



TEACHERS' STRATEGIES, PREPARATION, AND PERCEIVED IMPACT IN THE SHIFT FROM ONLINE TO FACE-TO-FACE EFL TEACHING

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Abstract

The shift from emergency online teaching back to face-to-face classrooms has created a second adjustment for teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), yet little is known about how Indonesian secondary-school teachers have managed it. This mixed-methods study examined (1) teachers' strategies, (2) their preparation, and (3) the perceived impact of the shift from online to face-to-face teaching. Thirty EFL teachers from Islamic private senior high schools in Indonesia completed an 18-item, five-point Likert questionnaire, and a subset took part in semi-structured interviews. Questionnaire data were analysed with descriptive statistics and interview data with Saldaña's two-cycle coding. Teachers reported blending digital and face-to-face practice, with the strongest agreement for collaborative tasks ($M = 4.57$) and for integrating online resources into classroom lessons ($M = 4.53$). They also reported continuously seeