amount of teachers’ time (MP10, Interview content, Pos. 597)”. Three participants described ICT and infrastructure as barriers to using SNS for CPD. Five views were related to governmental support. It is believed that the government does not support the use of SNS, leading to teachers and academic settings not embracing new technology. Only one teacher shared that the problem could be due to general hesitancy, and lastly, the expense of SNS was highlighted. One male interviewee complained about the introduction of SNS in the academic setup and said, “I also think implementing ICT in schools is quite expensive” (MP9, Interview content, Pos. 504). Data is summarised in table 5.9 below.

Table 5.9 Comments of Saudi EFL teachers related to the barriers

Document	Coded Segments	Codes
Interview content, Pos. 24	I'm not familiar	Limited knowledge
Interview content, Pos. 32	not fully aware of using technology.	Limited knowledge

Interview content, Pos. 504	I believe it is a general problem that all teachers view different SNS differently and use these SNS if they offer ease of use and accessibility.	Limited knowledge
Interview content, Pos. 469	lack of awareness among teachers on how to use various SNS.	Limited knowledge
Interview content, Pos. 504	I believe it is a general problem that all teachers view different SNS differently and use these SNS if they offer ease of use and accessibility.	Limited knowledge
Interview content, Pos. 537	absence of basic training, such as using technology in a classroom	Limited knowledge
Interview content, Pos. 651	Saudi English language teachers sometimes need to gain basic knowledge about using various SNS to discourage them from using SNS.	Limited knowledge
Interview content, Pos. 626	Not all teachers know how to use various SNS, and the Ministry of Education provides no official training.	Limited knowledge
Interview content, Pos. 362	Teachers need more time to use SNS for CPD because of poor internet connection in schools and limited knowledge about using various SNS, which prevents teachers from using them for CPD.	Limited knowledge Internet connectivity issue
Interview content, Pos. 32	technological issues	Internet connectivity issue
Interview content, Pos. 395	Internet connection issues	Internet connectivity issue
Interview content, Pos. 504	Internet connectivity	Internet connectivity issue
Interview content, Pos. 597	I have had a slow internet connection, consuming many teachers' time.	Internet connectivity issue
Interview content, Pos. 142	Okay, as I said before, in some places, uh, there's no internet which will prevent us from using these sites, and uh, some social networking uh areas are challenging to use	Internet connectivity issue
Interview content, Pos. 566	There are also technology infrastructure problems in school	Infrastructure ICT
Interview content, Pos. 362	As I said earlier, the overall state of IT infrastructure is still new in the Kingdom.	Infrastructure ICT
Interview content, Pos. 469	Educational organisations have poor infrastructure in terms of ICT.	Infrastructure ICT
Interview content, Pos. 433	In my opinion, poor internet connectivity, poor equipment and ICT infrastructure, and lack of policy by the Saudi Ministry of Education to use SNS for teachers' CPD are the main problems.	Government support Internet connectivity issue
Interview content, Pos. 467	Unless the Government officially implement these as a part of the English teaching syllabus, the usage of SNS among teachers for their CPD will be low.	Government support

Interview content, Pos. 566	Technology still needs to be more active in Saudi schools in Western and American countries.	Government support
Interview content, Pos. 651	Some schools in Saudi Arabia do not even allow both teachers and students to access SNS.	Government support
Interview content, Pos. 626	There is no mandatory course specified by the Ministry which should incorporate digital technology in classrooms.	Government support
Interview content, Pos. 465	There is a general hesitancy among English language teachers to use SNS.	English teachers and CPD Hesitancy
Interview content, Pos. 504	I also think implementing ICT in schools is quite expensive	expensive

5.9. Training in using SNS for CPD

In the sixth theme, the researcher asked questions related to training and workshops that only one EFL teacher has attended to learn the efficient use of SNS for CPD. The researcher also asked about the training a respondent believes is necessary to understand SNS usage. Data is summarised in table 5.10 below.

Table 5.10 Overview of the training for use of SNS in CPD

Theme 6: Training for the use of SNS in CPD			
Code/Subcode	Definition	Source	Reference
Training EFL teachers got	Comments which refer to the training EFL teachers got for using SNS	Interview	15 participants
Training that is needed	Comments which refer to the activities EFL teachers need for using SNS	Interview	15 participants

5.9.1. Training received by Saudi EFL teachers for using SNS

Participants were asked if they had received any training for using SNS for CPD. Only five of the fifteen participants responded to the question, and all answered negatively.

No official training has been provided, but I have personally done courses in digital learning and how to use various SNS to improve the teaching practice, which has facilitated me in terms of designing the content of lessons while keeping in view feedback received from my students, and I encourage my students to do regular posts

in the English language on various SNS and especially on Twitter (MP8, Interview content, Pos. 439)

Most participants confirmed that no such training for using SNS has either been provided by the government or any private organisation. MP1 stated.

Uhm, no, mostly no, and I would say this mainly because, you know, the recent few years, there has been a bit of focus on using technology, but it was for the use of online teaching and, you know, things have been affected by the pandemic. Otherwise, there is a direction, or the Ministry of Education will do soon. I believe this will happen. (MP1, Interview content, Pos. 46).

Data is summarised in figure 5.17 below.

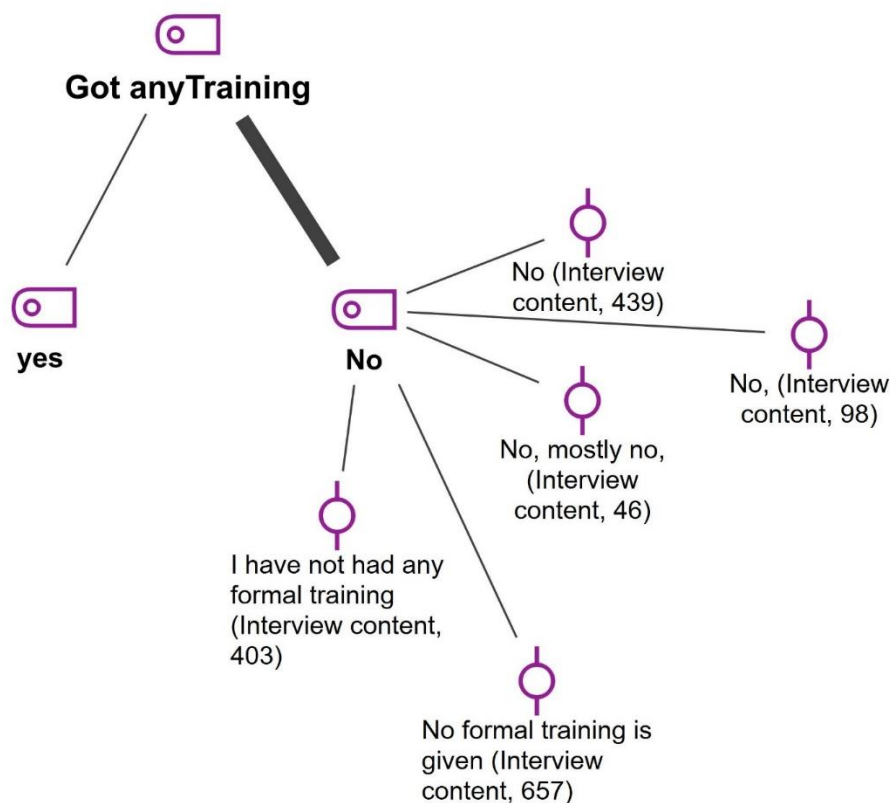


Figure 5.17 The training Saudi EFL teachers have received for the use of SNS in CPD

5.9.2. Training needed by an EFL teacher in using SNS for CPD

As per this theme, participants were asked if they needed training in using SNS for CPD. Since it was a semi-structured open-ended interview, all respondents provided detailed opinions.

There were thirteen responses to the question, and all of them believed that there was a need to incorporate training into EFL teachers' curricula.

I need more training regarding including SNS in the English language teaching syllabus, which can only be done if the Ministry of Education authorises it. There are hierarchical problems with using SNS, which can affect the training needs of Saudi English language teachers. There should also be fully trained professionals with experience using various SNS and digital technologies so teachers can readily contact them when they have a problem using SNS. (FP4, Interview content, Pos. 628)

Participants put forward different suggestions. Mainly, they believed teachers should be taught about effectively using SNS such as Twitter. They should be trained to create accounts to access the English language content. One of the participants believed that training should be for teachers and students; he noted, “I think training to both teachers and students need to be provided and that can assist in improving teachers’ CPD (MP8, Interview content Pos. 439).

Another type of training highlighted by EFL teachers was related to enhancing writing skills.

I will need training in using blogs to develop my English language lesson. Regarding Twitter, I will need training in using ‘Twittersphere’ to look for specific search terms such as vocabulary, reading, writing, grammar, listening, speaking”. (MP10, interview content, Pos. 500).”

One of the female teachers shared that female teachers were not very familiar with technology, so based on that, she recommended “Areas of training are improving the overall use of technology among female Saudi teachers, allowing them more time for training and giving them extra time to finish their lessons so they have adequate time to learn about SNS” (FP1, interview content, Pos. 530)

Data is summarised in table 5.11 below.

Table 5.11 Comments of interviewees regarding the training that is needed by Saudi EFL teachers in using SNS for CPD

Document name	Code	Segment
Interview content pos. 102	Need of training> opinion	The training that they need, how to access them, how to create an account, and how to find the information that you need in a rapid way

Interview content pos. 543	Need of training > opinion	Areas of training are improving the overall use of technology among female Saudi teachers.
Interview content pos 572	Need of training > opinion	SNS, when incorporated into teachers' training courses, can readily address the training needs of English language teachers.
Interview content pos. 628	Need of training > opinion	I also believe there should be fully trained professionals who have experience using various SNS.
Interview content pos. 439	Need of training > opinion	I believe it provides training to teachers and students and can assist in improving teachers' CPD.
Interview content pos. 628	Need of training > opinion	I need more training on including SNS in the English language teaching syllabus.
Interview content pos 100.	Need of training > opinion	I think it isn't easy to try to tweak the course for the teachers
Interview content pos. 405	Need of training > opinion	Regular training includes creating meaningful posts and conducting everyday activities on integrating different SNS into the English language syllabus.
Interview content pos. 370	Need of training > opinion	There are various areas in which teachers need training.
Interview content pos. 158	Need of training > opinion	We need to more of a push to use social media for CPD.
Interview content pos. 599	Need of training > opinion	I will say how to navigate various SNS to ensure that the content of discussion on multiple SNS is strictly about the English language.
Interview content pos. 657	Need of training > opinion	This is an area of attention for policymakers.
Interview content pos. 441	Need of training > opinion	Training.. yes! Regarding the following accounts on Twitter, which must have relevant English language content and how exactly to design the teaching course using, for example, Twitter to teach English.

5.10. Recommendations for using SNS for CPD

The final theme pertained to recommendations regarding the use of SNS for CPD. Within this theme, as the interviews concluded, the researcher asked participants whether they had been recommended by someone to use SNS for CPD and if they would in turn recommend it to others.

5.10.1. Recommended by someone the use of SNS for CPD:

As per the Maxmap, only four of the respondents were recommended by someone. One of the respondents said that his friend was the one who recommended him; for one respondent, it was a Headmaster.

Yes! The Headmaster in the first school I started working as an English teacher recommended that I use SNS, and this is why I am confident in using SNS to teach my students, and it has strengthened my CPD. (MP9, Interview content, Pos. 471).

One of the respondents was recommended SNS by his trainer. He said, “Yes! The trainer I worked with during my apprenticeship days recommended I use SNS” (FP1, Interview content, Pos. 539). Whereas ten participants said they were not recommended by anyone to use SNS for CPD. One of them confirmed using SNS, “No! I have been using SNS since my college and university days” (FP2, Interview content, Pos. 568).

No, mostly I started by myself. You are almost aware of what's going on. Let's say that educational organisations in our country are beginning to grow and perform well, but they are still not fully aware of using technology. These technological issues, and I mean authenticity, are not addressed either in the curriculum or in the materials themselves. So, let's focus on this point later. (MP1, Interview content, Pos. 32).

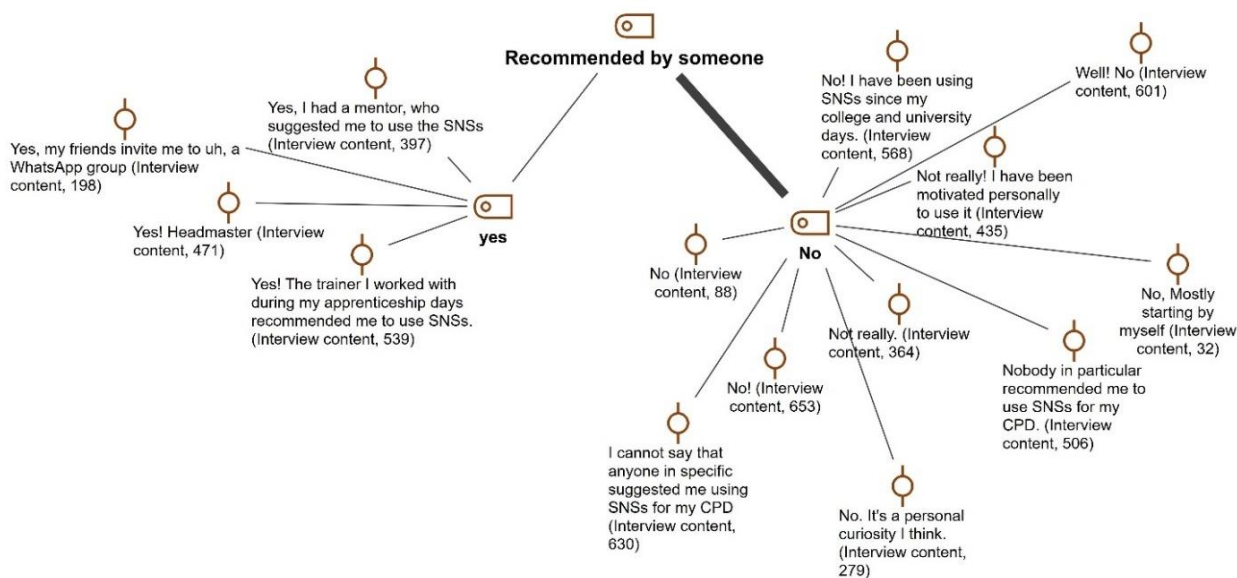


Figure 5.18 Maxmap of the recommendation of use of SNS for CPD

5.10.2. Recommending to others the use of SNS for CPD

The last question was if the interviewee would recommend SNS to others, such as their colleagues in EFL teaching.

I guess more than a recommendation; it is more of a policy matter, so policymakers in the Saudi Ministry of Education should work in collaboration with principals and teachers in schools to devise a policy about using SNS for English language teaching, which, in my opinion, will improve the use of SNS among Saudi English language teachers. (FP5, Interview content, Pos. 655)

As per the responses, fourteen respondents said they would recommend it. One of the respondents quoted,

Yes, I also recommend that SNS be included as a part of ‘Teachers’ Training Courses’ as that will give teachers a significant idea of how to use SNS in everyday classroom teaching. (FP2, Interview content, Pos. 570)

Yes, I will highly recommend it to the teachers, trainee teachers, and principals in schools who also use SNS to develop a culture that promotes the use of SNS. (MP9, Interview content, Pos. 473)

While only one respondent replied Maybe, stating, “Not sure! Maybe it’s a good idea for all teachers to use SNS for improving their CPD” (FP3, Interview content, Pos. 603).

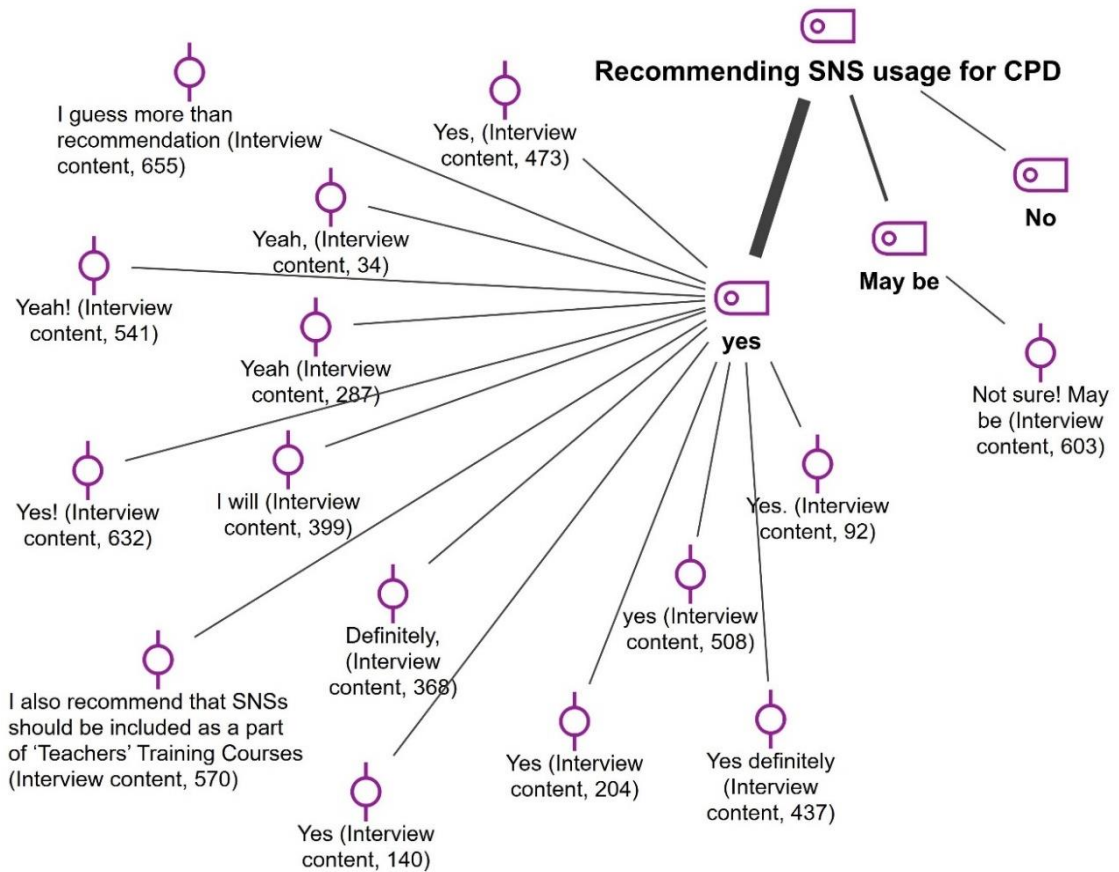


Figure 5.19 Maxmap of recommending use of SNS for CPD

5.11. Conclusion:

This research study used a mixed methods approach. In accordance with the consent, online interviews were conducted with fifteen Saudi EFL teachers. The interviews were transcribed and compiled into one document, listing the first ten male participants and then the five female respondents. The qualitative data was subsequently analysed using MAXQDA. The data was imported into the software as one file, and codes and sub-codes were derived based on the seven themes.

According to the objectives of this study, the first research question and theme explored the general practices of EFL teachers for their CPD. In response to research question two which was about which SNS was commonly used by teachers for their CPD, it was concluded that Twitter was the most commonly used SNS based on the interviews. All the teachers expressed a preference for using Twitter. When asked about the reasons for using a particular SNS, they mentioned that Twitter provides concise and easily accessible knowledge. It allows direct interaction with other teachers. The second most used SNS was YouTube, which was appreciated for its visual learning resources and classroom activity ideas.

Moving on to research question three which was about how frequently teachers used SNS for their CPD, the frequency of SNS use varied among professionals. Five teachers reported using SNS daily, while two participants used SNS weekly, and the remaining four used SNS less frequently for their professional purposes. Participants shared their views that the use of SNS increased in Saudi Arabia after the COVID-19 pandemic and in line with Saudi Vision 2030. The objectives of using SNS were identified as learning platforms, networking, professional growth, and sharing extensive knowledge with students and other professionals. Saudi EFL teachers believed they faced several challenges when using SNS, including distractions, concerns about the authenticity of information, dealing with a massive amount of information, and the need for more time to explore SNS thoroughly.

Several barriers preventing Saudi teachers from fully utilising SNS included internet issues, infrastructure limitations, cultural differences, hesitancy, and a lack of government support. Interestingly, it was found that participants were not encouraged or recommended to use SNS for their professional development, and their usage was primarily based on personal motivation. The results of the qualitative analysis suggest that the use of SNS for CPD is on the rise among Saudi EFL teachers. They are enthusiastic about learning new teaching methods and classroom activities. Currently, the use of SNS for CPD is driven by individual initiative,

with no significant government support. The perspective of Saudi Vision 2030 is expected to further promote the use of SNS, but cultural differences and hesitancy may pose challenges to its widespread adoption.

Another key point highlighted in the interviews is the need for improved infrastructure, as the existing ICT setups are underdeveloped, and internet services are often slow. These factors currently act as barriers to the use of social media among Saudi teachers. There is a clear need for government reforms in this regard. The government of Saudi Arabia should prioritise the provision of sustainable ICT services to academic institutions and formulate policies that encourage EFL teachers to leverage SNS for their CPD. Additionally, teacher training programmes should be implemented to help educators navigate and extract relevant information from the vast amount of data available on SNS platforms.

Chapter 6

Results of Social Media Post analysis (tweets)

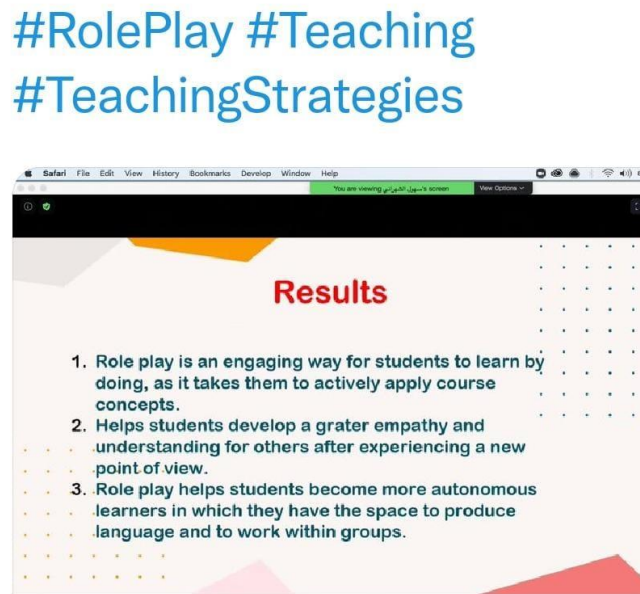
6.1 Evaluation of Tweets

In this chapter, the focus is on research question four, which is the analysis of the purpose and reasons for EFL teachers' usage of SNS for CPD. Ten tweets were selected from ten different EFL teachers on their respective Twitter accounts. Prior to this, the researcher obtained permission from these teachers as part of the questionnaire's concluding notes. Some teachers refused to grant permission. Therefore, only ten Twitter accounts were available for analysis, one tweet from each account. The aim of analysing these tweets was to investigate the type of content teachers share on social networking sites and to determine whether this content contributes to enhancing students' knowledge of EFL and aids teachers in improving their CPD.

6.1.1 Tweet 1. Teaching Strategies:

The first tweet, posted by an EFL teacher, features a slide that is shared with the audience through the tweet. It highlights one of the teaching strategies known as 'Roleplay.' The teacher has incorporated multiple hashtags in the tweet, which can assist other professionals or students in searching for teaching or role-play strategies in locating this specific tweet. The primary aim of this tweet is to summarise the advantages of employing the 'Roleplay' teaching strategy in the classroom for students. This tweet can be a valuable resource for other professionals seeking information on this strategy and considering its implementation in their own classrooms. Visual aids, such as images, can further enhance the impact of tweets, as demonstrated by this teacher in the Figure 6.1

Figure 6.1: Tweet 1- Teaching Strategies



6.1.2 Tweet 2: To update the System:

The second tweet, extracted from another teacher's account, serves the purpose of sharing information with colleagues. This tweet is specifically targeted at Saudi EFL teachers, as it centres around an update in the Foreign Language teaching system. Using multiple hashtags by the EFL teacher ensures that it can be easily discovered by a wide range of EFL professionals in Saudi Arabia, including TESOL or English teachers, allowing them to grasp the essence of the update. The teacher starts the tweet in their native language, making it more accessible and engaging for Saudi nationals. Even individuals not directly associated with the English language can gain an understanding of the tweet's content. This update pertains to the L1 and encourages students to participate actively in their classes verbally. This update can be a valuable resource for professionals seeking to introduce new updates to their classroom methodologies. The current EFL teacher employs SNS to disseminate updates and information to others within the same field, as depicted in Figure 6.2 below:

Figure 6.2: Tweet 2- To update the system

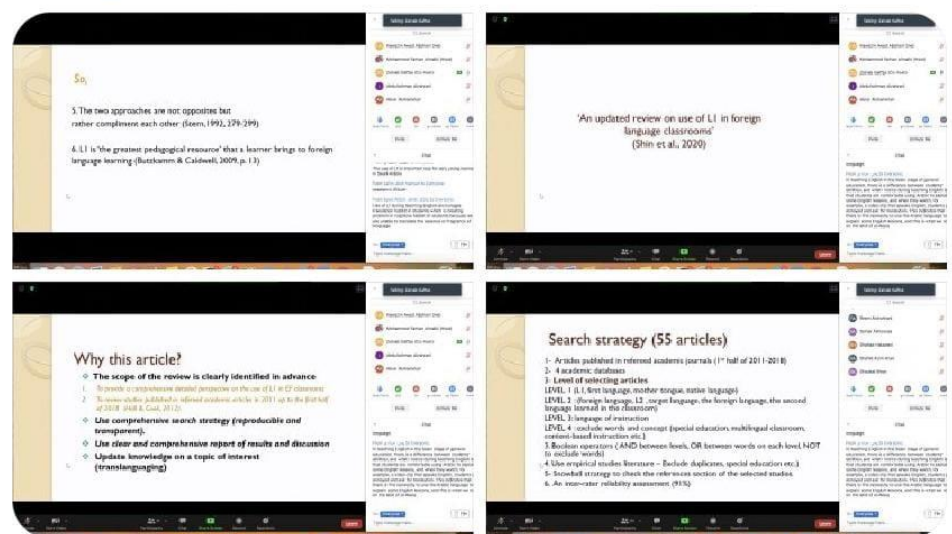


قراءة نقدية للمقالة العلمية

"An update review o use of L1 in foreign language classrooms"

Dr. Zainab Gaffas

#EFL
#teachers
#KSA
#TESOL
#Motivation
#EnglishTeachers



6.1.3 Tweet 3: Sharing knowledge

In tweet three, the EFL teacher has composed the tweet in their native language. The tweet begins with a question, addressing the importance of grammar in linguistics, and has been shared with Saudi English Language Teachers using the "@" symbol. This tweet primarily aims to capture the interest of colleagues. The EFL teacher has shared a discussion on the topic that explains the distinction between prescriptivism and descriptivism. This tweet aims to highlight the importance of grammar in written and spoken language, prompting educators to tailor their activities and broaden their understanding. Including "@" in the tweet has facilitated

its reach to a wide audience. This shows that the tweet could disseminate knowledge among colleagues and also provides a platform for discussion, as depicted in Figure 6.3 below:

Figure 6.3: Tweet 3- Sharing knowledge

هل سلامة القواعد اللغوية grammar مهمة في
تعلم اللغة ؟

حديث جميل حول أهمية قواعد اللغة
(المكتوبة) ومثيلاتها (المنطوقة) من نافذة
المدرستين الشهيرتين

prescriptivism vs. descriptivism

@selteachers

[Translate Tweet](#)



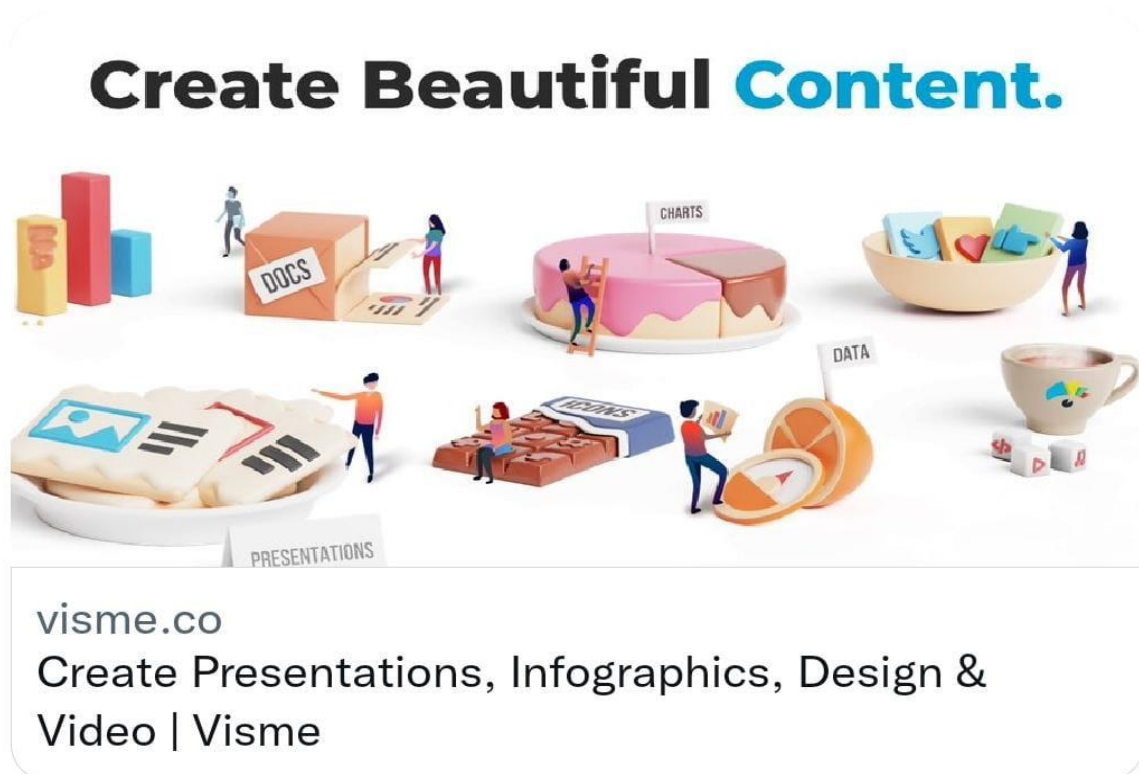
4,440 views

6.1.4 Tweet 4: Knowledge related to content creation websites:

A tweet taken from the Twitter handle of the fourth participant reveals that the teacher has shared a website that facilitates content creation. In the post, the teacher has not included any written text, hashtags, or mentions using '@'. However, the image from the website itself provides a clear understanding of the services it offers for various types of content. Despite the

absence of written content, this tweet effectively directs users to the website through visually appealing graphics. The visuals showcase the creation of charts, graphs, images, and documents, besides the ability to produce videos, presentations, and infographics. This tweet introduces a convenient website that enables users to design their projects for free and in a timely manner, as depicted in Figure 6.4 below. As the teacher has not specified the intended audience, it is challenging to determine the exact target audience.

Figure 6.4: Tweet 4- Knowledge related to content creation websites



6.1.5 Tweet 5: Basic knowledge of Homophones:

Participant 5 has posted a tweet containing a hashtag related to homophones which as per the Oxford dictionary are defined as the words which sound the same, i.e. same pronunciation but have different spelling or meaning or both such as eight and ate, write and right, threw and through. This hashtag allows anyone searching for this specific term on Twitter to find and access the tweet. The tweet's primary purpose appears to be the sharing of knowledge about homophones. The intended audience for this tweet seems to be students, as the teacher begins by defining the term 'homophones' and provides colourful worksheets as illustrative examples.

The teacher includes a link to live worksheets that can assist students in practicing their understanding of homophones. Therefore, through this tweet, the teacher aims to impart fundamental linguistic knowledge of English to students.

6.1.6 Tweet 6: Sharing content with Students

In tweet 6, the EFL teacher shared Twitter content titled 'summer readings.' The teacher provided a link to the reading source along with the title of the PDF source and its table of contents. These details can assist students in easily accessing the document on the Cambridge website. The teacher did not tag anyone or any specific group, so those who follow the teacher on Twitter will receive the tweet and have the option to add the PDF to their summer reading list. Through Twitter, the teacher shares knowledge and ideas about what makes up suitable summer reading material with their students. Figures 6.5 and 6.6 below display tweets focused on sharing content with students.

Figure 6.5: Tweet 6- Sharing content with students (Homophones)

#homophones : Words that sound the same but have different spelling and different meaning ✨

◆ Active worksheet

[liveworksheets.com/lz1258766hz](https://www.liveworksheets.com/lz1258766hz)

LearnEnglish# انجليزي#

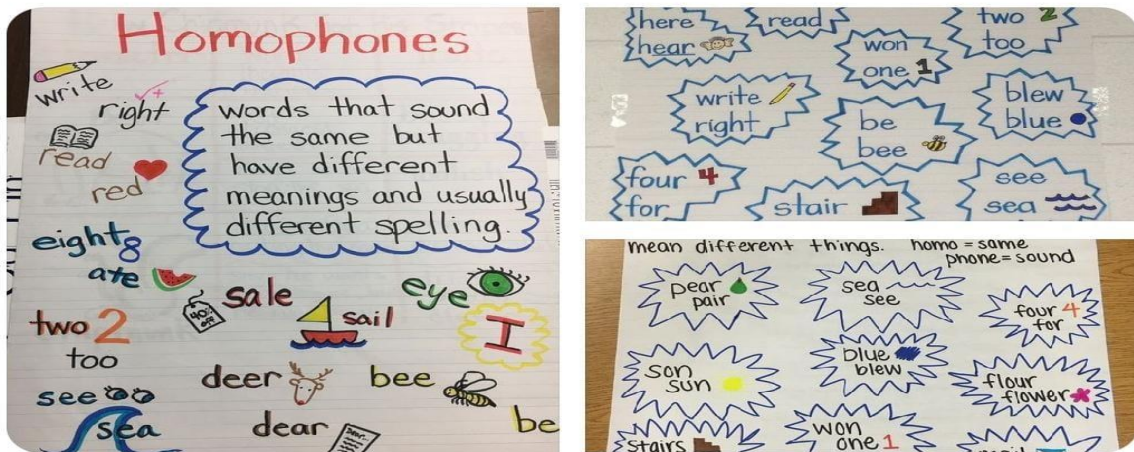


Figure 6.6: Tweet 6- Sharing content with students (Summer reading)

Summer reading
PDF
Blended Language Learning
cambridge.org/us/files/2115/...

•

CONTENTS	
2	What is blended learning and how does it work?
5	Why adopt blended learning?
10	How to adopt blended learning?
13	Concluding remarks
14	Putting theory into practice: 5 case studies
17	Bibliography

6.1.7 Tweet 7: Sharing ideas with colleagues:

In tweet seven, the account holder tagged English teachers and posed two questions. These questions revolve around the vocabulary that can be taught to students before presenting them with the content in the classroom. While these are just a couple of key questions, the teacher ultimately mentioned one of the Twitter handles that can aid in accessing the vocabulary. The purpose of this tweet is clear, as shown in Figure 6.7 below. The EFL teacher is sharing their ideas and knowledge with other English teachers so that they can adopt this approach and create a more effective classroom learning environment.

Figure 6.7: Tweet 7- Sharing ideas with colleagues


#SaudiET

? What vocabulary and background knowledge do children need when accessing a new text?

? How can we identify key vocabulary within texts, to pre-teach children, in order to ensure all children are able to access the range of texts read in class?

Via **@EducEndowFoundn**

6.1.8 Tweet 8: Taking Feedback

In tweet 8 of this study, a teacher has shared a classroom activity that was conducted in class on Twitter and is seeking feedback from other teachers. The teacher has used Twitter as a platform to receive comments from their peer group and aims to share this idea with fellow EFL teachers so that they can also implement such activities in their own classrooms. Figure 6.8 displays Tweet 8, which pertains to gathering feedback.

Figure 6.8: Tweet 8- Taking feedback

In my class today, my pupils and I had a breakfast. I made them practice unit 4 (breakfast) vocabularies. Actually, they enjoyed and liked the lesson.

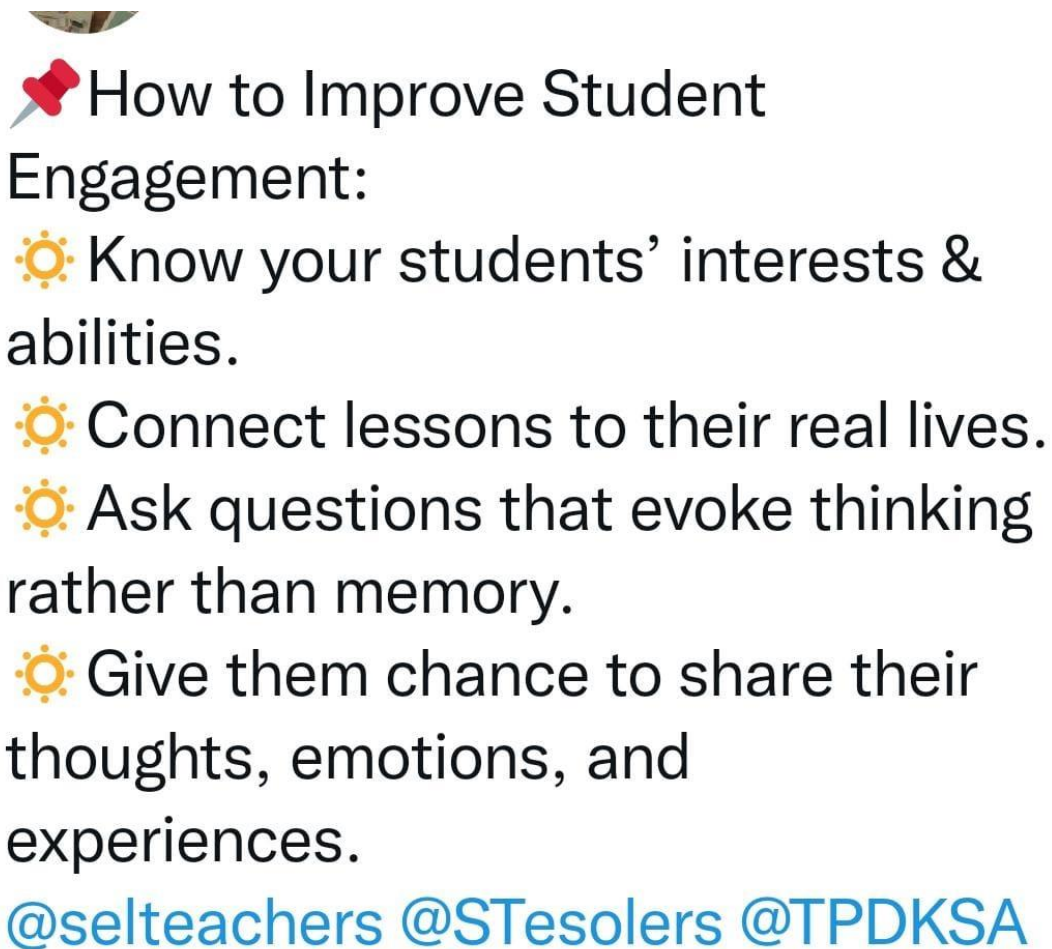
Need your comments on this



6.1.9 Tweet 9: Sharing knowledge with colleagues

In the Tweet 9, one of the EFL teachers shared a list of bullet points in a tweet titled 'how to improve student engagement.' The teacher used the "@" symbol and mentioned Selteachers, STesolers, and TPKSA, showing that the teacher is addressing these professionals to highlight some potential factors that can be used to enhance student engagement. The teacher is using social networking sites to disseminate knowledge among their colleagues, as depicted in Figure 6.9 below.

Figure 6.9: Tweet 9- Sharing knowledge with colleagues



6.1.10 Tweet 10: Flowchart

In the final tweet, this participant shared a flowchart, explaining that it can clarify the sequence of tenses. This teacher has provided an example of the flowchart that illustrates the sequence of tenses. The shared flowchart, titled "Flowchart 3" as seen in Figure 6.10, suggests that there have been previous posts related to different flowcharts. This tweet shows that the teacher is using social networking sites to disseminate information and knowledge to their followers, who can include both teachers and students.

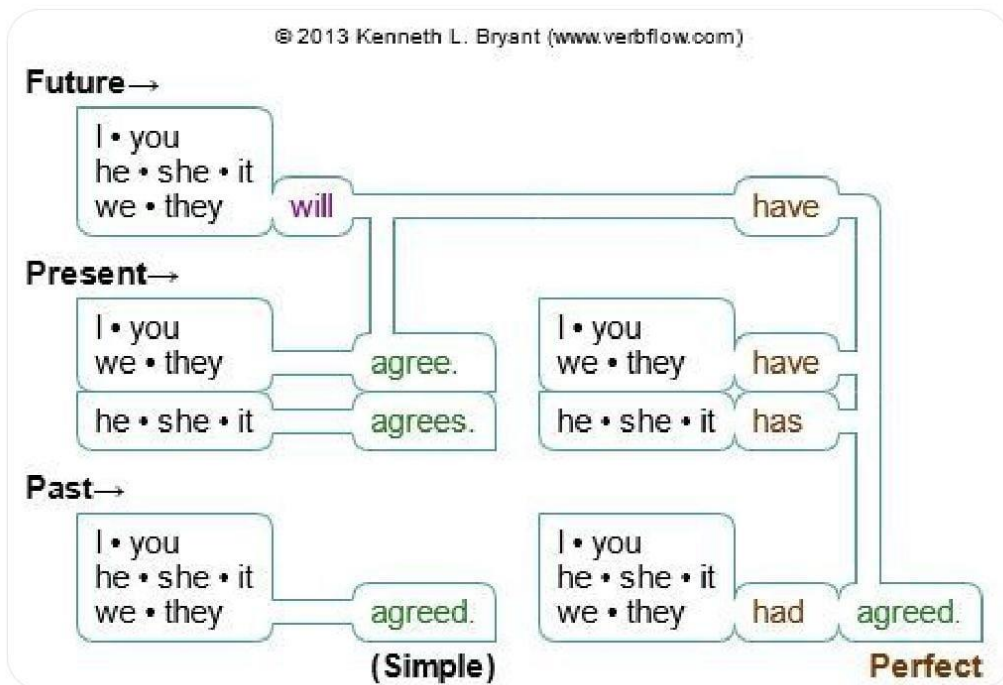
Figure 6.10: Tweet 10- Flowchart



3. Flowcharts:

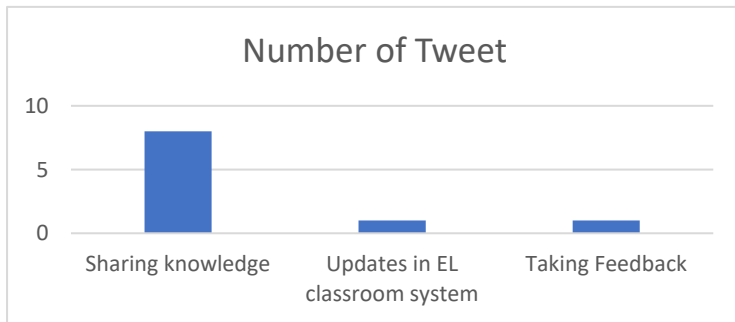
يستخدم هذا النوع لتوضيح ترتيب عملية أو إجراء معين. ويمكن استخدامه في شرح ترتيب الأزمنة.

Translate Tweet

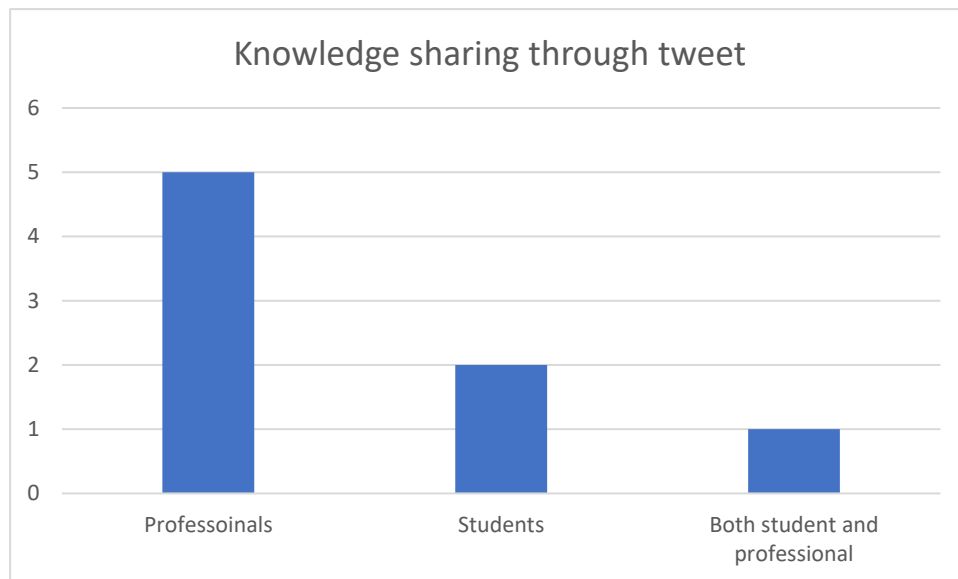


6.2. Result of tweet analysis

The analysis of the tweets under study shows that eight out of the ten tweets aim to share knowledge with others. One of the tweets is intended to share an update, and one obtains feedback from colleagues. The summary of the results can be seen in the graph below:

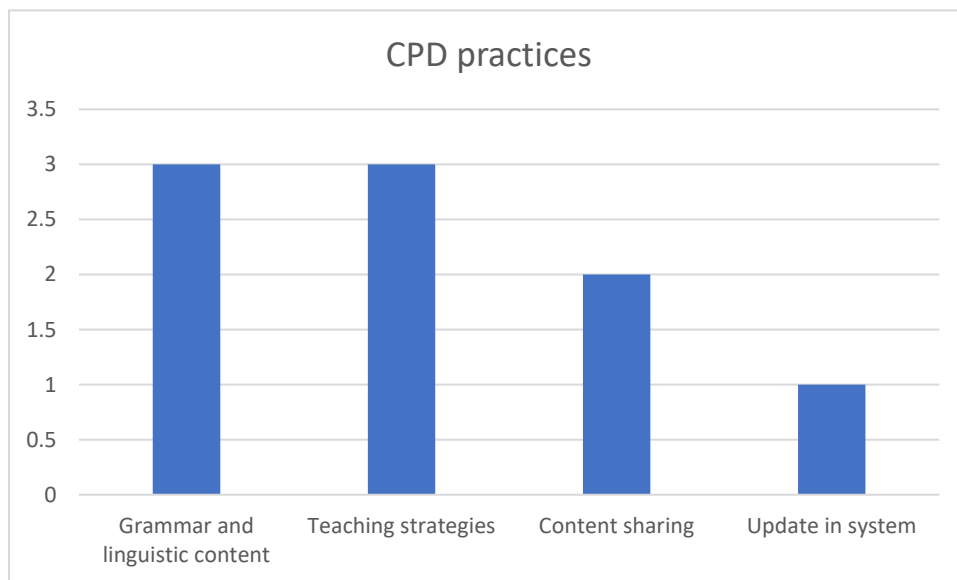


Further analysis of the eight tweets that share knowledge shows that in five of the tweets, EFL teachers are tagged and



mentioned so that various teachers can benefit from knowledge sharing via tweets. The graphs below summarise knowledge sharing through tweets:

In the tweets, the evidence shows that three of them are intended to share grammar and linguistic concepts of English, three are shared as teaching strategies, two of the tweets are for sharing learning content, one is to take feedback on a class activity, and the last one is to share the update in the L1 version of the classroom. The following graph shows the CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers using SNS.



There were ten tweets taken from ten different Saudi EFL teachers' accounts. One conclusion is that Saudi EFL teachers are using SNS for their CPD as a part of their general practices. They are also using social media for professional development. Another noteworthy observation is that the most used SNS platform for CPD among teachers is Twitter. An analysis of their tweets helps to understand that sharing knowledge and ideas may indeed be easily accessible on Twitter, as teachers rarely write lengthy essays to explain their tweet's context. Instead, they use concise sentences with images to make their tweets more readable and understandable.

A deeper examination of the tweets reveals that out of the ten tweets, eight primarily focus on sharing knowledge through SNS. Among these eight tweets, five are intended for EFL professionals, as indicated by the use of hashtags or mentions of professional groups in their tweets. The remaining three tweets are aimed at sharing knowledge and resources with students. One tweet shows a teacher sharing a classroom activity on Twitter, seeking comments, showing that the teacher is using SNS to gather feedback from other professionals. In another tweet, evidence suggests that the teacher has used Twitter to share updates and recent news related to the EFL classroom.

In conclusion, it can be said that some EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are using SNS for CPD. The predominant CPD practice among these Saudi EFL teachers on SNS is sharing knowledge and information related to the English language as a second language. Sharing knowledge with colleagues can help them enhance their understanding collectively. When comparing the results summarised in previous parts of this study, which include interviews and questionnaires, Twitter is one of the most widely used SNS platforms for CPD practices. It is predominantly used for professional purposes, with 143 participants in the questionnaire and 14 out of 15 interviewees selecting Twitter as their preferred platform for CPD. In the interviews, teachers mentioned they use Twitter because it is user-friendly, easy to understand, and its tweet word limit promotes concise and comprehensive messaging. The inclusion of images enhances the impact, as visuals can readily capture attention. Twitter also provides easy access to authors, researchers, and educational professionals, allowing users to stay updated by following them. As summarised in the questionnaire, the regularity of use of SNS for CPD is typically once a week among professionals, and many have been using it for at least 2-4 years. Traditional CPD practices, such as attending seminars, subscribing to journals, and reading articles, are not very common among professionals. However, reading blogs and using SNS are becoming more popular. Social networking sites facilitate connections and enable networking with native English speakers and experts in various fields. They provide direct access to researchers, allowing users to gain the desired knowledge quickly. Integrating SNS as a common element of CPD practices faces significant challenges, including a lack of infrastructure, limited knowledge of using primary social networking sites, time constraints, and hesitancy among Saudi English language teachers.

Chapter 7

Discussion

7.1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to evaluate the CPD practices of EFL teachers and to assess the integration of SNS in their CPD activities. It is essential to highlight the importance of CPD in the teaching experience, so the first research question of this study focused on the general CPD practices of EFL teachers. In research question two, teachers were asked about their use of SNS, particularly for CPD, the SNS they prefer the most, and the reasons for their preference. The third research question aimed to examine the extent and frequency of SNS use for CPD by EFL teachers. The fourth research question aimed to inquire about the EFL teachers' purposes for using SNS for CPD, while the fifth research question focused on their training and assistance needs in using SNS for CPD. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the results obtained from the questionnaire, interviews, and analysis of tweets. The discussion focuses on comparing and contrasting this study's results with the findings from the literature review.

7.2. General CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers:

The first research question of this study focused on the general CPD practices of EFL teachers. To address the first research question, 182 participants undertook a questionnaire about CPD practices, which contained nine different CPD practices. Participants were asked to select which CPD practices they used the most out of these nine options. The results confirmed that around half of the participants disagreed with not using all nine of the CPD practices provided in the questionnaire. Approximately 39% of participants confirmed that they read non-academic digital sources, and 40% of participants agreed to using Zoom or Skype. These findings confirm that the participants used some form of CPD practice, showing the potential incorporation of digitalisation and SNS into Saudi EFL teachers' classroom practices.

These findings align with the results of various previous studies. For example, the findings of Sparks (1994), Zein (2017), and Hinojosa (2022) confirm that teachers engage in various CPD activities by using available resources on social media, highlighting the use of SNS. They also attend workshops, conferences, and seminars using Skype and Zoom, which facilitate the exchange of ideas, views, and practices, all contributing to the development of teachers' CPD. The findings of this study are also consistent with Abdulrazak (2020) and Assalahi (2021), who note that EFL teachers can use various social media platforms to discuss language teaching strategies, share their teaching experiences, and exchange best practices, contributing to their

CPD and creating a proactive learning environment, which is vital for improving students' learning outcomes.

The results of the questionnaire also confirmed a positive correlation between the educational experience of EFL teachers and their use of CPD practices. EFL teachers with more experience are more likely to engage in specific CPD practices. Data from fifteen interviews were collected using open-ended questions, and general CPD practices were categorised based on the participants' familiarity with CPD, their level of education, and their teaching experience. Ten participants answered this question, with four teachers not knowing about CPD, one teacher confirming its importance, and five teachers providing their opinions about CPD. The findings confirmed that participants overall had some understanding of CPD, viewing it as regularly updating their skills and core competencies through both formal and informal training.

These results align with the observations of Diaz-Maggioli (2003), Reynolds (2006), Ravandpour (2019), and Prestridge (2019), who note that CPD is teacher-driven, self-directed, and involves documenting teachers' skills and capabilities. The findings of this research also correspond with Richards and Farrell (2005), Nooruddin & Bhamani (2019), and Khan & Umrani (2023), who suggest that professional qualifications do not solely result from CPD practices. Instead, CPD often leads to informal learning outcomes, such as improvements in teachers' skills and knowledge. These outcomes can enhance teachers' motivation, job performance, and overall impact on students' learning outcomes.

The findings of this research confirm that CPD is about acquiring professional expertise by continuously refining teachers' skills and capabilities. These results align with Ravandpour (2019) and Alzhrani (2023) in the literature, suggesting that CPD is a strategy used by teachers to enhance their skills and adapt to changing requirements in their teaching profession. This improvement in skills and capabilities can be achieved through both formal professional qualifications and engaging with peers through discussions and sharing views. These informal practices contribute to improving teachers' CPD.

The findings of this research also confirm that teachers' educational qualifications influence their understanding of CPD. For example, the interviews revealed that out of fifteen participants, a significant number of Saudi EFL teachers hold advanced degrees in English, with ten teachers having master's degrees and two teachers having obtained PhDs. This shows a commitment to advancing their educational qualifications. However, two teachers chose not to disclose their academic qualifications, possibly because of differences in their academic

backgrounds or privacy reasons. These findings suggest a relationship between teachers' academic qualifications and their CPD practices. For instance, one teacher specifically mentioned having a TEFL certification, demonstrating a more formal approach to CPD.

These research findings correspond with the observations of Wolf & Peele (2019) and Zhao et al. (2019), who contend that teachers are incentivised to undertake formal qualifications, including formal professional development programmes, which are more likely to develop teachers' core knowledge. The findings are also in line with Assalahi (2021), who observes a correlation between academic qualifications and CPD, as Saudi Arabia classifies EFL teachers as 'educators' and 'non-educators' based on their qualifications. Similarly, Alruqi & Alharbi (2022) and Abdullateef et al. (2023) suggest a potential link between formal qualifications and access to formal professional development programmes supported by the Saudi government.

The interviews in this study also confirmed that incorporating contemporary research and publications into teaching methods is a notable CPD practice pursued by EFL teachers. These research findings emphasise the importance of integrating current research and publications into teaching practices, offering a means to improve teachers' CPD. These findings align with Day (1999), Al-Hazmi (2003), Al-Seghayer (2014), and Ahmad & Shah (2022) in the literature, suggesting that academic publications, modern research, and government-sponsored programmes are preferred professional development practices among Saudi teachers.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data analyses in this study confirm that most teachers use digital resources, such as videos, for their professional development. Many also enrol in EFL-related courses and degrees to enhance their qualifications, showing their motivation to engage in formal CPD courses. The comparison of these findings with current literature shows that Saudi EFL teachers display a willingness to develop their qualifications, as evidenced by participants' master's and PhD degrees. These findings fit with those of Diaz-Maggioli (2003), Reynolds (2006), Prestridge (2019), and Rahimi (2023), who observe that teachers pursue advanced academic qualifications to enhance their skills and capabilities, impacting their CPD practices. This highlights the relationship between the academic qualifications of teachers, their teaching experience, and their CPD practices.

The results of this study suggest that, although EFL teachers may employ SNS for their CPD, their use is not as significant as compared to their peers in western countries. This shows that teachers can prioritise specific areas of their core knowledge based on their individual identities, specific needs, and current levels of expertise. Decisions influenced by these factors

may shape their pathways for CPD. For example, a teacher whose professional identity revolves around imparting knowledge may place a strong emphasis on pedagogical expertise and linguistic fluency, while potentially allocating less focus to cultural expertise (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012).

Prestridge (2019)'s model also aligns with the notion of Saudi teachers utilising digital sources and suggests that, as information consumers and networkers, EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia can access pedagogic and cultural knowledge more readily. However, they may predominantly extract information and knowledge from SNS without actively contributing to them. Likewise, Luo et al. (2020) assert that teachers often employ a combination of blogs and social networking sites to engage with other teachers, whether they are in proximity or placed globally. This interaction allows them to exchange valuable information, contributing to the development of their core knowledge.

In the literature review, there is no consistent definition of CPD. Therefore, when sharing data with EFL teachers, CPD was defined and clarified for them using the basic concept of CPD. CPD pertains to the professional development activities in which a professional shows interest and participates (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Reynolds, 2006). As noted by Ravandpour (2019), CPD can encompass activities for professional growth started by EFL teachers themselves. Teachers have the autonomy to choose which professional development opportunities to pursue and how best to achieve their CPD goals, such as increasing their understanding of using virtual reality in the classroom. These methods may involve both formal and informal learning techniques, including the use of social media to promote cooperative learning (Prestridge, 2019). Teachers routinely document the development of their skills and the outcomes achieved through learning as part of CPD.

The results of this study confirm that Saudi EFL teachers displayed different approaches to CPD, aligning with the multifaceted nature of CPD, as illustrated in the literature. There was consensus among participants in defining CPD, with CPD seen to refine one's skills and capabilities. This lines up with the findings of Diaz-Maggioli (2003), Richards and Farrell (2005), and Reynolds (2006). To ensure consistent responses, the concept of CPD was clarified with the teachers during interviews, addressing the lack of a common understanding about CPD among Saudi EFL teachers. This finding suggests the need to refine the concept of CPD, as suggested by Sparks (1994) and Prestridge (2019) in the literature.

The results of this study also revealed that Saudi EFL teachers adopted various approaches to CPD. Some teachers believed in formal CPD programmes offered by the government or

organisations, such as courses offered by Tatweer, while others preferred independent, self-directed, and informal CPD programmes. For example, participants in interviews mentioned using social networking platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as informal but valuable tools to integrate virtual reality into their teaching and learning. This finding corresponds with the notion of autonomy proposed by Ravandpour (2019), where teachers actively choose opportunities that align with their CPD goals.

The results highlight the need to acknowledge and adapt to different CPD practices among Saudi EFL teachers, recognising that CPD encompasses both structured (formal) and unstructured (informal) practices, including the use of social networking sites (SNS), as proposed by Prestridge (2019). Saudi EFL teachers show diversity in their CPD practices, with some choosing formal government-sponsored programmes and others relying on informal resources, such as virtual resources and various social networking sites. However, this diversity does not show the extent to which Saudi EFL teachers have fully integrated digital resources, including SNS, into their teaching practices. This issue aligns with the concerns raised by Albaqami & Alzhrani (2022) regarding the potential negative impact of teachers' insufficient digital literacy on their CPD. Addressing this challenge is crucial to improving teachers' CPD and aligning with the findings of Rahimi (2023).

When examining CPD practices, it is important to analyse whether these are externally governed, such as by education ministries, or managed by employers. The study found that few Saudi EFL teachers had an awareness about official, government-sponsored PD programmes and participated in those programmes, and these provided limited autonomy to teachers in achieving their pedagogical goals. These findings fit with those of Mitchell (2013), who noted that government-sponsored PD programmes impose bureaucratic control and may undermine teachers' autonomy in pursuing their instructional goals, potentially hindering their professional development. Teachers typically have limited autonomy in achieving their instructional goals as part of PD programmes. Formal certifications upon completing PD courses are common (Sparks, 1994; Akerson & Hanuscin, 2007). Concurrently, PD programmes involve either government bodies, such as local education ministries, employers, or institutes, to facilitate professionals' advancement in their field (Loucks-Horsley, 1996; Komba & Nkumbi, 2008).

A related aspect is the evaluation of CPD outcomes. While this research did not delve into the evaluation of CPD outcomes, Saudi EFL teachers engaged in informal CPD platforms, such as SNS, are also responsible for evaluating their CPD outcomes. One way to achieve this is by maintaining records of their skill and capability development, as commonly defined by most

interview participants. This corresponds to the findings of Mitchell (2013) and underscores the significance of teachers documenting their CPD outcomes.

It is important to highlight the role of Tatweer as an example of a formal PD programme sponsored by the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE). According to Tatweer (2018), the Tatweer initiative plays a pivotal role as a source of PD programmes in Saudi Arabia, primarily focusing on aligning with international standards for EFL instruction. These international standards encompass key aspects such as language, culture, evaluation, and instruction, as defined by the global EFL teacher community (TESOL, 2019). The Tatweer project offers a range of PD programmes, each tailored to specific objectives, including education and training, curriculum development, improving the classroom learning environment, and implementing extracurricular activities (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020). Tatweer operates as an organisation dedicated to planning and financing CPD activities for EFL teachers.

One of Tatweer's objectives is to ensure the integration of robust virtual technology into teaching and learning, underscoring the importance of SNS in this context. Tatweer serves as an example of a project reflecting the Saudi MoE's commitment to enhancing the professional development of Saudi EFL teachers and aligning their teaching practices with global standards, as suggested by Tatweer (2018). The results of this study also confirm that Saudi EFL teachers engage in individual CPD using virtual resources and SNS, thus adopting more of an informal approach to CPD. This individualised approach to CPD aligns well with the formal PD programmes offered by Tatweer, suggesting that by incorporating virtual resources and SNS into Tatweer's formal PD programmes, both formal and informal learning practices can be integrated into teaching, vital for improving teachers' CPD. This aspect is discussed further in the next section.

7.2.1 PD programmes and CPD of EFL teachers:

In the current literature, there was a gap in PD programmes among Saudi EFL teachers. Most of the EFL teachers in this study, specifically 59 participants, agreed that they were aware of government-initiated PD programmes and understood the entry requirements. Additionally, 2 EFL teachers 'strongly agreed' that they were aware of government-initiated programmes and the associated entry requirements. This shows that, contrary to the literature, which suggests that Saudi EFL teachers have limited awareness of formal PD programmes (Assulaimani, 2019, El Deen (2023), the results of this study confirm that Saudi EFL teachers have some awareness of formal PD programmes. One reason linked to participants' increased awareness of formal PD programmes may be attributed to 'The Human Capability Development Programme under Saudi Vision 2030,' which has led to a significant increase in participation in formal PD

programmes, as noted by Mohiuddin et al. (2023) in the literature. Similarly, Tatweer is another government-initiated PD programme, with one of its objectives being to enhance the professional development of teachers, including English language teachers, and to integrate modern technology with social media platforms to modernise education in Saudi Arabia.

The results of this study sharply contrast with the findings of Zhao et al. (2019) and Lindyall and Ryve (2019), who have found no empirical evidence that formal PD programmes significantly contribute to the development of foundational knowledge among EFL teachers. Lindyall and Ryve (2019) reviewed 95 publications focusing on the PD policies implemented by governments and concluded that, despite their emphasis, these programmes have not significantly improved instructors' fundamental knowledge or student performance. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2019) noted that the CPD of EFL teachers is not closely governed and administered by the MoE, even though there has been an increased emphasis on the need to learn English as a foreign language over the past few decades.

One reason that can be attributed to the improved awareness of participants about formal PD programmes is the increasing involvement of the MoE in Saudi Arabia in local training centres for PD programme implementation. While the MoE centrally manages all formal PD programmes, local training centres have been granted some autonomy by the MoE to implement formal PD programmes. This autonomy may enhance the effectiveness of these formal PD programmes by allowing them to address teacher behaviour and local educational challenges. The role of behaviour-centric interventions is highlighted in the literature, as they focus on gathering teachers' perspectives on CPD and ensure the inclusion of objectives related to teachers' behaviour, which can enhance their skills, capabilities, and knowledge which are integral components of CPD. This approach can lead to improvements in both teaching and learning outcomes, as suggested by El-Deen (2023).

It can therefore be argued that local PD training centres in Saudi Arabia may play an important role in incorporating teachers' behavioural objectives and addressing local educational challenges related to curriculum, technology, religion, and culture into their formal PD programmes. These formal PD programmes can be essential in improving teachers' awareness of CPD, particularly since they aim to include electronic training networks and integrate ICT into EFL teaching, as stated in the literature by Alharbi (2008) and Assulaimani (2019), both of which apply to the CPD of EFL teachers.

Regarding the third core knowledge question related to awareness of government-owned PD programmes, most Saudi EFL teachers were familiar with these programmes, which play a significant role in improving teachers' CPD. These results do not align with the findings of

Almazroa & Al-Shamrani (2015) and Alnefaie (2016) in the literature, who observed that EFL and science teachers did not consider PD in Saudi Arabia as effective. According to Alnefaie (2016), one reason for this issue is that these PD programmes are centrally managed and designed by the MoE without involving teachers in the course design. Conversely, the results of this study have shown that EFL teachers are aware of formal PD programmes, and since local training centres are increasingly involved and are striving to design formal PD programmes by considering local education challenges and incorporating teachers' behaviour-related objectives, it can be concluded that initiatives are being implemented to incorporate teachers' feedback into formal PD programmes, which may contribute to improving teachers' CPD.

7.2.2 Core Knowledge of EFL teachers

The core knowledge of Saudi EFL teachers in this study was assessed using a questionnaire with six questions, and the responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. According to the perceptions of EFL teachers, the majority showed they possessed core knowledge related to EFL. For example, they had an awareness of new developments in classroom systems, knowledge of independent research, and some understanding of linguistic phenomena relevant to teaching. The results of this study revealed that approximately 54.3% of participants either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they were aware of new classroom trends. These findings align with previous research conducted by Diaz-Maggioli (2003), Reynolds (2006), Komba & Nkumbi (2008), Ono & Ferreira (2010), Kryvonis (2013), OECD (2020), and Addae (2022). These studies have emphasised the importance of incorporating new classroom trends into teaching and adapting to changing educational landscapes through innovative strategies. Such adaptability is crucial for creating experiential learning environments, which are essential for improving teachers' CPD.

The results confirmed that a majority of teachers (67.3%) either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they had knowledge of methods for managing students' behaviour. This aligns with the findings of Goodyear et al. (2019), Chouana (2022), and Mercer et al. (2022), who have highlighted effective classroom management as a significant factor in improving students' engagement and overall teaching and learning outcomes. Effective classroom management is also closely linked to enhancing teachers' CPD. However, it is worth noting that around 32.1% of participants 'disagreed' or 'neither agreed nor disagreed' regarding their knowledge of methods for managing students' behaviour. This highlights an area where some teachers may need to improve their core knowledge.

Regarding proficiency in English, approximately 80.4% of participants either 'disagreed' or 'neither agreed nor disagreed' that they were highly proficient in English. This suggests that various teachers do not consider themselves highly proficient in English. This could be attributed to how effectively EFL teachers use English in their professional and daily lives, as noted by Huang and Huo (2019). Given that Arabic is the native language of both students and teachers in Saudi Arabia, it often becomes the primary language of communication, which may explain the lack of English proficiency among some teachers. In terms of knowledge of English linguistic phenomena, the study found that a majority (50.9%) of participants either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they had knowledge in this area. However, 52.9% neither 'agreed' nor 'disagreed,' indicating an overall ambiguity about their core knowledge in this aspect.

In Saudi Arabia, teachers' core knowledge is categorised into two sub-categories: educators and non-educators. Educators possess relevant experience and certifications, while non-educators hold a master's degree or above but lack experience and certification. The data from this study revealed that every individual classified as a non-educator held at least a bachelor's degree in English. Core knowledge encompasses three aspects: pedagogical, cultural, and language knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge includes understanding contemporary methods of instruction and classroom management, such as instructional games and the use of digital whiteboards. Language ability pertains to how effectively EFL instructors use English in both their professional and personal lives, as well as their understanding of how students learn English.

The last two questions in this study examined teachers' perceptions of their language proficiency and knowledge. EFL teachers believed they had knowledge of relevant linguistic phenomena, but there were mixed responses regarding their perceived English proficiency. Cultural knowledge involves an understanding of cultural artefacts and phenomena related to language, such as TV shows, music, books, and idiomatic expressions, as noted in the literature by Nguyen (2016) and Cantrell et al. (2022). This cultural knowledge is essential for effective language teaching. Overall, these results offer insights about the core knowledge of Saudi EFL teachers, suggesting both strengths and areas of improvement.

7.3 Most used SNS for CPD and reasons for their use

The second research question of this study aimed to examine which SNS are most frequently used by Saudi EFL teachers for their CPD and to determine the underlying reasons for using those SNS. Approximately twelve different SNS were mentioned in the questionnaire, and the same options were given to participants in the interviews. According to quantitative analysis, the most frequently used SNS was Twitter, chosen by most EFL teachers, followed by

YouTube. The results of this study show that a significant majority of EFL teachers, 143 out of 156 participants, confirmed using Twitter for CPD. The second most used SNS, according to 97 participants, was YouTube. WhatsApp ranked as the third most used SNS, as reported by 45 participants in this study.

In the qualitative analysis, the same trend was observed as Twitter was mentioned as the preferred SNS for CPD by all 15 participants. Nine participants mentioned using YouTube, six mentioned Facebook and Telegram, four mentioned Instagram, two mentioned Google Plus, one mentioned WhatsApp, one mentioned Skype, and one participant mentioned using LinkedIn as a source for CPD. These findings, therefore, confirm Twitter as the most used SNS, followed by YouTube.

These research findings are supported by existing literature. For instance, Fungchomchoei and Kardkarnklai (2016) reported in their study that language teachers in the Gulf countries use Twitter to contact their colleagues and YouTube to view lectures on new teaching and classroom management practices. Similar findings are reported in the literature by Ngo (2018) and Yuan and Mak (2018), as well as Carpenter et al. (2023), who note that EFL teachers use SNS like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to enhance their pedagogical knowledge and teaching practices. These platforms also facilitate collaboration and networking, which are valuable resources for improving teachers' CPD.

Both Twitter and YouTube are effective SNS for enhancing EFL teachers' core knowledge and cultural knowledge. This aligns with Day (1993), who believes that EFL instructors must be knowledgeable in pedagogy and culture. Therefore, SNS have the potential to improve the core knowledge of EFL teachers. Similarly, findings from Goodyear et al. (2019) and Njenga (2023) confirm that EFL teachers use SNS, including Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, to engage with professional learning communities (PLCs), exchange ideas, and promote the use of modern technologies, all of which are vital for improving teachers' CPD. The results of this study also align with the findings of Moghavvemi et al. (2018), who highlight the usefulness of YouTube as an SNS for offering various visual and multimedia content, which can be used by students to gather information and develop their understanding of complex topics, thus contributing to improved student learning.

This study posits that SNS can contribute to teachers' core knowledge, particularly in terms of cultural knowledge, which is a critical component of EFL teaching. For example, Topkaya and Celik (2016) explored the perceptions of CPD among EFL teachers at different career stages and found that teachers defined professional development as using various resources and applying their knowledge effectively. Although this study did not explicitly address the role of

SNS in cultural knowledge acquisition, it indicated that EFL teachers used Twitter and Facebook posts to acquire knowledge of new teaching exercises. However, it did not clarify whether SNS were sources of cultural knowledge (Topkaya & Celik, 2016; Elyas & Al-Ghamdi, 2018).

Using SNS for CPD and knowledge-sharing with colleagues and students, as well as integrating modern technology and social media platforms into the classroom, is considered topical, as noted by Becker et al. (2017), Prestridge (2019), and El Deen (2023). Teachers in current study have mentioned Twitter's concise tweets and its various features, such as hashtags and retweets, as vital for creating and sharing useful content that enhances EFL learning. Similar findings are reported in the literature by Tang & Hew (2017), Greenhow & Galvin (2020), and Carpenter et al. (2023), which highlight that using tweets, retweets, hashtags, and replies can foster connections among teachers and students. These connections are essential for co-creating content that guides and shapes the shared experiences of teachers and students, ultimately improving educational outcomes for both.

Likewise, Twitter's usefulness for English language learning and networking is supported by Krutka et al. (2019), who note that various SNS, including Twitter, offer a strong platform for communicating with peers, engaging in extensive discussions with different viewpoints, and facilitating reflective discourses that contribute to teachers' CPD. As Prestridge (2019) suggests, Saudi EFL teachers are likely to be 'info consumers,' using specific SNS to watch educational videos on YouTube or read Twitter feeds of native English speakers, both employed by EFL academics. Twitter also provides an easy way to contact colleagues and stay updated with educational advancements through following official educational news.

Another highlighted reason for choosing Twitter is that it is more conducive to conversational modes of communication in a social media environment and offers the possibility for action-based learning (Liu & Hung, 2020). Educators can follow relevant hashtags on Twitter, make comments, and engage in discussions on current events. This informal mode of learning can significantly contribute to teachers' professional growth. For example, Twitter's hashtags can play a significant part in creating personal learning networks, which are vital for improving teachers' CPD (Prestridge, 2019; Santisteban et al., 2020).

The role of SNS in this context could be crucial, as they have the potential to encourage self-directed learning, which can contribute to enhancing teachers' CPD (Smith, 2017). Teachers can use SNS to facilitate self-directed CPD by selecting suitable activities that are accessible 24/7 which can help them achieve their pedagogical goals through empirical and action-based

learning (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Smith, 2017; Alshaikhi, 2020). Consequently, teachers regard it as a supplementary learning resource for English language instruction.

7.4 The Extent of SNS use for CPD

In the third research question, Saudi EFL teachers were asked about their frequency of usage SNS for CPD. It also included the number of years they have been using SNS, with the collected data linked to the EFL teaching experience of these educators. Results from both qualitative and quantitative analyses indicate that the majority of participants were using SNS for their professional growth at least once a month. Quantitative data analysis revealed that out of the 156 teachers, 73 reported using SNS for CPD once a week, 62 stated they used it daily, 19 mentioned using SNS once every two weeks, and 2 claimed to use it once a month. Therefore, based on the quantitative data analysis for research question three, it can be concluded that Saudi EFL teachers use SNS for CPD at least once a week.

These findings fit with previous studies in the literature review. For example, studies by Lenhart (2020) and Rahimi (2023) note that teachers regularly use SNS to connect with peers and provide interpersonal feedback, which aids in individual identity construction and positively impacts teachers' CPD. Similarly, studies by Gao et al. (2012), Greenhow & Galvin (2020), Bui (2022), and Carpenter et al. (2023) suggest that regular use of SNS can generate social capital, and platforms like Twitter can enhance engagement, learning, and networking, advocating for their regular integration into teaching and learning.

Another aspect examined in this research is the duration for which Saudi EFL teachers have been using SNS. Questionnaire results show that most of 62 teachers had used SNS for 4-6 years, 40 teachers for the last 6-8 years, 29 teachers for over 8 years, 20 teachers for 2-4 years, and the remaining 5 teachers for the last 1-2 years. Qualitative data analysis revealed that 5 teachers used SNS daily for CPD, 2 used SNS weekly, and 4 used SNS less frequently. These results overall indicate that Saudi EFL teachers have adopted SNS to facilitate their professional development and create an effective learning environment. These findings align with the observations of Greenhow & Galvin (2020), who noted that SNS offer effective learning environments for students by including asynchronous online components that allow students to progress at their own pace and have some control over their learning experiences, ultimately improving learning outcomes.

The theoretical framework model presented in the literature review divides the use of SNS into three categories: cognitive use, where EFL teachers keep track of what their colleagues share on SNS; hedonistic usage, where individuals deliberately search for content, such as relevant material on YouTube; and social use, where EFL teachers directly interact with other

professionals through direct conversations (Poecze et al., 2018). Data analysis in this study found that Saudi EFL teachers employed all three usages, as they sought updates, shared knowledge, and used YouTube to prepare class content. In quantitative analysis, a positive correlation was found between teachers' teaching experience, age, and the extent of SNS use. Sharing knowledge is another reason educators use social media for continuing professional development (Prestridge, 2019). Social networking sites align well with social constructivist learning theories (Vygotsky, 1978), as they foster environments rich in discussion and diffuse leadership, where those with knowledge can help others as needed, supporting learning through scaffolding (Jenkins et al., 2009; Prestridge, 2019). Roberts and Butler (2014) propose that social networking sites can leverage the web's communicative and collaborative capabilities to create more learner-centric experiences, potentially transforming pedagogical processes, including teacher professional development. The summary of the discussion of the results presented in this section is provided in table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Summary of discussion of results about the extent of use of SNS for CPD

Aspect	Summary of discussion of results about the extent of use of SNS for CPD
Frequency of SNS use for CPD	<p>Majority use SNS for professional growth at least once a month.</p> <p>73 teachers use SNS for CPD once a week.</p> <p>62 teachers use SNS daily.</p> <p>19 teachers use SNS once every two weeks.</p> <p>2 teachers use SNS once a month.</p> <p>Overall result: Saudi EFL teachers use SNS for CPD at least once a week.</p>
Duration of SNS use	<p>Most teachers (62) have used SNS for 4-6 years.</p> <p>40 teachers have used SNS for 6-8 years.</p> <p>29 teachers have used SNS for over 8 years.</p> <p>20 teachers have used SNS for 2-4 years.</p> <p>5 teachers have used SNS for 1-2 years.</p> <p>5 teachers use SNS daily for CPD.</p> <p>2 teachers use SNS weekly.</p> <p>4 teachers use SNS less frequently.</p> <p>Overall result: Saudi EFL teachers have adopted SNS for professional development and creating effective learning environments.</p>

Theoretical Framework Model Categories	Cognitive use: Keeping track of colleagues' SNS sharing. Hedonistic usage: Deliberately searching for relevant content, e.g., on YouTube. Social use: Direct interaction with other professionals through conversations. Overall result: Saudi EFL teachers employ all three uses, seeking updates, sharing knowledge, and using YouTube for class content.
Correlation with Teaching Experience	Positive correlation found between teaching experience, age, and the extent of SNS use for CPD.
Importance of Sharing Knowledge	Educators use social media for sharing knowledge and professional development, aligning with social constructivist learning theories and supporting learning through scaffolding.
Transformation Potential of SNS	Social networking sites have the potential to transform pedagogical processes, including teacher professional development.

7.5 Purpose of using SNS for CPD

Research question four aimed to inquire about the purposes for which Saudi EFL teachers use SNS to enhance their CPD. The questionnaire included ten distinct purposes, and this same question was posed during interviews. Ten tweets from teachers were analysed to discern the motivations behind using SNS for CPD. The results of the questionnaire analysis affirm that approximately 87% of teachers either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with using SNS to connect with other EFL teachers. These findings show that a majority of EFL teachers utilise SNS for interacting with their peers. These outcomes align with the research of Prestridge (2019), Lenhart (2020), and Rahimi (2023), who have observed that EFL teachers utilise SNS to engage with colleagues, share ideas, perspectives, and knowledge, which aids in shaping their professional identity and contributes to their CPD. It is essential to note that these results may not fully correspond with general findings in the literature, as they are specific to the Saudi context and may differ from the experiences of teachers in Western countries, as highlighted by Liou and Daly (2018).

The questionnaire results also reveal that approximately 71% of teachers 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they use SNS to gather feedback from students, while a striking 90% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with using SNS to watch educational videos and tutorials. These findings are consistent with the research of Stevenson et al. (2016), Valdmann et al. (2017), and Mercer et

al. (2022), which emphasises that teachers employ SNS for self-reflection and to elicit feedback from students, leading to improved student engagement and assisting teachers in assessing their CPD goals through self-reflective information. Similarly, the outcomes of this study are in line with the findings of previous research by Becker et al. (2017), Greenhow & Galvin (2020), and Khoza (2021), which show that teachers use various SNS platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, to access extensive content such as videos and tutorials related to English language learning, which can help to enhance students' English language proficiency. The analysis of questionnaire data further confirms that approximately 85% of teachers 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they have used SNS to share knowledge with other EFL teachers, while approximately 76% of teachers 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they have utilised SNS to get feedback from their colleagues. These results are consistent with the findings of Vangrieken et al. (2017), Luo et al. (2020), Al-Maatouk et al. (2020), Sharma (2022), and Abakah (2023) in the literature, which suggest that teachers use SNS to get feedback from other professionals by establishing communities of practice (CoP), where teachers exchange ideas, experiences, and receive feedback on their performance, fostering collaborative learning which is an essential aspect of improving teachers' CPD. Similar results are echoed in the literature by Sutherland (2020), who shows that SNS is used for seeking feedback from other teachers, with constructive feedback offering emotional and professional support that contributes to teachers' CPD.

The questionnaire analysis showed that approximately 83% of teachers 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they have employed SNS to discover new teaching methods, and 75% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they have used SNS to stay updated with current news. A majority of 96% of teachers 'agreed' that they have employed SNS to motivate students, while 83% stated that they have used SNS for inspiration and to encourage creativity. These findings align with the results of previous studies in the literature, such as those conducted by Yumru (2015), Worden (2019), and Abakah (2023), which emphasise that SNS enables teachers to explore innovative teaching methods, contributing to the development of their pedagogical knowledge. SNS also serves as a valuable source of news and updates, promoting collaboration and networking. These findings are supported by Papageorgiou et al. (2019) and Nkundabakura et al. (2019), who note that staying updated on recent news and sharing updates about teaching practices enhances teachers' pedagogical knowledge, enabling them to improve their teaching practices continually, which is an integral aspect of teachers' CPD.

The qualitative data analysis through interviews in this study also confirms the diverse purposes for which teachers use SNS for CPD. Eight teachers in interviews provided various reasons for

using SNS for CPD, such as connecting with native English-speaking professionals, acquiring insights for new research, and enhancing their English language skills. A similar trend was observed in the analysis of tweets in this study, wherein five teachers confirmed using tweets for sharing knowledge, three teachers confirmed using tweets for sharing knowledge and resources with students, one teacher confirmed using tweets to share classroom activities, and another teacher confirmed using tweets to share news and updates.

One of the primary motives for using SNS was to share knowledge with students and colleagues. In this study, all participants agreed they used SNS for sharing and gaining knowledge, categorised as cognitive usage. EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia can choose the SNS usage style that suits them, such as reading the Twitter feeds of EFL teachers in Western countries, potentially leading to the development of fundamental pedagogical knowledge, which aids in CPD. Building professional networks is another primary purpose of teachers' SNS usage, enabling them to connect with educators who share their interests, exchange knowledge, ideas, and best practices. This helps EFL teachers stay updated with new developments in English language teaching, allowing them to interact with their students and impart knowledge through social interaction, as noted by Cavus et al. (2021).

Users of SNS who actively contribute and seek information may enhance their linguistic or cultural proficiency. Increased SNS usage could significantly boost teachers' proficiency in these areas, as noted by Johnsons & Johnsons (2017). According to Durak (2019), social networking sites play a critical role in enhancing teachers' CPD by offering pre-service teachers, or future teachers, the opportunity to manage their own learning, strengthening their ties to the academic community and fostering collaboration during the learning process. This preparation helps them overcome challenges associated with using social networking sites in their classrooms once they become formal teachers.

Another vital strategy when integrating social networking sites into the classroom is to focus on relationship-building and providing interpersonal feedback, which aids in creating one's own identity and is crucial in strengthening teachers' CPD, as noted by Lenhart (2020). Utilising social media, such as incorporating Twitter into lectures, can enhance student engagement in learning and interpersonal relations, thus improving motivation to learn, as indicated by Gao et al. (2012). Integrating social networking sites into education can be achieved by using social media as an informal backchannel. Twitter can also be used to contact the publishers of EFL textbooks (cognitive and social SNS usage) and share educational videos among students using Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp (social SNS usage), as discussed by Manca & Ranieri (2016).

Social media can enhance one's social capital, and incorporating it into lessons, such as including Twitter, can increase students' interest in their studies and their ability to form relationships, which might positively affect students' motivation, as noted by Gao et al. (2012). The outcomes of this study underscore the benefits of using SNS, as it can enhance student-teacher interaction, increase student interest and motivation, and broaden the educational perspectives of both teachers and students, as shown by Lee et al. (2019).

Similar results were observed in the current study, wherein teachers stated SNS is helping them learn new strategies. As the world becomes more digital, the trend of using SNS as an educational tool is on the rise and is expected to continue growing. This study aimed to fill a gap in the literature by investigating whether SNS practices can contribute to the development and progress of EFL teachers' pedagogical skills. The significant positive correlation between SNS usage, duration of use, and teaching experience underscores the importance of SNS in enhancing CPD practices and core knowledge among Saudi EFL teachers significantly. The summary of the discussion of the results presented in this section is provided in table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Summary of discussion of results about purpose of using SNS for CPD

Aspect	Summary of Discussion on Results about Purpose of Using SNS for CPD
Research Focus	Explored Saudi EFL teachers' use of SNS for CPD.
Research Methods	Employed questionnaires, interviews, and tweet analysis.
Connecting with Peers	Approximately 87% of teachers use SNS for connecting with EFL peers.
	Supported by research from Prestridge (2019), Lenhart (2020), and Rahimi (2023).
Student Feedback and Educational Content	71% of teachers use SNS for gathering student feedback. 90% for educational videos.
	Aligns with Stevenson (2016), Valdmann (2017), and Mercer (2022)'s findings.
	Various SNS platforms, e.g., YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, are used for content related to English language learning.
Sharing Knowledge and Receiving Feedback	85% use SNS to share knowledge. 76% for colleagues' feedback.

	Consistent with research by Vangrieken (2017), Luo (2020), Al-Maatouk (2020), Sharma (2022), and Abakah (2023).
	SNS fosters collaborative learning.
Discovering Teaching Methods and Staying Informed	83% employ SNS to discover teaching methods. 75% for current news.
	Similar to Yumru (2015), Worden (2019), and Abakah (2023)'s findings.
	SNS as a source of pedagogical knowledge and news.
Diverse Purposes from Interviews and Tweets	Qualitative data from interviews confirms diverse SNS purposes.
	Sharing knowledge with students and colleagues is a primary motive.
	Cognitive usage aids pedagogical knowledge.
	Building professional networks to stay updated.
Enhancing Linguistic and Cultural Proficiency	Active SNS users enhance linguistic and cultural proficiency.
	SNS valuable for pre-service teachers.
Relationship-Building and Interpersonal Feedback	Focus on relationship-building and interpersonal feedback.
	Integrating SNS into education enhances student engagement.
	SNS contributes to student-teacher interaction and motivation.
Growing Trend in SNS Usage for Education	Trend of using SNS as an educational tool is growing.
Positive Correlation with Experience	Positive correlation between SNS usage, duration, and teaching experience.

7.6 Covid-19 Pandemic and use of SNS for CPD in Saudi EFL teachers

In the qualitative semi-structured interviews, one of the EFL teachers remarked that the Covid pandemic has contributed to the proliferation of SNS for CPD. Despite efforts made since 2015 to integrate modern technology into the Saudi education system, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has made remote teaching and learning a global norm. A similar trend has been

observed in Saudi Arabia, as noted by one EFL teacher during the interview. These findings align with previous studies in the existing literature. For instance, Greenhow et al. (2021) noted that the Covid-19 pandemic affected education systems worldwide, placing new demands on teachers' professional development to transition to online teaching. Similar findings are documented in the literature by Carrillo and Flores (2020), Winter et al. (2021), and Du et al. (2023), who observed that teachers began using SNS such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube as a norm to exchange ideas, participate in academic discussions, and share their classroom practices. Online teaching and learning replaced traditional classroom learning during Covid-19.

Similar results are also reported by Brouwer et al. (2020), who noted the shift from traditional classroom education to virtual classes during the Covid-19 pandemic. They concluded that the use of virtual communication tools, including multimedia and social media, increased during the pandemic. However, the findings of Brouwer et al. (2020) also highlighted certain constraints in third-world countries, as they grapple with a shortage of resources, making the integration of modern technology and SNS a challenge in these countries. This situation may also apply to Saudi Arabia, where a significant number of schools are in rural areas where the availability of technology and digital resources, including SNS, can be a challenge. Therefore, this presents an area for improvement for the Saudi MoE.

Overall, the results confirm that there has been a surge in using virtual communication tools during the pandemic. Similar findings are reported in the literature by Camilleri and Camilleri (2021), who state that since the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers have extensively utilised social media, LMS, and video conferencing tools like Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet to share resources and conduct lessons. SNS have the advantage of offering action-based learning, which, according to Edwards (2019) and Greenhow and Galvin (2020), is a professional development strategy that equips EFL teachers with the skills to reflect on their agency. Table 7.3 provides a summary of discussion of results in this section.

Table 7.3: Covid-19 Pandemic and use of SNS for CPD by Saudi EFL teachers

Aspect	Summary of Discussion of Results
Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on SNS and CPD	The pandemic led to a global surge in EFL teachers using SNS for CPD.
	Remote teaching and learning became the norm in Saudi Arabia and worldwide.

	Studies by Greenhow et al. (2021), Carrillo and Flores (2020), Winter et al. (2021), and Du et al. (2023) support this trend, highlighting SNS adoption for academic discussions.
	Resource constraints in schools in rural areas of Saudi Arabia posed challenges.
Use of Virtual Communication Tools	There was a significant increase in using virtual communication tools for educational purposes.
	Globally, teachers turned to platforms like Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet, promoting action-based learning and professional development.

7.7 Training and Assistance of Saudi EFL teachers for the usage of SNS for CPD

The final research question aimed to explore the potential training and assistance programmes that could enhance the effectiveness and use of SNS for CPD among Saudi EFL teachers. This question gathered responses from interviews, where participants were initially asked about potential barriers and then about possible solutions to overcome these obstacles. A significant number of teachers in the interviews highlighted a major barrier to using SNS for CPD: a lack of understanding of how SNS can support teaching, learning, and professional development. For instance, one teacher noted that perceptions of SNS vary among educators, and their integration into the classroom depends on perceived importance. This highlights the importance of ease of use and accessibility as key factors. Additionally, slow internet connections and inadequate digital infrastructure, common concerns in Saudi Arabia, were mentioned by participants.

Issues related to internet availability and connectivity have been widely discussed in prior studies. Alhaddad (2018), Bai and Lo (2018), Bui (2022), Rasmitadila et al. (2020), Mohalik and Sahoo (2020), Albaqami & Alzhrani (2022), and Ventista & Brown (2023) have all noted similar challenges faced by EFL teachers due to technical issues and infrastructure limitations. Another significant barrier identified in interviews is the lack of government support, with the MoE not mandating the use of SNS in classrooms. These findings concord with studies by Al-Hazmi (2003), Al-Seghayer (2014), and Ahmad & Shah (2022), which suggest that Saudi EFL teachers prefer government-sponsored programmes over self-directed learning. Policy

directives from the MoE could significantly improve SNS adoption in Saudi Arabian classrooms.

To enhance SNS usage for CPD among EFL teachers, the MoE should consider offering higher salaries, bonuses, and flexible work arrangements, as recommended by Ahmad & Shah (2022) and Alshammary et al. (2023). Cultural and religious beliefs of Saudi teachers may discourage SNS use for professional development (Alqahtani, 2019). Addressing this issue could involve conducting seminars and training programmes to project a positive image of using modern technology while respecting cultural and religious values, as suggested by Wenger et al. (2008) and Wang et al. (2023). The participants also discussed the need to provide additional training to EFL professionals to enhance their digital competencies. As part of the Tatweer project, only a few teachers in Saudi Arabia are familiar with digital learning tools, and some may not be comfortable using SNS for CPD (Atapattu et al., 2019).

Time constraints in the classroom were highlighted as a significant barrier to adopting virtual or hybrid systems. Most teachers also noted that Saudi EFL teachers lack familiarity with SNS for academic purposes, emphasising the need for proper training. English language and communication courses can be planned to use SNS as part of in-service teachers' training programmes. The Tatweer initiative plays a crucial role in funding CPD activities for EFL teachers. However, it is unclear whether the Tatweer project has significantly improved CPD (Wedell & Alshumaimeri, 2014; Gaffas, 2019; Alzhrani, 2023). Therefore, fresh approaches are needed to enhance CPD beyond the Tatweer initiative.

Cooperative learning theory suggests that using SNS can potentially directly contribute to improving EFL teachers' CPD and expanding their knowledge base (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Saudi Arabian EFL instructors can use SNS to consume information from educators in Western countries, fostering the development of pedagogical knowledge. Lack of learners' engagement and a lack of training in digital literacy negatively affect teachers' CPD when using SNS (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Conducting training and mentorship programmes on the effective integration of SNS into the curriculum can help develop a positive perception of using SNS for educational purposes. As students increasingly seek online learning opportunities, traditional classrooms are being replaced by online alternatives. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated this shift, making online teaching the new norm. Teachers should assist students in creating profiles for studying through SNS, as recommended by Krutka and Damico (2020).

To overcome challenges, platforms like Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Basecamp can be used for educational purposes instead of students' personal profiles. These tools facilitate professional or educational interactions within private groups. In conclusion, addressing the

challenges of integrating SNS into the classroom is essential for creating optimal teaching environments for EFL teachers and enhancing students' learning experiences. Table 7.4 provides a summary of the discussion of results in this section.

Table 7.4: Training and Assistance of Saudi EFL teachers for using SNS for CPD

Aspect	Summary of Discussion of Results
Research Question	Explore training and assistance for SNS use in Saudi EFL CPD
Data Source	Interviews with EFL teachers
Barriers to SNS CPD	Lack of understanding of SNS benefits
	Varied perceptions among educators
	Importance of ease of use and accessibility
	Slow internet and inadequate digital infrastructure
	Limited government support for SNS integration
Solutions for SNS CPD	Consider higher salaries, bonuses, and flexible work arrangements for teachers
	Conduct seminars and training to address cultural and religious concerns
	Provide digital competency training
	Explore new approaches to CPD beyond the Tatweer initiative
	Use SNS for information consumption and knowledge expansion
	Address learner engagement and digital literacy through training and mentorship programmes
	Assist students in creating profiles for studying via SNS
Platforms for Educational Interaction	Consider Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Basecamp for educational purposes
Conclusion	Addressing integration challenges is crucial for optimal teaching environments and improved student learning

Chapter 8

Conclusions & Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) by Saudi EFL teachers for their continuing professional development (CPD). Data were collected using a mixed methods approach to gain a better understanding and awareness of how Saudi English Language Teachers utilise SNS and perceive their effectiveness in the current era of technology. To address these aims, the following objectives were formulated:

- To establish the general continuing professional development activities available to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.
- To determine which social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (Twitter was the name of the platform when the research was undertaken, but it is now called X) Saudi teachers predominantly use to enhance their CPD.
- To identify the reasons for and the extent to which Saudi ESL teachers use social media for professional development.
- To pinpoint which SNS platforms Saudi teachers primarily use for professional development.
- To outline the benefits of social media as a CPD tool from the perspective of teachers.
- To identify the challenges associated with using social media as a CPD tool for teachers.

In accordance with the stated objectives, information about the general SNS for Saudi teachers was obtained through the literature review. All the sites identified in the literature data were included in the questionnaire to address the second objective, which focuses on determining the social networking sites most commonly used by Saudi teachers. The remaining objectives were addressed by analysing responses collected through questionnaires, interviews, and the social networking sites of Saudi EFL teachers. The last two objectives aimed to identify the benefits and challenges from the perspective of Saudi teachers, which can contribute to integrating SNS in the Saudi educational sector by addressing the current issues.

8.2 Conclusions

The objectives of this study have been addressed through an in-depth analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, as well as an examination of the tweets posted by participating Saudi

EFL teachers. In Chapter 2, existing research in the field shows that CPD for teachers aims to enhance core and professional knowledge, encompassing both formal and informal learning (Prestridge, 2019).

The first objective was to determine the general CPD practices of Saudi EFL teachers. According to the reviewed research, teachers typically acquire professional development through their classroom experiences, which fosters their professional growth. Another resource employed by teachers is academic research; EFL teachers may advance professionally by studying the work of their peers, as documented in academic articles and other forms of research. Government-based professional development initiatives, including professional exchanges that send academic professionals to Western countries for core knowledge enhancement programmes, play a role in CPD.

General CPD practices encompass self-directed learning, with Social Networking Sites (SNS) emerging as an informal source of learning. Various SNS platforms are accessible to Saudi EFL teachers, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram, which can contribute to their professional development. However, there is a lack of research on the use of SNS for CPD in Arabian countries, and no formal system has been established by the Saudi government to monitor SNS usage, despite the government's initiatives such as Saudi Vision 2030 and Tatweer.

In the literature, SNS is seen as a potential collaborative learning space for EFL teachers, suggesting the need to incorporate the concept of SNS into the Saudi education system. Among the SNS platforms, Twitter emerges as the most widely used for CPD among Saudi EFL teachers. Teachers cite its succinct yet comprehensive nature, easy accessibility to researchers and colleagues, and its capacity to facilitate discussions and exchanges among EFL teachers worldwide. Although teachers may attempt to incorporate SNS into their CPD, specific platforms have not been definitively established. However, the current research identifies Twitter (now called X) as the primary SNS used by EFL teachers, with teachers utilising it to enhance their core knowledge, including language and cultural knowledge of English. Twitter is also used to disseminate new information, updates, and basic English language concepts that benefit their students. As per Prestridge (2019), the use of SNS by EFL teachers can be categorised as interactive reasoning, as teachers actively contribute knowledge to social media.

The analysis of participants' tweets reveals that Saudi EFL teachers are enthusiastic contributors to SNS, actively sharing information and seeking interaction with teachers locally and globally. The development and use of SNS for CPD primarily depend on individual teachers, including their self-motivation, efficacy, and engagement. However, the extent of social media use among Saudi EFL teachers remains somewhat limited, with most teachers using SNS for professional development once every four to ten days, as indicated by quantitative data.

The results highlight that limited technical resources and inadequate teacher training are significant barriers to using SNS for CPD. Teachers often lack technological skills and are uncertain about how to effectively use SNS in order to enhance classroom learning and teaching experiences. There is a general reluctance among Saudi EFL teachers to embrace such technology. The limited availability of technology and underdeveloped ICT infrastructure across the country further hinder the practicality of using SNS in EFL teaching. Additional limitations and challenges associated with implementing SNS for CPD are identified through data analysis. The study shows that limited knowledge, time constraints, poor technical facilities, and teacher hesitation are major obstacles to the use of SNS for CPD.

The analysis of interviews and questionnaire responses shows that, while most Saudi EFL teacher participants use SNS, its specific use for CPD remains relatively low. A number of participants expressed concerns about their limited knowledge of effectively employing SNS for professional development. Many highlighted the need for basic ICT infrastructure in schools and advocate for formal training to ease teachers' reservations about using SNS for CPD. These findings underscore the importance of government action in providing essential ICT resources and implementing formal training programmes to promote the use of SNS for CPD among EFL teachers.

8.3 Original Contributions of this Research

This study offers various contributions, potentially benefiting policymakers, the IT sector, and the educational sector. Specifically, the findings hold the potential to enhance academic teaching and learning systems. The conclusions derived from this study could lead to a transformation in the current CPD practices of EFL teachers, provided that the entire system acknowledges the role of SNS. The original contributions of this research are divided into two (2) sections: the Contribution to Literature (8.3.1), the Contribution for Policy Makers (8.3.2).

8.3.1 Contribution to the Literature

This PhD research brings originality to the literature on the use of SNS in CPD, particularly concerning English language teachers in Saudi Arabia. It consolidates existing research and provides a clear definition of CPD, as this term has been interpreted differently in various studies. This study conducted an in-depth literature review, revealing research gaps in the current data and shedding light on issues in the educational sector. It offers valuable insights for future researchers.

This study offers a comprehensive overview of the current status of EFL teachers and offers thoughtful solutions to existing problems. This study is important because it reveals the obstacles and constraints of incorporating social networking sites as a formal learning tool for EFL teachers' continuous professional development. This research has collected perspectives from Saudi teachers, which were previously unknown, regarding the potential benefits and barriers to using SNS for CPD, contributing to the literature that predominantly focused on other contexts. The study also brings attention to the lack of awareness and support provided to EFL teachers for implementing new teaching strategies in their classrooms.

The primary focus of this study is on Saudi EFL teachers, who have shown resistance to incorporating SNS into their general CPD practices. Even though many teachers use SNS as a self-administered learning tool, its effectiveness in driving significant change within the system remains limited. Some teachers view SNS primarily as an informal platform. This study's results can raise awareness among all stakeholders about the potential utility of SNS, not only for general CPD but also for Continuous Professional Training (CPT). The findings encourage teachers to explore SNS for their professional interactions and learning. Additionally, this research highlights challenges that school administrations should address, such as infrastructure improvement and sustainable internet connections.

8.3.2 Contribution for Policy Makers

Regarding the potential impact of the current research results on policy, this study underscores the need for official training programmes for EFL teachers regarding the use of SNS for their CPD. Furthermore, this study can help in emphasising the role and significance of social networking sites in the current era of virtual learning. The framework of this study may also have an influence on other closely related industries in terms of knowledge transfer and sharing approaches.

8.4 Strengths of this research

It is important to highlight the strengths of this research. One notable strength of this study lies in its contemporary relevance, as it addresses current and crucial issues in EFL teaching, particularly within Saudi Arabia. The research underscores the significance of digital tools and integrating modern technology in today's Saudi classrooms. It makes a compelling case for incorporating SNS as part of teaching and learning by addressing the key challenges faced by Saudi EFL teachers in SNS integration. This research identifies several challenges related to SNS usage, including a lack of understanding of the benefits of SNS, varying perceptions among teachers regarding their usefulness, the importance of ease of use and accessibility, slow internet connections, inadequate digital infrastructure, and limited government support for SNS integration. Besides pinpointing these challenges, the research also offers various solutions. It emphasises the importance of training in using SNS to develop digital skills and highlights the role of digital literacy and learners' engagement, which are vital for improving learners' digital skills and familiarity with SNS.

Therefore, this research holds practical and policy relevance, as noted above. It addresses contemporary issues and proposes solutions that can be considered by the MoE for integrating SNS into EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia. The presentation of both problems and solutions facilitates a comprehensive understanding of various factors, encompassing multiple aspects of this research. Another strength of this research is its timeliness and relevance to contemporary issues in Saudi Arabia, particularly concerning the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on teaching and learning. It emphasises the significance of incorporating SNS to facilitate remote teaching and learning, which has become the new norm during the pandemic and post-pandemic era. This argument advocates for integrating SNS to improve teachers' CPD.

This research exhibits strength in its data collection methods. It adopts a robust approach to data collection by not solely relying on quantitative data analysis through questionnaires, which may not provide accurate information about the research problem. (Bell et al., 2022). Instead, it incorporates qualitative methods, such as interviews, which have a better potential to capture the viewpoints, problems, and solutions related to the research problem. (Bell et al., 2022). Interviewing allows for an in-depth exploration of how Saudi EFL teachers use SNS and how they address the challenges of using SNS for CPD. The suggestions provided by participants regarding the incorporation of SNS into teachers' CPD are valuable for professionals in the field. The triangulation of data in this research, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, and the use of software such as MAXQDA for organising interview data into relevant

themes and SPSS for questionnaire analysis, ensure that the results precisely reflect the perspectives, experiences, problems, and practices of participating Saudi EFL teachers. This practical evidence-based approach enhances the validity and reliability of the research (Bell et al., 2022).

Finally, this research shows strength in its thorough engagement with the existing literature. It conducts a critical analysis of various studies in the literature, identifying common themes, viewpoints, challenges, and solutions across the literature. It evaluates to what extent these existing studies apply or are not applicable in Saudi Arabia. This rigorous analysis contributes to the development of a robust theoretical framework upon which subsequent data collection and analysis are based. The research not only presents its theoretical argument within the context of the existing literature, but also contributes to the literature by critiquing various viewpoints. This contributes to the establishment of a strong theoretical foundation for future researchers and practitioners interested in exploring the significance of SNS for EFL teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia, especially in an area that has not been extensively researched before. This critical analysis of the literature is a major strength of the research.

8.5 Limitations of this research

This study also has several limitations. It is confined to the Saudi EFL sector, and therefore, its generalisability to the broader Saudi educational sector is limited until more research is conducted. Compared to the available quantitative data, only fifteen respondents participated in interviews. In future research, the number of qualitative responses should be increased to enhance the reliability of the findings. This study primarily reflects the perspective of EFL teachers, who are the primary focus of CPD, which limits the validation of the data. Future research should include experts and students to increase the validity of the outcomes. While the mixed-method approach used in this study was generally effective, future research could benefit from longitudinal observational studies to investigate the development in using general CPD practices among EFL teachers and the extent of their SNS use for CPD purposes. Data was collected through online surveys, but in future research, conducting face-to-face onsite interviews may enhance the effectiveness of data collection, as participants may feel more open to discussing their perceptions and opinions.

8.6 Emerging Fields for Future Research

The education sector is a growing industry that continually encourages innovation and competition. With the world emerging from the Covid pandemic, the use of virtual classroom systems has become increasingly common worldwide. New online teaching methods and

recorded lessons have challenged traditional classroom systems and practices. Online teaching offers benefits not only to students but also to teachers and higher administration by reducing infrastructure costs. As a result, many institutions have started offering complete online degree programs, even as lockdowns have eased. In this transitional era, the use of social networking sites for teachers' professional growth is an emerging and vital topic.

The existing literature suggests that SNS can serve as collaborative learning spaces where teachers from around the world interact and help improve each other's core knowledge. This is particularly relevant for teachers who are teaching a second language, as it involves the development of linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical knowledge. This study marks just the beginning of research on this enlightening topic. However, it is important to extend this research to other educational sectors, as English is an international language and a second language for Saudi teachers. Therefore, highlighting their CPD practices is crucial for improving the English learning sector in the country.

This study opens the door for other sectors to conduct research in their respective domains, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of CPD practices. As individuals' capabilities to share and transfer knowledge vary, this research study can serve as an initial step in establishing a foundation for further research on the type of training and awareness that could be provided to employees.

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

The Role of Social Media in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English Language Teachers

Please answer the questions below:

A - General information

- Your gender:
 - Male
 - Female

- Your age:
 1. Younger than 25
 2. 25- 34 years
 3. 35- 44 years
 4. 45- 54 years
 5. 55 years and older

- How long have you been teaching?
 - 11- 20 years
 - Less than 1 year 21- 30 years
 - 1- 3 years 31- 40 years
 - 4- 10 years More than 40 years

B – Evaluating general CPD practices

4. Please read the following statements and then tick the relevant box (Tick only one box).

Sentence	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
At least several times per year, I attend professional courses, seminars and lectures.					
I am subscribed to academic journals on EFL teaching (e.g. TESOL Quarterly).					
I read non-academic digital sources (e.g. blogs on Medium) on EFL teaching.					
I read academic articles on EFL teaching at least three-four times a month.					
I use services such as Google Books to search for new information on EFL teaching.					
I use Skype or Zoom to communicate with other EFL teachers.					
I use Google Docs or similar services to share knowledge of EFL teaching with my colleagues.					
At least two-three times a month, me and my colleagues meet in person and discuss our knowledge of EFL teaching.					

At least several times per year, I visit a physical library and read books and articles on EFL teaching.					
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C – Using social media in general

- Do you use social networking sites?
- Yes (**skip Q6**)
- No
- If your answer to the above question is **No**, then choose the reason why? You can choose more than one. (**End of questionnaire**)
- I am not interested in joining social networking sites
- I joined once, but I didn't enjoy it
- It's against my culture
- No privacy

List any other reasons_____

- Which of the following social networking sites do you use? Please tick all that apply
- Facebook Myspace
- Twitter WordPress
- 1. YouTube Pinterest
- 2. Instagram SlideShare
- 3. LinkedIn Snapchat

Other. Please specify_____

- What do you use social networking sites for? You can choose more than one
- Personal purposes
- Professional purposes

- All of the above

Other. Please specify _____

- How often do you go on these social networking sites?
 - Every day
 - 2- 5 days a week
 - Once a week
 - Once every two weeks
 - Once a month
-
- Roughly how long have you been using social networking sites?
 - 1. Less than a year 4- 6 years
 - 2. 1- 2 years 6- 8 years
 - 3. 2- 4 years More than 8 years

D – Using social media for professional development

- Have you used social networking sites to enhance your professional development?
- Yes
- No (**End of questionnaire**)

- Which of the following social networking sites do you use for professional purposes?

Please tick all that apply

- Facebook Myspace
- Twitter WordPress
- 4. YouTube Pinterest
- 5. Instagram SlideShare
- 6. LinkedIn Snapchat

Other. Please specify _____

- How often do you go on these social networking sites for professional purposes?
 - Daily
 - Once a week
 - Once a fortnight
 - Once a month
 - Every two months
 - Less often than above
- Roughly how long have you been using social networking sites for professional purposes?
 - Less than a year
 - 1-2 years
 - 2-4 years
 - 4-6 years
 - 6-8 years
 - More than 8 years

15. Please read the following statements and then tick the relevant box (Tick only one box).

Sentence	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
Teacher core knowledge					
My awareness of new trends in classroom instruction (e.g. digitally-assisted learning) is high.					

I am highly knowledgeable of methods for managing the behaviours of my students (e.g. providing verbal feedback).					
I know what PD programmes are provided by the government and what the entry requirements are.					
I know how to conduct independent research (e.g. searching for academic articles on EFL teaching).					
My English proficiency is higher than the requirements posed by my current place of employment.					
I am aware of how linguistic phenomena in the English language (e.d. idioms) may be a result of cultural phenomena.					
SNS Usage					
I use social networking sites to contact other English teachers from English-speaking countries.					
I follow the accounts of educational officials					

to be aware of what is going on.					
I use social networking sites to answer students' questions and give feedback.					
I find social networking sites useful for searching educational videos and tutorials.					
I use social networking sites to share knowledge and materials with other EFL teachers.					
I use social networking sites to collect feedback from colleagues.					
I use social media to search for new ideas about teaching methods and practices.					
I use social networking sites to scan for recent news about EFL teaching.					
I use social media to discover new ways of motivating my students (e.g. funny pictures, educational games, motivational phrases, etc.).					
I use social networking sites as a source of creativity and inspiration.					

I will identify teachers who use social media for professional purposes and may ask you for your permission for me to analyse your written exchanges with other professionals.

Are you willing for me to do this?

- **Yes**
- **No**

Are you willing to be interviewed about your use of social networking sites and professional development?

- I am willing to be interviewed
- I am not willing to be interviewed

Please write your name and your preferred contact method if you are willing to be interviewed. Please be sure that all information will be treated as confidential and your personal name will not be mentioned in the reported findings.

Name: _____

Mobile Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Thank you very much for your participation

--End--

APPENDIX B: Interview Transcripts of 15 Participants

Interview with Male Participant1 (MP1)

Me: Okay, thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

MP1: Okay, thank you so much for having me a participant.

Me: You're welcome. just I would like to tell you some information about this study at the beginning, then we'll start to ask you questions, the core part of the interview.

MP1: Ok.

Me: I'd like to thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. Just before we start interview, I would like to introduce myself, (name of the researcher), the researcher of this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of social media in the CPD of Saudi English language teachers in Saudi Arabia and to what extent do they use social media for the CPD. A questionnaire was the first phase of this study, as you have been required to complete, which was, as you know, an online questionnaire that aims to investigate the role of using social media for enhancing Saudi teachers' CPD. I'm conducting an interview with the participants who agreed to be interviewed and you are one of them. Thank you, again, for agreeing to take part in this study. Just to let you know, before asking the questions, that all the collected information will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. So, is that okay, for you?

MP1: Yeah, I'm aware of these procedures.

Me: Thank you so much.

MP1: Would you mind me having a question, please?

Me: Yes of course

MP1: I am not fully aware of the acronym CPD, nowadays, I'm being of so many acronyms. Can you explain what is CPD stands for please?

Me: Yeah, of course, that's a good question before we start the interview. The CPD is the continuing professional development. So, as you know, we can then understand professional development as the development of a person's knowledge, expertise and competence as a skilled teacher specifically. I mean, to get more knowledge, and share ideas with other like-minded teachers from different parts of the world. So, to give, you know, to get more knowledge, information and ideas and what's going on in the field.

MP1: Ok, thank you. Thank you so much

Me: Just before starting the core part of the interview, how long have you been teaching?

MP1: I've been teaching for almost five years now.

Me: Okay good. Can you tell me which social networking sites do you use most to enhance your CPD? I mean, which one is mostly used to enhance your CPD, to enhance your professional development? Is it like for example, Twitter or Facebook or different type of social networking sites? Which one do you use mostly?

MP1: Yeah, thank you so much for this. uhm I would say mostly, mostly YouTube, uhm Twitter, some sometimes Twitter but it's going to be mostly YouTube, I think it's efficient. It's so useful, you know, you just you don't just get the information as written information, you get visuals, you get explanation of how to do something. and you can find the resources sometimes below in the description. You know, Twitter, you are restricted within few numbers, it is going to be like dense information.

Me: Why do you particularly use this social network site for your CPD? Could you tell me more please?

MP1: Yeah. Again, as I said, I would say mostly YouTube and Twitter, you know, for Twitter, you get direct access to the researcher himself to umm a famous linguist, for example, Zoltan Dorney or we can have Tomlinson any famous person in the field, you can get direct access to him to be the first one to get the information when he tweets or post something, you are the

first one to know. And for YouTube, as I said, it's much better for explanation. You get visuals you get audio; you get description, you get resources.

Me: That's good, how do you use it for your continuing professional development? I mean, YouTube or Twitter, do you use it daily or once a week? How do you use it?

MP1: Well, I have to be honest, I would use it at the beginning of each semester, when I prepared myself to the to the semester as a long period, I would stay with my timetable. The first week I have this lesson and then I prepare myself the second and till the final week. And then during the semester, each two to three weeks I might get a chance to look here or there to the I mean our everyday or weekly.

Me: Alright, good. Umm, So, is there any barriers of not using I mean, different type of social networking sites for your CPD? or to what extent do you use it for your CPD?

MP1: You know, it depends on I think I'm not familiar with Facebook. I am a bit old fashioned. It's only YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Twitter, these four I'm not fully aware of any social media sites.

Me: Okay that is good point about Facebook. Could you tell me more about your using social media for your CPD? You said you started using it for your CPD, just at the beginning of the semester. Was it this year?

MP1: Maybe you know, as a fresh teacher still five years, I guess I'm still fresh. So, you know, the first two years, The teacher will not like like, be strongly prepared and have that experience that at the beginning of the semester I should do this.

Me: Umm

MP1: Yeah, you know, you're just, let's say, keen waiting for your salary to come to enjoy haha and later you should, then I felt that I should like start growing up and make myself a pioneer in the field of teaching. Then, I started like creating, for example, posting tweets, for example. And later after two to three months. I check that that was my tweet where I was two months and where I am now. So, it's yeah. Let's say for consolidation, and I'm checking my performance mostly on tweets, my own tweets.

Me: That's amazing. could you give more explanation about the tweets?

MP1: Yeah. Yeah. I used to check my performance through my own tweets. For example. If I'm looking for a tweet years ago, I would remember I was nothing and nowadays, let's say a bit of pioneer at the field. So, I would use it like to check my performance through the years I was knowing a bit and nowadays I know much more than that. So, this is one way of checking it.

Me: That's good that's amazing. Is there anybody who recommended you to use it for your CPD, or just starting by yourself?

MP1: Mostly starting by myself, you are almost aware of what's going on, let's say that educational organization in our country is starting to grow up and making such a good performance, but still not fully aware of using technology, these technological issues and I mean, I mean, authenticity is not totally used for either performance or in the materials themselves. So, I think we should focus on this point later.

Me: Okay good, will you recommend using social media for someone else to use it for CPD or just?

MP1: Yeah, I would, I would recommend this one. As I said, when you like post something, the best of yours, of your thoughts to post it somewhere. And after two to three months, your post the best of yours and then you can check your performance through these tweets. I think this is one way of doing it.

Me: Right. That's good. Thank you so much. Do you think using social media helps you to enhance your continuing professional development?

MP1: Yeah, yeah for sure. As I said, when you like follow for example an English department and on Twitter and you find that nowadays there is new research in the field, and

there is a new technique who's just had been proposed. So, you know this, you started to apply this and then you can find then you can combine the findings I think it's so useful yeah.
Me: That's great, did you find any problems of using social media for CPD? I mean, you said at the beginning that you're not familiar with using Facebook.

MP1: Uhm, I think this point depends on the person himself. Um, for example, I don't like to change. I mean, I do I don't have an account on Facebook or on Instagram, because I don't like to change from one app to another, so it is One point.

Me: This is good point.

MP1: Yeah, also, I think sometimes, these are distracting you. I mean, you open for example, let's say Twitter and find a tweet on football and another tweet on a political hot issue then it distracts you from your interest, which is English, or whatever it is.

Me: Uh, that's good. Could you tell me just about the advantages of using social media for CPD?

MP1: Again, I would say like checking performance, mostly, which is a good and important point. And to be up to date, to be to have more than one source of information, yeah.

Me: Do you think social networking sites can help other English teachers to enhance their CPD?

MP1: I think this would work, if it is already prepared, I mean, if teachers have a network site or an account for example, on Twitter, and I post my findings in a particular area to that account. And that account posted to other my colleagues this is going to be useful; I think.

Me: Okay, the last part of this interview is about the kind of assistance or training do Saudi English teachers need with the use of social networking sites to enhance their CPD? I mean, have you got any training, assistance about how to use social media to enhance your CPD?

MP1: Uhm, no, mostly no, and I would say this, mostly because you know, the recent few years there is a bit of focus on, on using technology, but it was for the use of online teaching and you know, things aroused by the pandemic. Otherwise, I think there is a direction, or the Ministry of Education is going to do soon, I believe this is going to happen.

Me: Do you think that you need training with the use of social networking sites?

MP1: Uhhh,

Me: Do you think it's a good point to have, like training with the use of social networking sites to enhance teachers' CPD?

MP1: Yeah, yeah I think the advantages of using social networking sites if the advantages are introduced to the teachers themselves. It's going to make a difference, I believe.

Me: Good. Good point. This is a good point. What kind of training do you think that English teachers would need with the use of social networking sites? Sometimes, as you know some teachers don't know how to use social media.

MP1: Yeah.

Me: Do you think they need more training about this thing? With the use of social networking sites?

MP1: I think, as I said before, if the advantages of networking sites are allowed, then the teacher will be motivated to use them. For example, I told you that I don't use Facebook, and in my opinion, it's useless. So, if I am introduced to the advantages of using Facebook, to enhance my performance, then for sure, I wouldn't open my account directly after the workshop.

Me: That's a good point. Yeah, that's good. That's the last question of the interview. But before that, do you want to add anything? Regarding this topic?

MP1: No, it's just that part of training for teachers or showing teacher the advantages of social networking sites, to introduce them to the CPD and at the same time or before that, teachers should be introduced to the notion of CPD itself because I asked you at the

beginning of this, what is CPD? So, I think teachers at the beginning should be introduced to this notion and then introduced to the benefits of social media apps to improve it

Me: Many thanks for agreeing to take part in this study.

MP1: It's fine, anytime I am available.

Me: Thank you.

Interview with Male Participant2 (MP2)

Me: Okay, thank you, (name of the participant), for agreeing to take part in this interview.

MP2: You are welcome

Me: I'd like just to tell you some information about this study at the beginning, then we will start to ask some questions about the core part of the interview.

MP2: Ok

Me: As I told you, before start asking questions, I'd like to introduce myself, (name of the researcher), the researcher of this study. So, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of social media in the CPD in the continuing professional development of Saudi English language teachers in Saudi Arabia and to what extent do they use it for the CPD. A questionnaire was the first phase of this study, as you have been required to complete, which was, as you know, an online questionnaire that aims to investigate the role of using social media for enhancing Saudi teachers' CPD. I'm conducting, you know, an interview with the participants who agreed to be interviewed, and you are one of them, So, thank you again for agreeing to take part in this study. Just to let you know before asking the questions, that all the collected information will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. So, is that okay for you?

MP2: Yes, yes.

Me: Okay, before starting the interview, I'd like to tell you more about the CPD. What is CPD? CPD stands for continuing professional development. So, as you know, we can then understand professional development as the development of a person's knowledge, expertise and competence as a skilled teacher, you know, specifically, I mean, to get more knowledge and share ideas with other like-minded teachers from different parts of the world. So, to get more knowledge, information and ideas, and what's going on in the field. Okay, before starting the core part of the interview, just I'd like to ask you, how long have you been teaching?

MP2: Approximately 11 years

Me: Okay, that's good. Which degree do you have?

MP2: PhD, in English language teaching.

Me: That's good. Okay, could you tell me which social networking sites do you use most to enhance your CPD to enhance your professional development? I mean, which one is mostly used to enhance your CPD? For example, Twitter, Facebook or different type of social networking sites? Which one do you use mostly?

MP2: Well, I think it's, it depends, for example, Twitter, give me the ability to reach doctors, professors in my field, to follow what they say, read some of the research and interact with them. So, this is for me, Twitter is the best. Also, we have for me recently, I tried to use telegram and I think it may be also related to CPD. So, I study from the telegram a lot. So, these two social networking sites are the most important. Sometimes, I use YouTube to revise some of the things that I need to know in a short period of time. So, these are the top three sites that I use.

Me: So, the most one is?

MP2: Yes, the most is Twitter, because it gives me the, for example, I think, sometimes about trying to go to, to develop myself more, trying to continue my study. So, I follow some people who are at the top of the field, and I try to read some of their latest research. Twitter gives me the ability to access them easier than the other sites, like journals or some because they, they publish it on Twitter, sometimes for free.

Me: Alright, good point.

MP2: Or sometimes they discuss an idea, and it's interesting just to, to reach and listen and see it in a closed circle.

Me: That's amazing, as you said, they post or tweet their articles for free. So, how do you use it for your CPD? I mean, Twitter, YouTube, do you use it daily? once a week, twice a week? Or how would you use it?

MP2: I don't think if it as this way, no daily or weekly or something. It depends, for example, Twitter, it depends on the timeline. You know, I have certain followers. I have followers from all different areas, not just English, or not just related to enhancing my CPD, just like general topics. So, sometimes I see a tweet from one of the doctors or one of the professors that I follow on, you know, I, I start to read about the tweets that they say, or the research that they put on their Twitter page. And it takes me to different areas, also related to English. So, I don't think that every day I need to look or every week or something like that. It depends sometimes on the need. For example, some days, I think that, you know, I get this urge to try to read more or try to understand more. And some other days. I don't think about that at all. So, it depends on what I have on the timeline. However, YouTube or telegram, I open them specifically for that purpose CPD. So, also, it depends on the need. So, I can't say that I do it weekly or yearly.

Me: I see. So, you mean whenever you want it, you can open it directly straightaway.

MP2: Yeah, yeah. That's the beauty of it. You know, you can reach it at any time. It's free. You only need an Internet access,

Me: Right. Are there any barriers of not using social media for CPD?

MP2: Barriers?

Me: Yes, sometimes, you know, some teachers don't know how to use social media. Do you think are there any barriers of not using it?

MP2: Ahh, It depends, as I said earlier, because I think every social networking site is unique in its own. So, some people they are experts in Twitter and some people are experts in telegrams. And I think it depends on the way or how to look. For example, in Twitter, if you find the right people that spark your interest, it's easier to get involved in CDP. You can find professors or doctors or even bachelor's degree students or master's degree students or PhD students. They talk about things that interest you in your area in English language teaching even in more specific ways. Some people are drawn to phonetics, some people are drawn to syntax and some people are drawn to research areas in general. So, if you try if you can find the people that interest you, it's very good idea. For YouTube, it only depends on your what the information that you are looking you're looking for. And telegram is also related to that area telegram. Telegram for me is related about teaching English, like in schools or in general,

teaching like grammar, reading, listening, these types of things that relate to the job. I think that it helps a lot to enhance CPD.

Me: Okay. That's good. Can you tell me more about your using of social media for your CPD? When did you start using it for your CPD specifically?

MP2: Well, I started using it when I was studying for my master's degree. And I used Facebook at the beginning. But I don't understand it a lot, you know, the way I don't understand it, or I don't like it a lot, even though it's easier sometimes. But it's, you know, I have some issue with it. So, I started to go search in Twitter, and sometimes in YouTube at the beginning. But also, most of the time, you know, at the beginning, I used like, you know, Google Scholar, and this type of website, that's our general website, not related to social media, I tried to be involved in LinkedIn, I don't think I don't know if it's considered social media website or not. And I also didn't understand it in a way that's I found information that I need in different sites. So, if we're talking about social media, Twitter, for me is number one right now.

Me: Alright, that's good and amazing. Is there anybody who recommended you use it for your CPD or just starting by yourself?

MP2: No, when I first started my Twitter account, I used to follow some of my colleagues. And I see my colleagues follow other people that doctors in different universities, so I, for example, go to my friends following list. And I try to see who they follow. And then I started to notice that they follow this professor and for example, King Abdul Aziz University and they started to follow this, another professor in University of London, and so on. So, I started to follow these people, I started to read the research, or read what they post in the timeline, or Twitter page. And the downside for Twitter in that area that it's, it's open. You know, and it depends on people minds. So sometimes when I follow this guy, or this professor, they don't post CPB related topics all the time, sometimes they post their personal opinions. Sometimes they post different things that they find funny or interesting, not relating to my field in English language. But it's interesting to you know, to see a person and that person draw you to another person and so on. So, it's like a web net or a net, it's very, very interesting process.

Me: Good. Do you think using social media helps you to enhance your CPD?

MP2: I think yes, it helps me but only if you want to enhance your CPD, only if you want to go to another level. Some people are happy with the way they are, they are happy that they have a job, and they get paid. And that's it because the job after a while it gets repetitive, and they think that they have the knowledge to perform good or perform better in their in their level. I think CPD, I think it should be related to postgrad study for me, you know because after you get your degree and you have a job and the job is the same no matter what you do, only now they put like a license test every five years. But even though some of the information is the same, you will only need to revise it So it's like, there is a way to it, you know, you don't need to develop yourself, past a certain point. But if you want to pursue a postgraduate study, you need CPD a lot.

Me: Okay, that's good. Would you recommend using social media for someone else to use it for the CPD?

MP2: I would recommend it. Yes. If I find someone interesting, you know, for example, on Twitter, I found this professor, and they post a lot of their interesting work. I try to maybe when I talk with some of my friends, maybe I will recommend that follow that person or see what

this research said about this area or this area. And I found that research on for example, Twitter. So yeah, it's a way to get involved. I don't think it's the only source. It's a valuable source. But I think it's like a gateway to something better, or something more.

Me: Okay. What are the advantages here? Can you tell me more about the advantages of using social media for CPD?

MP2: Well, for example, you know, you can access it almost any time and you can find the information that you want very quickly. You know, so, speed is very important. Availability is important. And it depends also on what you need, for example, that I need to learn about statistics, I think SPSS or something like that I forgot. And the only source that was helpful for me was, for example, YouTube, I couldn't understand the books that they recommended, I read about two books. They were too general, they, sometimes they when they were specific, they were written in a language that I couldn't understand. Because, for me, for example, mathematics or something like that, it's like, a weak point. So, when I, when I searched in YouTube, and I found a lot of videos that explain what I want better, I tried, it helped me a lot. So, it depends on the stage that you want, or the things that you want. So yeah, these are the advantages that I can think of right now. Also, you can, for example, if you are like you want to pursue a PhD study, you can try to contact some of the people that you follow from Twitter, for example, colleagues, that can give you some tips, or give you some ideas about different universities that they attend. You can try to contact doctors or professors that you would like them to supervise you, for example, on Twitter, so there is an established knowledge. So maybe it's useful that way. Or maybe that's you are more familiar, more familiar with their work since you follow them in a daily basis. So maybe this is one of the advantages that you can think of.

Me: Yeah, thank you so much. Do you think social networking sites can help other English teachers to enhance their CPD?

MP2: Yes. Yes. It can help them. But it depends on what they need. So, for example, right now, Twitter, maybe like the number one source I'm sorry, telegram is the number one source for teachers in general. Also, English teachers, because as I said, there is a yearly test every year and they need certain grades to have their license. So, they got a telegram, and they try to look at the examples of the books that are available in telegram in a very simple way, rather than trying to find it on Google and so on. So, there are some people that recommend different books in for example, English language on any other area that you find it helpful in your CPD. So yeah.

Me: Okay, the last part of this interview is about the kind of assistance or training do Saudi English teachers need with the use of social networking sites to enhance their CPD? I mean, have you got any training, assistance about how to use social media to enhance your CPD before or?

MP2: No, actually, no, it's like, something that you learn with the time, you know how to use that app for your own benefits. As you know, they are open sites, you know, you can discuss or talk about anything. So, you only need to, to know how to reach the people or reach the group that can help you. For example, I don't use Facebook, but if someone try and sit with me and told me that there are certain groups or tell me how to use Facebook for my own benefit in CPD, I will use it, but I don't know how and I find another source. So, now I don't I don't use it, or I don't think that I need it. But if someone sit with me and said, you can find these people and you do this and this and this and you can find this, it will be very helpful.

Me: That's a good point. Do you think that you need training with the use of social networking sites, or English language teachers need training or assistance with the use of social networking sites for their CPD?

MP2: I think it depends on the understanding, you know, if there is a training about using social media, I would like to ask the question, what will they do? How will they train me? Will they open Twitter, and say go follow that person? Or writes in the research box, English development or anything? So, it depends on the idea or the imagination of the people who will try to design a course for that, because for example, if we talk about Telegram, yes, telegram is an open source, and you can find any, maybe all the things that you need in CPD but some of them, for example, they put books, and the books as you know, they are protected. You need to buy it. Using it that way, you know, it's maybe it's illegal. So, I think it's very difficult to try to tweak the course for the teachers, maybe they'll say you can find some groups, but they can't go into details, how to benefit from these groups. So, maybe there is an issue sometimes.

Me: Yeah, but I mean, what kind of training do you think that English teachers would need with the use of social networking sites? You know, sometimes, some teachers don't know how to use social media, or do not like using social media for the CPD? Do you think we can go.

MP2: I think you can back to the advantages that we spoke of earlier, you know, accessibility and availability and speed. So maybe, you know, the training that they need, how to access them, how to create an account, and how to find the information that you need, in a very quick way, you know, so if you open these areas to them, they will try to develop their own knowledge and try to benefit on their own.

Me: That's amazing. Yeah, that's a good point.

MP2: Thank you. Thank you. That's the last question of the interview. But before that, do you want to add anything?

Me: Well, I think it's a broad statement when we say social media because for me, I think every site, one of the three or four sites are unique in their owns. So, for example, YouTube is like a goldmine, but we didn't talk a lot about YouTube in this Interview, because I don't use it in that way. So, yeah. Sometimes it's difficult to think about the questions when we, you know, form these questions in social media websites. And I also understand it's very difficult to try to construct research regarding just maybe one site or two sites. So yeah, maybe this is something to think about.

MP2: Okay, that's it. Thank you so much. Many thanks for agreeing to take part in this study. Thank you.

Me: You are welcome.

Interview with Male Participant3 (MP3)

Me: Okay uh thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

MP3: You are welcome.

Me: Actually before I start this interview I want to introduce myself. I am (name of the researcher), I am the researcher of this study. So, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of social media in the CPD in the continuing professional development of Saudi English language teachers in Saudi Arabia and to what extent do they use it for the CPD. A questionnaire was the first phase of this, of this uh study.

MP3: Okay.

Me: So uh as you have been required to complete an online questionnaire uh which aims to investigate the role of using social media for enhancing Saudi teachers' CPD. So the interviews will be the second phase. Uh and I will conduct interviews with some participants and who agreed to be interviewed and you are one of them and thank you for participating in this study.

MP3: You are welcome.

Me: Thank you so much. Just to let you know uh before starting this interview, all of the collected information will be confidential and all uh and will only be used for research purposes. So uh the first my question just you know I want to ask you how long have you been teaching?

MP3: Okay first nice to talk to you.

Me: Thank you so much, thank you.

MP3: I have been teaching for uh 2 years.

Me: Okay good for 2 years. So which degree you have?

MP3: Uh bachelor's degree.

Me: Good, good, hope everything is okay with you.

MP3: Yeah thanks so much.

Me: So can you tell me please about uh your using of social media for your professional development for your CPD please?

MP3: Okay yes um I use different uh social networking sites to enhance my uh professional development. As you know uh nowadays with development of technology uh it is very easy to use social networking sites anytime from different devices such as smartphones to get more knowledge and different information so I can share my ideas.

Me: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

MP3: Uh as well with other teachers from different parts in the world. Uh social networking sites uh help us to share ideas and experience with many teachers and to be in touch with them every day and to be update our knowledge and to get lots of information.

Me: Great, so what to extent uh do you use the social networking sites for your CPD, for your you know professional development?

MP3: Okay uh actually I use social networking sites from one to two times a week.

Me: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

MP3: And not just for my CPD uh I use it also for the social purposes so I can communicate with my friends from different countries and with my family as well. So uh I must use, I must use it for my professional development at least once a week.

Me: Good, so you use it from one to two times a week?

MP3: Yes.

Me: For your professional development.

MP3: Yes that's right.

Me: Good is there anybody who recommended you to use it for your uh professional development?

MP3: Yes, yes of course some of my colleagues recommended uh me to use social networking sites uh for my professional development and they said to me it has lots of useful information. So I tried to use it for my professional development and actually found it very useful for me. Because, because I can access to it anytime and anywhere easily if there is internet [laughs] and that's one of its advantages.

Me: Okay so can you explain this point please more?

MP3: Yes sure. As you know if there is no internet you cannot access to these sites, example Facebook, What's Up, Twitter, you cannot use it anymore. So I have to be in the places that have internet otherwise I cannot develop my professional.

Me: That's right yes. So will you recommend it for someone else?

MP3: Yes yes of course I will recommend it my friends and my colleagues to use social media for their professional development, sorry. As I found it very useful and they can share ideas and experience because we communicate with different teachers from different countries easily just by a click.

Me: Yes that's right. So did you find any problems when you use the social networking sites for your professional development?

MP3: Okay as I said before in some places uh there's no internet which will prevent us to use these sites and uh some social networking uh sites are difficult to use. And that might take times to be familiar with it. So I have to learn first how can I use it, then it will be more familiar.

Me: Great so is there an advantages can you tell me about advantages of using social networking sites for you know professional development?

MP3: Okay as you know social networking sites are free without any cost and any effort and I can use it from many devices, example laptops and smartphones and I can use it in my waiting time, example when I'm waiting in a bus stop, and when I'm traveling by train.

Me: Oh that's great. So can you tell me which social networking site do you use most to enhance your professional development please?

MP3: Okay in fact mm yes, the most one is Twitter.

Me: okay why do you particularly use Twitter for your professional development?

MP3: I prefer using Twitter to enhance my professional development because it is very easy to me and I know how can I use it and I created my account in Twitter five years ago so I'm familiar with it.

Me: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

MP3: Okay and so I can tweet, re-tweet, upload images and I can post link.

Me: Okay what about the other you know the other social networking sites, you know I mean Facebook and You Tube and others. Are they difficult to use or what?

MP3: Well normally I first joined Facebook because I got friends around the world and it was like an easy way to keep in touch with people. That uh, that was my main reason for using Facebook. And in fact there is a lot of benefits so I use it for my professional development. But my main usage of Facebook I would say it is the social reasons so that is why I prefer to use Twitter for my professional development.

Me: Good, okay so which accounts uh do you uh follow on Twitter?

MP3: Uh actually I follow many accounts on Twitter, one of them IATEFL, IATEFL which has lots of new things about teaching English as a foreign language and I follow TESOL and many experts as well.

Me: Good, how do you use it you know how do you use it for your professional development?

MP3: Um I can communicate with like-minded teachers who tweet everyday then I can re-tweet their tweets and I can exchange ideas with them. Um so that will help me to enhance my CPD also if I have any uh problems with it. I can communicate with experts to help me to solve it. With social media uh there's like um a massive, a

massive push out potential to meet people who would never normally have that chance to meet them in the real life face-to-face. So, you have got this massive amount of information and it is really good to connect to, connect with other people who are uh kind of one of the same uh network as you.

Me: Good great, that's uh you know the last question but uh you know uh do you want to add any, anything?

MP3: Uh I think using social media for specificity as a positive thing, social media is a really positive thing for professional development. Uh before we were very limited and I think there's no enough emphasis on using social media for professional reasons. So I think we need to more of a push to use social media for CPD.

Me: Great do you have questions?

MP3: No thank you for giving me a chance to participate in this study.

Me: Thank you so much thank you for time.

MP3: You are welcome, you are welcome.

Me: That is the end of the interview.

MP3: Nice to meet you.

Interview with Male Participant4 (MP4)

Me: Good morning.

MP4: Good morning.

Me: Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. Just before I start this interview, just I want to introduce myself. I am (name of the researcher), I'm the Researcher of this study and this study or the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of social media in the CPD in the continuing professional development of Saudi English language teachers in Saudi Arabia and to what extent do they use it for the CPD

A questionnaire was the first phase of this study. As you have been required to complete, an online questionnaire which aims to investigate the role of using social media for enhancing Saudi teachers' CPD.

MP4: Yes.

Me: Now I'm conducting an interview with the participants who agreed to be interviewed and you are one of them and thank you again for agreeing to take part in this study as well.

MP4: That's okay, thank you.

Me: Just to let you know before asking the questions, that all of the collected information will be confidential and uh, will only be used for research purposes. Is that okay now?

MP4: That's okay.

Me: So, how long have you been teaching?

MP4: Uh, 6 years.

Me: One year, good. So, have you used the social media for your CPD?

MP4: Uh, yes, uh-[crosstalk]

Me: Good.

MP4: Almost yeh, we use uh, social media, we depend on social media like 90% for our CPD.

Me: Ninety percent?

MP4: Yes.

Me: Great. Can you tell me more about your using social media please?

MP4: Uh, it's not like the source of the material but it's like the place where you get the latest trends where you find the uh, uh most important authors in the field so you can get like an idea about what's going on in, in your field-[crosstalk]

Me: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MP4: And from that point, you go and search in, in books or journals, articles, uh, so it's, it's, it's like they give you the headline and you start from there.

Me: Good, to what extent uh, do you use it for your CPD? Do you use it once a week, twice a week, or?

MP4: No actually uh, some uh, some applications, some social media applications, uh, we u-, we use it as a daily basis. Like Twitter-[crosstalk]

Me: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MP4: Uh, I use it every day I, I look at my Twitter account and I see what people are writing about everything

Me: Good.

MP4: Uh, sometimes when something is interesting-.

Me: Okay.

MP4: Yes uh, I go to journals and I read the whole thing about this interesting issue that might help me in my practice.

Me: Good. (Clears throat), so, is there anybody who recommended you to use it for your CPD? I mean the social networking sites?

MP4: Um, Twitter uh, I began it as a social uh, activity. I wasn't planning that I will uh, go in because um, uh, it wasn't like a trend in CPD at that time.

Me: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MP4: But uh then I used it for my CPD. I followed the people who are uh, working in the same field but some of the um, uh, applications like WhatsApp uh, and Telegram uh, sometimes my friends invite me to uh, a WhatsApp group. Uh which is for teachers or

a Telegram group which is also for teaching, or for research. Uh, but um, uh it wasn't meant for the CPD Twitter but some other applications yes.

Me: Good. Did you find it useful for your CPD?

MP4: Yes uh, it, it helps you to know what's going on in the field. Uh, it gives you like um, uh, it gives you like uh, an idea about how the other teachers in other contexts deal with certain problems that might be similar to the problems that you have or uh, or you get to read about the theories behind some sort of practice and uh, this is pretty much the most important benefit from the social media.

Me: So you said before, uh, If there is something interesting in these sites, so you just go directly to the articles or to the journal to read about this for example-[crosstalk]

MP4: Because you can-, you cannot depend on a tweet to like, to say that something is, is really true or not true. Uh, if I read a Tweet about something from anyone, uh, I take this issue and uh, look for more information about it and look for what people wrote about it in the field. Some of the major authors and researchers, uh, and I investigate more uh so I can make sure whether the, this is something that I can rely on or not. So I have to read more. It's not like the social media is the source, it's like, it gives you like a headline and it is on you now to make sure whether this issue or this idea works or not.

Me: Good. Will you recommend these sites or these social networking sites for someone else, for the other teachers or for your friends to help them to enhance their CPD or not?

MP4: Yes actually we do that. Sometimes or uh, when we see problems uh, and we discuss it in, in, in a group or when we discuss it face to face, uh, we recommend some of the uh, I ask uh, I, I, I tell them to join like a WhatsApp group or to follow someone on Twitter. Or to uh, follow someone in uh, and Snapchat who gives like eh, some advices or some uh, uh, ideas about the things that we are discussing.

If we, we recommend them because it is like now it's very important way or uh very important uh, start point where you can like develop yourself.

Me: Okay do you think using these sites helps you to enhance your professional development?

MP4: Yes uh, because sometimes uh, you have so new ideas which is still new in the field. So uh, it, it helps you to know wha-, what's new and some ideas that you use to practice and they prove to be of not very significant. So you abandon them or you try something new. So it and it, it, it helps you to exchange experience and ideas with other teachers in the field and see what they are doing in their classes. And you tell them what you're doing there in, in your classes and so there is an exchange of information and experience

which is like, which is very practical. Because when you are dealing with not like authors and researchers when you are dealing with teachers or communicating with teachers it's very beneficial because it gives you like something practical to do in your classroom.

Me: Good. Did you find any problems when you use these sites to enhance your CPD? Any problems that-[crosstalk]

MP4: Uh, it's, it's not like a problem that it's, eh, a difficulty that you have to make sure if, of everything that is written before you can like rely on it. Uh, i-, if you find someone Tweeting about an idea, you have to see what the people say about this idea. If there is uh, a research about this idea and I think eh-, during this investigation some kind of development happens because you see what, you see what's going on and-[crosstalk]

Me: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MP4: Uh, you get to know, uh, what people are writing about. So this is one, like uh, it's not uh difficulty, it's actually something that you have to investigate more. You don't depend on social media like 100%.

Me: So you don't depend on the social media for your CPD 100% so there is- [crosstalk]

MP4: Yeah.

Me: There are problems.

MP4: Yes because uh, you have to make sure that uh, the people what, what they are discussing, especially if they are like teachers like uh, they are teachers, they are not researchers, they are not authors. So you have to go back and see what, what research has been conducted on this idea and whether it, it works or not. Uh, so you have to investigate more. It's not like you are taking an idea and you apply it in your classroom, no. You have to understand more about it.

Me: So that's good idea. What about the advantages then?

MP4: Uh, the advantages I mentioned before. It, it, it opens your, it opens like uh, many doors for you to see what people, it, it's like the uh, you see like many experiences, many ideas from all over the world about teaching English. And uh, you see how people are dealing with certain issues and you ask for some information, you ask for help. Uh, this is, this is the most important thing that's the communication from people in the same field and seeing what they are doing and how they are feeling with uh, some of the issues that might be interesting for you.

Me: So, can you tell me which social networking site do you use most to enhance your CPD? there are a lot of social networking sites as you know. For example, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Which one do you use most from these sites?

MP4: Uh I use, uh, a-, eh-, it, it differs from one country to another because uh, in my country we depend on Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram. those are the top 3. Uh, the top 3 uh, the top 3 social networking that we, we are involved in, in my country. But when I went to eh, eh UK I found that they, they use Facebook a lot. Uh I have a Facebook account but was I set up socially like Twitter but now I use it to see what other people like in Britain because it's very popular in Britain more than Twitter. So eh, yeah I use Facebook now, I read about the groups and the uh, um accounts on Facebook. So pretty much those are the top 4 uh, social networking applications I use.

Me: Twitter?

MP4: Twitter, Telegram, WhatsApp and Facebook. The most important one and the one I use every day is Twitter.

Me: Is Twitter, good. So why do you particularly use this one for your CPD?

MP4: Uh-[crosstalk]

Me: Mostly.

MP4: Uh, Twitter is like uh, because it's something very brief. You read like a Tweet and if it's interesting for you, you can investigate it more. You don't have to read like a whole article or a lot of words or, so it's, it gives you like a headline. So if you, if you want this you have, and, it, it gives you a, like a chance to uh, the, the way the application designed is very uh, uh convenient. So I can go through the uh, I can see like a hundred Tweets every day eh, in a very short time.

But on Facebook sometimes it takes me like half an hour to see only 4 or 5 posts. So I feel Twitter is more convenient because I, I read a lot of things and I decide whether to read more about them or not but I get to know a lot of things because the Tweet is very brief.

Me: Good so do you mean teachers prefer 1 or 2 sentences or the short sentences first of all then if they-[crosstalk]

MP4: Because I, I don't know about others but because I, I have to investigate more when I read something whether it's on Face-, whether, whether it's half a page on Facebook or it's a Tweet. So I, I would like to have like a Tweet because it's shorter. It's this is interesting, I'm going to investigate it but sometimes you read like a whole page and it's

not interesting for you. So you, you waste like uh, some time on reading something which is, which is um not very important for your uh practice or your profession.

Me: Good yeah.

MP4: Yeah Twitter is convenient.

Me: So which accounts do you follow on Twitter? That helps you or-[crosstalk]

MP4: Uh as a teacher I find the British Council account is, it's very uh, useful. Uh, because it, it contains uh, ar-, articles. It, it contains uh, uh some experiences from teachers all over the world. They write about how to teach for example, uh, reading, how to help your students uh, uh, uh write so it, it's very uh, it gives you very specific ideas and uh, it gives you ideas not only written ideas, gives you like someone else with experience on doing something. So it gives you something very practical.

I follow some people who are uh, authors or researchers, people who um, I am interested in, in the way they are writing. Like Thornbury, eh, [??], and krashin. I also follow TESOLacademic, it, it gives you like the latest uh, res-, uh researcher. They talk about their research on uh, YouTube video so you get an idea about their research through their own words. And then if you decide that this is an interesting idea for you you can go and research for their articles and what has been written about this. These are the most um,-[crosstalk]

Me: Accounts.

MP4: Accounts I follow.

Me: Good so the last question will be how do you use it for your CPD? How do you use the Twitter for your CPD? So I mean uh, do you uh, Tweet daily or uh, Retweet?

MP4: Not, not on a daily basis I, I, I uh, I Retweet a lot. Uh sometimes uh, when someone uh I, I Tweet about something uh, I might have a question and I, I ask a question. Uh, sometimes when someone write about an experience or something that he has, he or she has tried, uh and I have tried it to, to, I can contribute to the tweet and reply. And I said yes I found it useful or I found it not useful. Uh, so I interact whenever I find something interesting. I interact wi-, I sometimes join uh, uh a talk. Uh, uh on uh, SB, SB uh, subject of the talk is interesting, we might talk about it on Twitter.

Me: Good. Thank you so much. do you want to add anything before we finish this interview regarding this study?

MP4: No. No thank you, this is all I think.

Me: Do you have any question?

MP4: No thank you.

Me: Okay thank you so much for your participating in this interview and that's the end of this interview. Thank you so much.

MP4: Thanks.

Interview with Male Participant5 (MP5)

Me: Okay, uh, now we're starting this interview. Uh, good evening.

MP5: Good evening.

Me: Uh, thank you. Actually before starting this interview I wanna thank you for agreeing to take part in this, uh, interview. Uh, just before starting this interview I want to introduce myself. I am (name of the researcher). I am the researcher of-

MP5: Uh-huh.

Me: -this study, and the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of social media in the CPD in the continuing professional development of Saudi English language teachers in Saudi Arabia and to what extent do they use it for the CPD

This interview is the second phase of this study as it's conducted with, uh, some participants who agreed to be interviewed, and you are one of them. And actually, thank you again for agreeing, or for your participating in this study. Just to ...

MP5: It's my pleasure.

Me: Just to let you know, before starting this interview ... before asking you questions, all the collected information will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Is that okay?

MP5: Sure. Yeah, it's fine, yeah.

Me: Okay, uh, let's start, you know with the questions. Uh, how long have you been teaching?

MP5: 7 years.

Me: 7 years. Good. Which degree you have?

MP5: Master.

Me: Great. So have you used social media for your CPD or for your professional development?

MP5: Yeah, I have done so but before, before carrying on with the interview, can you please explain the CPD for me?

Me: Yeah, the CPD is the continuous or continuing professional development. So, some, you know, of the participants use the social media to enhance their professional

development. I mean, to get more knowledge and share ideas with like, you know, other like-minded teachers from different part-

MP5: Okay.

Me: -in the world. So to-

MP5: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Me: -give you more knowledge and information and ideas and what's happening in the world.

MP5: Yeah, yeah. Great. I-I have done so, I have done so, yes.

Me: So can you tell me more about using, or your using of social media for your professional development please?

MP5: Well basically and uh, intrinsically, I do use the social media like any other people, uh, for socializing and keeping track of daily news and [??] events going on around the world. But in regards to the CPD, um, well I tend to use social media for, um, sharing and exchanging knowledge with other peers in the field. Uh, that's basically the main role of social media in, um, in CPD. Occasionally, uh, tend to post or tweet about a, a current concept, a specific concern or a query about an, or ... you know that the CPD ... others' opinions, suggestions in regard to that concern.

Me: Good. So you use the social media for the social purposes, but not for the professional development. Is that right, or can you correct me if I'm wrong?

MP5: [crosstalk 00:03:44] Can you, no, no, could you repeat your question please?

Me: I said you said you use the social media for different purposes and uh-

MP5: Yeah.

Me: Is the professional development one of these purposes, or-?

MP5: Yeah, yeah. As I said basically I do use social media for social purposes, but besides that I do sometimes tend to use social media for exchanging and sharing knowledge about a specific issue. If it's a concern or an issue clearly in the, in relation to um, continuous development, uh, career continuous development.

Me: Good. So to what extent do you use it for your CPD? I mean, is it once a week, twice a week, or is it daily basis of using, or what? For-

MP5: To be completely frank with you I do, I do use it whenever it is needed. Uh, so I would say it is occasionally, uh, used whenever there is a concern or there is a question, um, or a needed clarification for an issue then I do use social media for that purpose.

Me: So you use it as it's required to be used?

MP5: Brilliant. Yeah.

Me: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So is there anybody who recommended you to use social media for your professional development?

MP5: No, I don't think so. No. It's a personal curiosity I think.

Me: Okay. Did you find it useful to enhance your CPD or-?

MP5: Um. I can't hear you very well. Sorry.

Me: Sorry, I think it's technical error. But I will, uh, repeat the question again. I said, did you find it useful for your professional development?

MP5: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, I think so. There are some experts, uh, in the field where you post or tweet issues and they quickly, rapidly respond to that issue. And you find some knowledgeable people there so you can seek their advice and recommendations, uh, in regards to, uh, your concern. Yeah, I think yeah, it is more than useful.

Me: Good. So it's more than useful.

MP5: Yeah.

Me: Uh, will you recommend it for someone else? For other teachers, other colleagues or other-?

MP5: Yeah, I would. I would do, definitely so. Yeah.

Me: So did you find any problems of using social media for your CPD, for continuing, uh, professional development?

MP5: There are always limitations for using technology in, you know, uh, personal development or career development. However, the limitations in regards to the development could be sometimes, uh, related to, uh, cultural issues where you post a concern about an issue and you aim for getting responses, um, let's say, um, recommendations or useful or insightful comments from your perspective. However, in reality you get others' perspectives and they look for their issues from different

perspectives. So I think there will be some culture, um, let's say, how to spell it out in a sentence ... let's say culture, ah, differences, um, in exchanging knowledge.

Me: Uh huh. So the problem that you have ... just the culture issues of using social media?

MP5: Yeah. Yeah.

Me: Okay. Can you tell me about the advantages then?

MP5: The advantages of the CPD?

Me: Yes.

MP5: The advantages, I think, the a- the advantages I think they are many. Starting with I think you could reframe your perspective of your regarding an issue. Umm, also it could have some, uh, useful impact on improving your abilities as a teacher or as a worker in an institution. It can also establish your presence in in in the field. I'll give you an example. Using the ResearchGate, uh, where there are, uh, lovely people there and we exchange knowledge with them could establish your name as a researcher, as a young researcher and as a young teacher, and could make connections with other people.

Me: Great. So that about the social media in a general. What about ... Can you tell me which social networking site do you use most to enhance your CPD, to enhance your professional development? Which one do you use most?

MP5: Uh, you mean the site?

Me: Yes, which site? Do you use twitter as a most one or YouTube, or FaceBook?

MP5: Yeah, got it. Well that depends also on the nature of your need. Uh, I tend, you know um, [??], uh, to use, uh, Twitter-

Me: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MP5: -uh, more than another means for, uh, it is the social purposes or, uh, development purposes. So I think Twitter is at the top.

Me: Twitter is at the top to enhance your CPD, to use it for your professional development?

MP5: Yeah. I think yeah, Twitter is at the top. And there are also, um, there are other also platforms, uh, like LinkedIn, um, yep. And as a website if, if there has a place in your, uh, study as well. As a website, like I just said, ResearchGate, uh, um ... I can't recall every, every site that I've used before but ResearchGate is is the most prominent one.

Me: Okay. But the most one, of the social networking sites that you use is Twitter?

MP5: Twitter, yeah.

Me: So, why do you particularly use this one for your CPD, for your professional development as the most one?

MP5: Well I think the features of Twitter - yeah yeah, I got your question - I think the features of Twitter, uh, is a used ... it's just, you know um, could say, um, friendly use, uh, what else? You could also, uh, choose people who you want to follow and the people who you want follow you. So I think the flexibility of the followers and ... so that are the main things that attract me are a great things about Twitter.

Me: Okay. Which accounts? You, uh, just mentioned some accounts or some people who can follow you and you can follow them. Which accounts do you ...

MP5: Sorry?

Me: ... follow on Twitter to enhance your CPD?

MP5: Which accounts?

Me: Yes. Which accounts do you follow on twitter to enhance your professional development?

MP5: Well as I say, um, mostly mostly peers followers, uh, colleagues, um, institutions like, um, uh, British Council, um, uh, I-I can't remember all, all the-the-the people I follow but I think mostly they are people who who work in the same area of interest of mine.

Me: Good. But there is no specific accounts, you know, I mean experts in the field that you follow? For example, you know, TESOL, or the IATEFL, or, uh, you know the linguistics account or, kind of that.

MP5: Sorry, I couldn't get your question, sorry. Your voice is dropped, sorry.

Me: Sorry. Sorry for that. So the last question ... the last question is, how do you use it for your CPD, how do you use Twitter? Or how do you use Twitter for your CPD?

MP5: Ah, how do I use Twitter for CPD, you say, right?

Me: Yes. Yes please.

MP5: Well mainly, fundamentally for, uh, you know, seeking others opinions. Tweeting, okay, when you have a concern, or you want to find out more about an issue, you tweet what you have, have in mind, and you wait for your followers to respond.

Me: Good.

MP5: That's basically the main use of Twitter.

Me: Good. So that's the last question. But, do you want to add anything-

MP5: No, that's all I think.

Me: -regarding this topic.

MP5: No that's all.

Me: Do you have questions?

MP5: No I think that's all.

Me: Thanks.

MP5: All the best.

Me: Thanks a lot. Thanks a lot for, you know, uh, agreeing to take part in this study. Thanks. Many thanks.

MP5: It a, it's a pleasure, it's a pleasure. All the best

Interview with Male Participant6 (MP6)

Me: Good Morning! Thanks for your time and agreeing to be a part of this interview

MP6: Good Morning.

Me: As you may know the aim of this research is to investigate the role of social media in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers and to what extent they (English language teachers) use it (social media) for the CPD. Thanks for provided the consent to be a part of this interview and just to inform you that all information provided by your good-self in this interview will be kept completely confidential and will be solely used for the purpose of this research. Your name, name of school and any other information will not be disclosed in the research and appropriate pseudonyms will be used to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of your information. Is that okay with you?

MP6: Fine by me.

Me: Shall we start the interview then?

MP6: Yes! Please.

Me: How long have you been teaching?

MP6: 8 years.

Me: Great! That seems to be a long time. May I ask about your educational qualifications?

MP6: Yes! I have done MA in English Language Teaching.

Me: May I ask how do you define CPD?

MP6: In my opinion, CPD is a practice to become an expert in the teaching profession by continuously developing and updating one's skillset and competencies.

Me: Excellent! You have described it really well.

MP6: Thanks.

Me: May I ask which Social Networking Sites (SNSs) (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) do you use to enhance your CPD?

MP6: I actually use a combination of different SNSs and online Apps to enhance my CPD and I constantly look for like-minded English language teachers for exchanging knowledge and ideas which improve my learning and equally provide me strong networking opportunities to liaise with like-minded peers. I use Twitter, Edmodo, Facebook, YouTube. I follow different

‘Groups’ on Facebook where I can find English language teachers across the globe and read the content which they post, make a comment on various posts. I also follow various ‘Hashtags’ on Twitter and also actively watch English language teaching videos on YouTube which all help towards my CPD.

Me: Alright! So out of Edmodo, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, which one is mostly used by you for your CPD?

MP6: Twitter by far is mostly used by me for my CPD.

Me: Okay! Why do you use Twitter for your CPD and how frequently you use Twitter?

MP6: I use Twitter on a daily basis for my CPD. The reason why I am saying that I use it daily is because I liaise with other peers not only in Saudi Arabia but also with my peers in the UK, USA, and Canada, so to ask questions, exchange ideas, provide opinions and to share resources, Twitter I think is by far the best social networking site to not only develop my own knowledge but to reflect upon the knowledge which I gain through Twitter by communicating with my peers.

Me: Great! So you use Twitter daily for your CPD? May I ask why?

MP6: Yes! I use it daily and I believe that brief format of Twitter and regular stream of activity makes it efficient in terms of use which is especially important for teachers who have a very hectic routine.

Me: So may I ask you to explain a bit more as to how you use Twitter for your CPD?

MP6: For example, I use #Edchat on Twitter which provide a valuable opportunity to share stories, data and highlight best practices which peers use in teaching English language and this can equally serve as a training medium particularly for the intern teachers and equally for experienced teachers as #Edchat offers a platform to exchange knowledge and resources which contribute towards my CPD. Hyperlinks and retweets are also constantly used by me which direct me to the required lessons, quizzes, animations, assessments which have been used by other users and using them save a considerable amount of my time as I do not have to perform my own research to source every individual lesson, quiz and assessment. I also feel that Twitter significantly contributes to my CPD because I can always contribute to discussions on Twitter as and when I like to as against a traditional, physical CPD session in which I do not have a control as to how and when I learn. So I believe with the help of Twitter, I am certainly in charge of how and what I need to learn, and this certainly contributes towards my CPD.

Me: That was quite an insightful response.

MP6: Thanks

Me: So do you think that Saudi English language teachers extensively use SNSs for their CPD?

MP6: No! I do not think so. Use of IT in Saudi educational institutions itself is in early stages and teachers still believe in traditional 'classroom teaching' and a good majority of teachers are reluctant to use IT including SNSs so I believe there is still a long way to go before SNSs can be significantly used for teachers' CPD.

Me: So what do you think are the barriers for not using SNSs for CPD?

MP6: As I said earlier the overall state of IT infrastructure is still new in the Kingdom and teachers are trained to teach English language in a classroom-based environment so to use SNSs for CPD, English language teachers are first to be provided the relevant training in terms of using different SNSs and only then they can use them for teaching and to develop new skills and improve their practice. I also think that teachers do not have adequate time to use SNSs for CPD and part of it is because of poor internet connection in schools and limited knowledge about the use of various SNSs which prevent teachers from using them for CPD.

Me: Did someone recommend you use SNSs for your CPD?

MP6: Not really. I guess my use of SNSs for my CPD originated from the use of social media on a day-to-day basis while I was a student and I did use Twitter, YouTube and Instagram a lot to learn English language when I was a student, so I had a reasonable understanding of SNSs which helped me a lot when I started teaching.

Me: Excellent! So it is more of self-learning journey for you?

MP6: Indeed.

Me: Will you recommend it to someone else?

MP6: Definitely, I recommend it all the times to my students, my peers, and interns as I believe that these three groups can transform the state of learning in the Kingdom and can mitigate the resistance which is shown towards SNSs in schools and can considerably be used as a source to develop new skills in terms of English language learning and teaching which can flourish teachers' CPD.

Me: So this brings me to the last question in terms of what training is needed in terms of use of SNSs to enhance the CPD of teachers?

MP6: I think there are various areas in which teachers need training. I strongly believe that principals, headteachers should all be provided training how SNSs including different online applications should be used in schools so the general reluctance in schools can be reduced, and this can be pivotal in motivating teachers to use SNSs for their CPD. Other areas of training are how to source information from different SNSs, how to share it and how to use it to design lessons, to perform assessments, to share information with peers and to engage in a dialogue with peers so to reflect upon one's teaching skills, competencies and to identify areas for improvement which can all collectively improve teachers' CPD.

Me: Great! All done! Do you want to add anything else or have got any questions?

MP6: No! Thanks.

Me: Thanks again for your time.

MP6: My Pleasure! Good luck for the research.

Interview with Male Participant7 (MP7)

Me: Good Morning! How are you doing?

MP7: Good Morning. All well and you?

Me: Thank you for the courtesy you extended to me by accepting to be a part of this interview.

MP7: Thanks for inviting me.

Me: I would like to firstly brief you about the purpose of this research which is to explore the role of social media in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers and to what extent they (English language teachers) use them for their CPD. This research is being conducted in three phases. First phase involved filling the questionnaire and second phase is about conducting interviews with Saudi English teachers including yourself. While third phase is about analysing social media posts. As far as data protection is concerned, all information provided by you in this interview will remain wholly confidential and data provided by you will be protected as per the Data Protection Act UK (1998). Have you got any questions or concerns which you wish to raise before starting the interview?

MP7: No! I don't have any questions.

Me: Thanks! Let's start the interview then. May I ask you to explain the CPD?

MP7: CPD is an ongoing process of pursuing the skills, knowledge and experience which teachers gain acquire both in a formal and informal manner.

Me: That's right. Well said! My next question is how long have you been teaching, and which degree did you pursue?

MP7: I have been teaching since 4 years and I have got a MSc in English Language and Linguistics.

Me: My next question is which Social Networking Sites (SNSs) do you mostly use to enhance your CPD?

MP7: I mostly use Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus and Instagram to communicate with my colleagues, to share ideas and resources, to provide feedback to other teachers which have been instrumental in developing my CPD.

Me: So you use all four equally or if you can name one which you extensively use and if so why?

MP7: I will say that I mostly use Twitter and it is due to the fact that it has facilitated me to engage with fellow teachers in terms of content areas in English language such as grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary, speaking who may not be available within my school. So I can say that Twitter contributes towards my professional growth and equally expands my social network as within the span of few minutes, I can connect with my colleagues and can make meaningful contribution towards my own and other's learning which is quite informal but yet so helpful.

Me: So how do you use Twitter to enhance your CPD, if you may provide an example please?

MP7: I readily use Twitter chats, retweets to improve my CPD as through chats on Twitter I regularly post information about the syllabus and likewise, other teachers also regularly post the information so if I find something helpful in terms of new technology and multimedia and social media tool or any online application which can improve the quality of my English language lesson, I instantly post about it on Twitter and if I have any questions about how to align new technology in English language teaching, I will equally ask a question from my colleague, will do some research to solve the issue and this has been crucial in enhancing my CPD.

Me: You seem to be quite proficient in using SNSs to enhance your CPD. Do you think that other teachers are equally confident to use SNSs to enhance their CPD?

MP7: I cannot be definite in saying the same about other teachers but based on my experience, there is a growing trend in my school and specifically English language teachers use Twitter, Google Plus, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram a lot to design their lessons and I think that role of Twitter is particularly vital in developing a social network which contribute towards CPD of teachers and such CPD may not be experienced through formal teachers' training programs.

Me: So are there any barriers in using SNSs for teachers' CPD.

MP7: I cannot make an exact comment, but I feel certain issues are there which need resolving and these I guess are limited use of information, communication and technology in Saudi schools. At times the use of SNSs generate excessive information which can be difficult to handle and there is general conception among teachers that SNSs may not provide a learning platform as all activities are so informal, then there can be internet connection issues and at times discussion on SNSs can become biased which may discourage some teachers as their opinion may not be valued by others.

Me: That is a good description of some of the common barriers. Okay! Have you been recommended by anybody to use the SNSs for your CPD?

MP7: I have had a mentor when I was doing my internship in teacher's training who suggested me to use the SNSs to improve my skills and capabilities which I guess is CPD!

Me: Yes! That is quite helpful. So, will you recommend the SNSs to anybody to enhance their CPD.

MP7: I will recommend it heavily to the novice teachers.

Me: Have you been provided any training about SNSs to use it to enhance your CPD?

MP7: Are you talking about any formal training?

Me: Any formal or informal training?

MP7: I have not heard about any formal teachers' training programs which incorporate SNSs for teachers' CPD in Saudi Arabia. I guess these may be prevalent in the USA, UK. But I have not had any formal training. As I earlier said, I had a mentor when I was doing internship and he used to extensively use SNSs, so I have learnt that from him.

Me: Alright! So what kind of training do you need in terms of using SNSs to enhance your CPD?

MP7: I think regular training in terms of creating meaningful posts, availability of required ICT equipment and support and conducting regular trainings on integrating different SNSs into the English language syllabus can definitely address my training needs and can hopefully enhance my CPD.

Me: That brings us towards the end of this interview. Do you want to add anything else.

MP7: No! Thank you.

Me: I once again appreciate your time in answering these interview questions and I have learnt a lot from this interviewing session.

MP7: I am glad that I was able to help you. Thanks.

Me: You are welcome!

Interview with Male Participant8 (MP8)

Me: Good Morning! Hope all is well?

MP8: Great! How about you.

Me: I am doing well. Thanks for asking. I also highly appreciate your kind gesture of being a part of this interview.

MP8: Thanks.

Me: Let me first explain you about this research which I am currently undertaking. The goal of my research is to examine the role of social media in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers and to what extent it is used by them for their CPD. You did fill in the questionnaire survey earlier on so you may have some ideas about the nature of this research. Now my task is to interview the selected participants which is why you are being interviewed. Few pointers about how I will use the information which you will provide in this interview. All data provided by yourself will be kept confidential and anonymous and your participation is completely voluntary so if at any time, you do not wish to proceed ahead in this interview, you can decline to proceed. I shall also share with you the transcript of your interview and only after your final approval, I shall use it in my research. Is that okay or do you wish to ask any questions?

MP8: That is fine be me.

Me: So shall we commence the interview then?

MP8: Yes!

Me: To begin with, I will explain you about the CPD. CPD is basically about how teachers on a regular basis update their skills and polish their capabilities so to excel in their teaching and to deliver quality pedagogical outcomes for themselves and their students.

MP8: Okay! That makes sense!

Me: How long have you been teaching and which particular degree you have got?

MP8: I have done a BA and a MA in English literature, and I have been teaching since 9 years.

Me: Which Social Networking Sites (SNSs) do you use to enhance your CPD?

MP8: Twitter is my go to SNSs which has made me learn so much in past few years about improving the quality of English language teaching. Twitter hashtags, chat forums offer teachers like me a great opportunity to engage in professional discussions and then there are

relevant English language teaching groups which have refined the way I have been teaching and that I believe is the best contribution of SNSs towards my CPD.

Me: Okay! You have mentioned only Twitter, Don't you use any other SNSs and why do you readily use Twitter?

MP8: I do use other SNSs such as YouTube, Telegram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn but I rely on Twitter as word-limit in terms of character is great so users including teachers and students can present their viewpoints, questions, feedback in a concise manner which makes it easier for all users to read the information in a short span of time which is great in terms of saving teachers' and students' time.

Me: That sounds excellent! Will you describe more how you use Twitter for your CPD?

MP8: For example, I use Twitter to get feedback on my teaching from other English teachers not only in Saudi Arabia but from the teachers across the globe which give me ideas how to improve my teaching. I share works of other teachers and I also share work done by my students so to get identify areas of improvement and I believe that Twitter is far more accessible and user-friendly, and this all have done a reasonable contribution towards my CPD.

Me: Alright! You seem to be an active user of SNSs particularly Twitter to improve your CPD. What about other Saudi English language teachers, to what extent do they use it for their CPD and why?

MP8: Well! I think a fundamental reason about using SNSs by teachers is that 'Saudi Vision 2030' aims at making Saudi Arabia a digital economy so improving the usage of ICT in all domains is one of the aims of 'Saudi Vision 2030' and this is why teachers use various SNSs to improve their CPD. I cannot precisely describe the extent of usage, but I certainly feel there is an upward trend in past 5 years in using SNSs by teachers and this may have improved teachers' CPD.

Me: Any problems in using SNSs for CPD which you have experienced?

MP8: ICT issues are quite rampant in schools and teachers are mostly overworked and short of time so ICT issues in terms of poor internet connectivity, poor equipment and ICT infrastructure and lack of policy by the Saudi Ministry of Education to use SNSs for teachers' CPD are the main problems in my opinion.

Me: Okay! Did anybody recommend you use SNSs for your CPD?

MP8: Not really! I have been motivated personally to use it.

Me: Will you recommend SNSs to anyone else to improve their CPD?

MP8: Yes definitely! Fellow teachers in English language teaching must use SNSs to enhance their CPD.

Me: Have you got any training/ assistance about how to use SNSs to enhance your CPD?

MP8: No official training have been provided but I have personally done courses in digital learning and how to use various SNSs to improve the teaching practice which have facilitated me in terms of designing the content of lessons keeping in view feedback received from my students and I encourage my students to do regular posts in English language on various SNSs and specially on Twitter and to regularly converse with English language teachers on different SNSs which I believe provide training to both teachers and students and can assist in improving teachers' CPD.

Me: What kind of training do you need with the use of SNS to enhance your CPD?

MP8: Training I guess in terms of following accounts on Twitter which must have relevant English language content and how exactly to design the teaching course using for example Twitter to teach English language.

Me: Do you want to add anything?

MP8: No! I guess I have been quite a chatterbox!

Me: Not at all! You have been so helpful. Thanks again for your time.

MP8: Great! Thanks for allowing me to be a part of this interview which has allowed me to reflect on the use of SNSs to enhance teachers' CPD.

Me: Pleasure is all mine! Thanks.

Interview with Male Participant9 (MP9)

Me: Good Morning! How are you doing?

MP9: I am fine and you?

Me: Firstly, I will describe the aim of this research which is about examining the role of social media in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers and to what extent the teachers use social media to enhance their CPD. Since, you have consented for this interview, so please note your participation is voluntary and you may feel free to withdraw any time from this interview, if you do not wish to do that. All data provided by you will remain anonymous so to ensure the privacy and secrecy of your data as per the ethical requirements of this research. Have you got any questions?

MP9: I am fine with all that. You may start asking the questions.

Me: May I firstly know, how long have you been teaching?

MP9: 3 years.

Me: Great! Which degree have you got?

MP9: I have a MA in Applied English

Me: I would also like to know, what is your understanding of the CPD?

MP9: I guess to refine one's skills and capabilities in their professions.

Me: Well-defined. So my first question will be which Social Networking Sites (SNSs) do you use to enhance your CPD?

MP9: Not one specific site, but I seek information from different SNSs to enhance my CPD. I use Google Scholar to access relevant journal article about how to improve reading, writing, pronunciation, grammar, listening and speaking skills among my students. I also use Twitter, Telegram, Instagram, YouTube to source English language content using edtech and by following the apps and by downloading them and using them and by actively follow different hashtags (#) on Twitter which have enhanced my CPD.

Me: So which SNSs is extensively used by you and what is your frequency of using Twitter?

MP9: I shall say Twitter and I use it more or less every day.

Me: That sounds good! So why do you use Twitter for your CPD?

MP9: For me, CPD is how I strive to improve my teaching by comparing it with the best practices across the globe so for me Twitter provides the required social networking which I need to engage with other teachers. I use 'Google Classroom' and I follow different teachers on Twitter, read their content, watch the teaching videos and tutorials which are uploaded by

teachers on Twitter and try using them in my own lessons and whatever I found helpful, I share that with teachers on Twitter. I reckon, teachers write extensive blogs and posts about different content and keep updating their 'Tweets' if they make any revision in content which I find very helpful to stay updated in terms of contemporary information and this by far contributes massively towards enhancing my CPD.

Me: That is quite a thorough response. May I ask in your opinion, Saudi English language teachers extensively use SNSs for their CPD?

MP9: I am not sure about that. I feel there is a general hesitancy among the English language teachers to use SNSs as these are considered a mean to develop social networks and not a formal mean to educate students and to use them for their CPD.

Me: Does that mean there are barriers in using SNSs for teacher's CPD?

MP9: I think so because SNSs are not regarded official tools by a good majority of teachers in Saudi Arabia and unless these will not be officially implemented by the Government as a part of English teaching syllabus, the usage of SNSs among teachers to use them for their CPD will be low.

Me: Apart from lack of policy, what other barriers are there?

MP9: I think educational organisations have poor infrastructure in terms of ICT which include connection issues in terms of internet, lack of awareness among teachers how to use various SNSs, lack of adequate time within classrooms so teachers can start using SNSs.

Me: Did someone recommend you use SNSs for your CPD?

MP9: Yes! Headmaster in the very first school I started working as an English teacher recommended me to use SNSs and this is why I can say that I am quite confident in using SNSs to teach my students and this has strengthened my CPD.

Me: Amazing! Will you recommend it to someone else?

MP9: I will highly recommend it to the teachers, trainee teachers and I also think that headmasters in schools also use SNSs, so a culture gets developed in schools which promote the use of SNSs.

Me: What about the training you need in using SNSs to enhance your CPD?

MP9: I will say that training in terms of finding groups on SNSs which focus on improving communication skills of students, training to refine the search process to find pages, native speakers who have placed quality content in terms of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Training in terms of skimming and scanning the information on SNSs and to write in a concise manner so to make the content attractive to the greater audience can all enhance the CPD. In addition to this, training is definitely needed in terms of aligning SNSs into the classroom and to provide training to teachers to become independent learners by involving in social networks and teachers who are expert in using SNSs should provide training sessions to apprentice teachers. There should be dedicated training programs and English language online courses should be designed in a way which involve the use of discussion areas on various SNSs to improve teachers' involvement which can significantly enhance CPD.

Me: Have you got any other questions or wish to add anything.

MP9: That's all for now.

Me: Thanks for your time and patience.

MP9: You are welcome.

Interview with Male Participant10 (MP10)

Me: Good Morning! How are you doing?

MP10: I am fine. What about you?

Me: Thanks for agreeing to become a part of this interview and to contribute towards my research.

MP10: Thanks for having me.

Me: Since you may have read the details about this research, I will provide you a brief synopsis as to what this research is all about. This research intends to explore the role of social media in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers and to what extent they (English language teachers) use them for their CPD. I have performed this research in three stages. First stage of the research used questionnaires and second stage involves performing interviews with Saudi English teachers which is why I will be taking your valuable time in next 30-45 minutes. Whereas third stage relates to evaluating social media posts. Just to inform you that all answers provided by you will be kept fully anonymous and confidential to protect your data according to the relevant ethical considerations of this research which I need to comply with as a researcher. So are you happy with that?

MP10: Fine!

Me: Shall I start the interview?

MP10: Please proceed ahead.

Me: Are you familiar with the concept of CPD?

MP10: Not really! Will you explain it to me:

Me: CPD is basically about refining one's skills and capabilities professionally so to facilitate them (teachers in this case) both in their roles and to deliver quality educational outcomes such as improved learning of English language among students and improved teaching on part of students.

MP10: Okay!

Me: May I ask how long have you been teaching?

MP10: 3 years

Me: Have you got any specific degree in English language teaching?

MP10: Yes! I have done a MSc in English Language.

Me: Alright! Do you use Social Networking Sites (SNSs) to enhance your CPD?

MP10: I cannot comment how these SNSs would exactly contribute towards developing my CPD. However, what I can say is that in Saudi Arabia, there is an ongoing trend since last few years to use few SNSs such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Me: Okay! That explains well but may I ask out of these SNSs which one do you the most and why?

MP10: I find Twitter really helpful in terms of connecting with English language educators globally and using hashtags on Twitter to share my ideas and equally to retweet others' ideas and I also find Twitter helpful when sharing students' homework with other teachers and to get their viewpoints about the work done. I also use YouTube as I find videos and tutorials about English language teaching really helpful when I need to learn or refresh a concept.

Me: So do you think teachers in Saudi schools, I mean English language teachers widely utilise SNSs for their CPD?

MP10: I will say there was a lot of resistance few years back as digital mode of teaching, i.e. online teaching and using social media and multimedia was not very commonly used by Saudi teachers. But this trend has changed since last few years and the whole concept of teaching has been massively affected due to Covid-19, when traditional classroom teaching got replaced by online teaching and since that time I feel SNSs have been widely used by teachers including English language teachers.

Me: So are there any particular barriers which you think obstruct teachers in terms of using SNSs for the CPD?

MP9: I can talk more for myself, and I feel there are considerable barriers which prevent teachers from using SNSs for the CPD. I can comfortably use Twitter and YouTube and I find finding relevant English language professionals is quite easy on Twitter as compared to Instagram or even Facebook. So this I believe is a general problem that all teachers view different SNSs differently and use these SNSs if they offer ease of use and accessibility. I also think implementing ICT in schools is quite expensive and even if schools have ICT there remain internet connectivity and IT support issues in school which may not be very helpful when using SNSs to improve teachers' CPD.

Me: Were you recommended SNSs by someone for your CPD

MP10: I started using social media around 10 years ago and I initially used Facebook and then as social media websites started becoming rampant, I started using various SNSs including Twitter, YouTube, Google Scholar and started following English language teachers and

different channels, web pages, blogs and hashtags, so I guess it will be appropriate to say that my use of SNSs for CPD has transpired over a period of time but nobody in particular recommended me to use SNSs for my CPD.

Me: Wonderful! How about you recommending it to someone else?

MP10: I believe if use of SNSs is widely encouraged and endorsed by the Ministry of Education, only then its overall use among teachers will increase and it will be readily recommended to other teachers, researchers, students and professionals.

Me: Do you need any training to use SNSs for your CPD?

MP10: I think I will need training in terms of using blogs to develop my English language lesson. As far as Twitter is concerned, I will need training in terms of using 'Twittersphere' so to look for specific search terms such as vocabulary, reading, writing, grammar, listening, speaking. Another area of training will be how I can train my students to write their own blogs, to post comments on SNSs, to engage in conversation to discuss about a contemporary topic which can all improve students' English language learning, and it will also improve my CPD.

Me: This brings me to the end of this interview. Do you want to add anything else?

MP10: No! That's all.

Me: Alright! Once again thanks a lot for your time.

MP10: Thank you.

Interview with Female Participant1 (FP1)

Me: Good Morning! How is it going?

FP1: All good and you?

Me: Thanks for sparing me your valuable time and agreeing to be a part of this interview

FP1: Thanks for the invite.

Me: Before commencing this interview, I will give you an overview about this interview. The aim of this research is to evaluate the role of social media in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers and to what extent these various Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are used by the Saudi English language teachers for their CPD. All your answers will remain wholly confidential and any of your personal information will not be revealed at all in this research so to comply with data protection under UK's Data Protection Act 1998 and once I have transcribed your interview, I will delete all the information. Have you got any questions about the confidentiality of data?

FP1: No! I got it!

Me: I will now start the interview. Firstly, may I know how long have you been teaching?

FP1: I have been teaching since last four years.

Me: What degree have you got in English language teaching?

FP1: I have done a MA in English language.

Me: Let's move to the core part of this interview. May I ask how do you define CPD?

FP1: Not sure but I guess it is to do with one's professional development so I think in this case it will be how teachers in Saudi Arabia uses SNSs to improve their skills so to improve their teaching practice.

Me: That is definitely a relevant definition of CPD. May I know which SNSs do you use the most to enhance your CPD and why you use that SNSs?

FP1: I use Telegram and follow various channels on it such as 'English of the day', 'English for tomorrow', 'Grammarfy' and these channels are helpful for learning grammar, idioms, different parts of speech as these have various quizzes, exercises to not only help in learning spoken English but also help in my CPD. I also use Facebook, but in terms of everyday usage, I use Twitter the most as it's concise format is always readily accessible, and 140 words-limit is an excellent way to present one's ideas in a succinct manner. Equally, I consider the use of Twitter best as compared to Telegram and Facebook when it comes to communicating with my colleagues and experts in English language teaching which to some extent has contributed towards improving my CPD.

Me: So Twitter is what you use the most and how frequently you use it?

FP1: Yes! Twitter is what I use the most and I use it more or less daily as tweets are always brief, so these do not take enormous amount of my time to read, comment and to retweet if I find a tweet appealing.

Me: Okay! What about the usage of SNSs among Saudi English language teachers?

FP1: Can you elaborate that?

Me: Yes! I mean how widely in your opinion Saudi English language teachers use SNSs for their CPD?

FP1: That is a difficult question to answer. What I feel is that my male colleagues are more experienced in using SNSs and reason for such statement is that number of male teachers in schools is higher than female teachers so male teachers have access to various SNSs within schools whereas female teachers lack considerable amount of knowledge in terms of using technology in everyday lessons due to which female teachers are quite reluctant to use technology including SNSs so all I can say is that female teachers use SNSs for their CPD but in a very limited manner and unless female teachers' technical and pedagogical knowledge about using different SNSs will not be improved, female teachers will remain reluctant to use SNSs for their CPD.

Me: You have more or less answered the next question which I was about to ask about the problems for not using SNSs for CPD.

FP1: As I have said earlier that main barriers are limited knowledge of teachers specially female teachers and other related issues are lack of access to SNSs, absence of basic training such as using technology in a classroom and I also believe that teachers have a very limited time within which they have to finish a lesson so using SNSs may not be their priority which can also affect the usage of SNSs for teachers' CPD.

Me: As far as using SNSs for CPD is concerned, did someone recommend it to you?

FP1: Yes! The trainer I worked with during my apprenticeship days recommended me to use SNSs.

Me: What about you in terms of recommending it to someone else?

FP1: I will recommend it particularly to female teachers as their use of technology and SNSs is quite low as compared to their male peers.

Me: So my last question now is do you need any training to use SNSs to enhance your CPD?

FP1: As I earlier said areas of training are improving the overall use of technology among female Saudi teachers, allowing them more time for training and giving them extra time to

finish their lessons so they have adequate time to learn about SNSs and this can correspondingly enhance teachers' CPD.

Me: Wonderful! With that I conclude this interview. Do you wish to add anything else or want to ask any questions?

FP1: No! I don't wish to add anything else.

Me: Thanks indeed for your valuable time.

FP1: Thanks. Take care.

Interview with Female Participant2 (FP2)

Me: Good Afternoon! Hope all is well?

FP2: All is well. How are you doing?

Me: Thanks for your precious time and giving the consent to be included in this interview.

FP2: Thank you.

Me: Let me begin by providing you an overview of this interview. This research is aimed at investigating the role of social media in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers and to what extent these various Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are used by the Saudi English language teachers for their CPD. I conducted this research in three phases. First phase was where I conducted surveys via questionnaire as you have filled the questionnaire so you may already have few ideas about this research. Now I am performing the second part of my research which is to interview the participants including yourself. In addition to this, third part of my research will entail analysing social media posts. Your answers will remain completely confidential, and your participation is entirely voluntary so you can withdraw at any time if you do not wish to proceed ahead. Shall I start the interview?

FP2: Yes! You may start the interview.

Me: My first question is how long have you been teaching and which educational qualification, degree have you obtained.

FP2: Alright! I am in teaching profession since last three years and I have obtained a PhD in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

Me: That is impressive. What is your understanding of CPD?

FP2: Thanks. CPD relates to constantly updating skills and core competencies and in my opinion both formal and informal training has got a tremendous role in improving one's CPD.

Me: Superb! Which SNSs have you used the most to enhance your CPD and why?

FP2: I cannot pinpoint one specific SNS as I use various SNSs at the same time as each SNS is unique in its own way and contribute towards my learning.

Me: Okay! That is great. So which SNSs you use.

FP2: Twitter is what I found quite helpful in terms of writing short descriptions, i.e. tweets on ideas, views and linking them to useful websites so to guide the learners to learn more about the given topic, question, idea or an activity. I also find that Twitter is also useful in terms following other users and their tweets and there is an option of one being followed back by these users and this readily forms a network of learned professionals which is a vital source of improving one's CPD. I also find that regular tweets during the day on Twitter is an ideal platform for a productive dialogue about how to improve English language teaching syllabus and which activities should be readily included to improve students' English language learning

and in doing so, I always ask fellow teachers on Twitter to advise me about the activities, tasks which they use for students and that way Twitter is more of a self-learning and a training platform which I believe is very important for one's CPD. I also use YouTube as it has various useful channels which I can use in my daily classroom activities. There are various channels on YouTube which I follow but I will give you an example, 'BBC Learning English' channel on YouTube is very useful as each day there is a new lesson which can greatly help in teaching English and even students should be readily encouraged to follow this channel as it is quite helpful in improving students' English as it has got excellent learning resources for students of all ages. There is also a 'BBC News Review' which since my university days I have followed, and I believe it is great both for teachers and students as there is always a discussion about latest news and it is shown how students can use latest news' English as a part of their daily English learning which is an ideal source for improving conversational English.

Me: That is certainly quite thorough answer! So do Saudi English language teachers extensively use SNSs for their CPD?

FP2: I don't think so.

Me: Why do you think so?

FP2: Technology is still not an active part of Saudi schools as it is in Western and American countries and there are concerns from teachers and parents that using social media for education is not a formal method of teaching and then I feel that not all teachers are tech-savvy which is why they don't even know how to use technology in a day-to-day lesson and then there are also technology infrastructure problems in school. Internet can be quite slow, there may not be IT staff in the school to resolve technological issues, so I don't think that SNSs are extensively used by Saudi English language teachers.

Me: Okay! May I ask did someone suggest you using SNSs for your CPD?

FP2: No! I have been using SNSs since my college and university days.

Me: Will you recommend it to anybody else?

FP2: Students mainly because if students start using SNSs from young ages, they will be more likely to use it when they will become teachers and I also recommend that SNSs should be included as a part of 'Teachers' Training Courses' as that will give teachers a significant idea how to use SNSs in everyday classroom teaching.

Me: So do you need any training in terms of using SNSs to enhance your CPD?

FP2: As I just said SNSs when incorporated into teachers' training courses can readily address the training needs of English language teachers and these training courses can enhance teachers' CPD.

Me: Alright! With that I am about to end this interview. Do you want to ask any question or have any comments to make?

FP2: No! Thanks.

Me: Thanks again for being so courteous and giving me your precious time.

FP2: Thanks too for your time.

Interview with Female Participant3 (FP3)

Me: Good Afternoon! How are you doing?

FP3: I am doing well. How have you been?

Me: Good! Thanks for asking and thanks for allowing me your time to be a part of this interview.

FP3: Pleasure is all mine.

Me: To begin with, let me brief you about the purpose of this research. This research is being conducted to evaluate the role of social media such as Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers and to what extent they (English language teachers) use it (social media) for the CPD. For data protection, all your responses will be kept fully anonymous and confidential and will not be used for any other purpose other than this research. The answers provided by you will not reveal any personal information about you and I will use pseudonyms in the research to safeguard confidentiality and anonymity of your data. Is that fine or do you have any concerns which you want to clarify before I start the interview.

FP3: I don't have any concerns. You may start asking me interview questions.

Me: May I ask if you are aware of the concept of CPD?

FP3: No! Can you explain that to me.

Me: CPD is about how a professional such as a teacher become skillful in his/her teaching by regularly developing and improving their expertise and capabilities. So in this particular case what I am looking for is how Saudi English teachers become proficient in their teaching (CPD) using SNSs.

FP3: Okay! Now I get it.

Me: Since how long have you been teaching English, and have you got any English language degree?

FP3: I just started teaching one year ago and I have got a MA in English language and I have also got TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate.

Me: Which SNSs such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Telegram or any others that you use to enhance your CPD?

FP3: I use Twitter, Telegram, Facebook and YouTube.

Me: Out of those which one do you use quite often and how that enhance your CPD? As I need to know how various SNSs contribute towards improving English language teachers' CPD?

FP3: I use all four of them more or less every couple of days. As these all four SNSs have varying features which help me in improving my teaching practice. For example, in terms of finding competent peers and professional groups such as English language teaching professionals and groups formed by these professional teachers can be easily found using Twitter, so I check every other day which tweets are posted by my peers and that for me is an easy way to know what exactly is happening in the field of English language teaching which can be regarded effective in improving my CPD. I also use Telegram and I find it's channels quite useful in teaching English language. For example, channels such as 'Viola' offers different resources to aid learners learn the English language. A channel called, 'English Online' is a great channel for elementary level students and it offers daily language analysis of vocabulary and its use via various posts from quotations and stories. I use Facebook to interact with my peers and by exchanging messages and status updates on Facebook, I utilise it as a mean to practice English language. As far as YouTube is concerned, I use lessons, lectures, tutorials, videos regarding English language teaching and all these SNSs have helped me in my professional role (CPD).

Me: Alright! Now I will ask about the usage of SNSs among Saudi English language teachers for improving their CPD? Do Saudi Teachers heavily use SNSs for their CPD?

FP3: That is a generic question. All I can say is that various reforms have been introduced by the Saudi Ministry of Education so schools can comply with the goals stated in 'Saudi Vision 2030' and all I know is that one such goal of 'Saudi Vision 2030' is to diversify the Saudi economy and for that heavy reliance from oil and gas need to be shifted towards 'Services' sector and ICT is one industry in the 'Services' sector whose role is considered essential in diversifying Saudi economy. So in few years, the usage of SNSs for teachers' CPD will increase but for now I am not definite about the current usage.

Me: So are there any problems in your opinion which hamper teachers from using SNSs for their CPD?

FP3: Yes! There are problems which is why I said that usage will be hopefully improve in coming years. As far as SNSs are concerned, I believe the main problem is how to sustain teachers' participation on various SNSs and how to effectively engage teachers both intern and experienced teachers. I struggle at times to navigate the social media space in an effective manner. For example, at times discussions on various SNSs become too biased and as against contributing anything meaningful towards English language teaching, these discussions may not be relevant which can waste teachers' time. A times when I have tried SNSs in my lessons, I have had quite slow internet connection which again can consume significant amount of teachers' time.

Me: So what type of training do you require to use SNSs for your CPD?

FP3: I will say how to navigate various SNSs so to ensure that content of discussion on various SNSs is strictly about English language teaching as against biased viewpoints of the users.

Me: Has anyone recommended you use SNSs to enhance your CPD?

FP3: Well! No! I have been self-motivated over the years to use SNSs.

Me: Is there anyone you will recommend use SNSs for improving CPD?

FP3: Not sure! May be it's a good idea for all teachers to use SNSs for improving their CPD.

Me: With that I have come to the end of this interview. Have you got any questions to ask?

FP3: No.

Me: Excellent! Thanks a lot for your time.

Interview with Female Participant4 (FP4)

Me: Good Evening.

FP4: Good Evening.

Me: Thank you for being a part of this research by initially completing the online questionnaire and now agreeing to be included in this interview. I am conducting this research to investigate the role of social media specifically various Social Networking Sites (SNSs) towards Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers in Saudi Arabia and to what extent teachers use them for the CPD. So shall I start the interview?

FP4: Thanks! You may start asking interview questions.

Me: Are you aware of the concept of CPD?

FP4: I believe it is about how to excel professionally and equipping teachers with vital skills needed by them in order to progress in teaching career.

Me: Great! You seem to have a good understanding of CPD.

Me: How long have you been teaching?

FP4: 2 years.

Me: Which degree have you got?

FP4: I have done MA Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Applied Linguistics.

Me: Which SNSs you mostly use to enhance your CPD and why?

FP4: I mostly use Twitter which helps me in a number of ways to improve my CPD. So for example, hashtags on Twitter are helpful to follow discussions on English language teaching which can be used by teachers to include any relevant content from those hashtags in their lessons and these discussions on Twitter may prompt a teacher to reflect on their English language teaching practice and social support which Twitter offers is helpful in developing my CPD. I at times use Facebook which more or less like Twitter offers networking opportunity to communicate with like-minded teachers and in sharing knowledge and above all in accessing massive audiences which cannot be possible without using SNSs. I also sometimes use blogs which are also helpful in teaching English language as these offer detailed content about an English language topic which can provide a significant insight about the topic.

Me: So in your opinion do Saudi English language teachers extensively use SNSs for improving their CPD.

FP4: I think so! Saudi English language teachers are still learning to use multimedia and social media technologies to design the content of their lessons and use SNSs to create various class groups and these groups serve some form of English language learning outcomes such as teaching grammar, using various parts of speech, how to use vocabulary, how to construct sentences, how to improve conversational English using idioms and phrases native to English language and English language teachers do not solely act as teachers but act more of an administrator and recommend topics for discussion and post various links so to access relevant teaching material and these all initiatives via SNSs improve English language teachers' CPD.

Me: That sounds quite interesting, and you mean the usage of SNSs among Saudi English language teachers is quite extensive?

FP4: I believe so!

Me: What are the problems in using SNSs for teachers' CPD?

FP4: I think teachers do not have enough time to use SNSs in a classroom and not all teachers know how to use various SNSs and there is no official training which is provided by the Ministry of Education or there is no mandatory course which is specified by the Ministry which should incorporate digital technology in classrooms and anything which is not mandatory always remain at the back foot. I also think there is at times lack of credibility regarding content which is posted on various SNSs so unless further research is not done and content is not endorsed officially, there remain a question about the legitimacy of content which may discourage teachers from using SNSs.

Me: What training do you need in terms of using SNSs to enhance your CPD?

FP4: I need more training regarding how to include SNSs in the English language teaching syllabus and this cannot be done unless it is authorised by the Ministry of Education so I believe there are hierarchical problems about using SNSs which can affect the training needs of Saudi English language teachers. I also believe there should be fully trained professionals who have the experience of using various SNSs and digital technologies so teachers can readily contact them when they have a problem in using SNSs. I guess another area of training is how to design the teaching material using SNSs so that overall content is authentic and how to engage in conversations on different SNSs which should demonstrate contemporary and reliable use of English language.

Me: Did someone recommend you using SNSs to enhance your CPD?

FP4: Not sure about that. I have had a network of professionals on my various social media accounts since I was a student so I cannot say that anyone in specific suggested me using SNSs for my CPD.

Me: Will you recommend using SNSs to anybody else to improve their CPD.

FP4: I believe both novice and experienced English language teachers should use SNSs to develop their CPD as these offer excellent learning and networking opportunities which can be vital for one's CPD.

Me: That brings me to the end of this interview. Any comments or questions have you got before I finish the interview?

FP4: No! Thanks for giving me the opportunity to be a part of your research.

Me: Thanks for your time once again. Take care.

Interview with Female Participant5 (FP5)

Me: Good Evening! How are you doing?

FP5: I am good. How are you doing?

Me: I would like to thank you for your time for this interview.

FP5: Thanks for contacting me and giving me an opportunity to be a part of this interview.

Me: You are welcome! I will brief you about the aim of this research which is to examine the role of social media such as Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Saudi English language teachers and to what extent they (English language teachers) use these SNSs for enhancing their CPD. Your data in form of your interview answers will remain confidential at all times and keeping in view the ethical considerations of this research your data will be protected under UK's Data Protection Act 1998. Your personal details will not be divulged at all in this research and your answers will be included in form of excerpts in this research protecting the anonymity and confidentiality of your answers.

Me: How long have you been teaching?

FP5: Since last year and a half.

Me: Which degree have you got in terms of English language teaching?

FP5: I have got a BA and a MA in English language.

Me: Which SNSs do you mostly use to enhance your CPD?

FP5: I mostly use Twitter for exchanging information with my fellow teachers. I find the use of Edchat on Twitter really useful in exchanging knowledge about English language teaching, in exchanging resources and sharing ideas and above all discussions on Edchat can aid teachers to get involved in interactive dialogue which can be really important in improving ones' CPD. When I started teaching, I was initially placed in a school in a rural area of Saudi Arabia and I find the use of Twitter helpful in terms of getting ideas from fellow teachers how to improve my English language teaching and how fellow teachers designed their English language lessons. So even though, I was in a rural area, online accessibility to diverse and global digital audiences on Twitter including fellow professionals provided me relevant emotional help which was what I needed in my early teaching days and that I think is a vital source of improving English language teachers' CPD. Other SNSs which I use are Instagram, Telegram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Skype and Facebook.

Me: To what extent do Saudi English language teachers use SNSs to enhance their CPD?

FP5: I cannot be definite about that. I mean Saudi English language teachers use SNSs but how extensively they use these SNSs, I cannot say anything. What I find on various SNSs that new teachers actively liaise with experienced teachers and this itself provides a valuable learning platform to English language teachers and can be essential in enhancing teachers' CPD.

Me: What barriers are there for Saudi English language teachers for not using SNSs for CPD?

FP5: There can be extreme flow of information on various SNSs so refining such information for teachers can be a daunting task. Since, Saudi English language teachers at times do not have the basic knowledge about using various SNSs so this can discourage them to use SNSs. I also believe that a negative mindset among teachers in general about using social media sites mainly for communication purposes as against teaching and language learning purposes can discourage both teachers and students in using SNSs and it can also negatively affect teachers' CPD. Some schools in Saudi Arabia do not even allow both teachers and students to access SNSs which can be quite detrimental if we are to use SNSs as a mean to improve teachers' CPD in future. This also calls for intervention in terms of having a policy formulated by the Saudi Department of Education which should approve the use of SNSs in schools and provide technological support in form of experts within school who can resolve queries about using SNSs instantly can encourage teachers to use SNSs for their CPD.

Me: Did anybody recommend you using SNSs for your CPD?

FP5: No!

Me: Will you recommend it someone else?

FP5: I guess more than recommendation, it is more of a policy matter so policymakers in Saudi Ministry of Education should work in collaboration with principals and teachers in schools to devise a policy about using SNSs for English language teaching which in my opinion will improve the use of SNSs among Saudi English language teachers.

Me: Have you got any formal training to use SNSs to enhance your CPD?

FP5: I will again say that this itself is an issue as no formal training is given to Saudi English language teachers to use SNSs for their CPD, so this is an area of attention for policymakers.

Me: Excellent! We have almost reached the end of this interview. Do you wish to add anything else or want to ask any questions?

FP5: I don't have any questions.

Me: In that case, thanks again for all your time. Much appreciated.

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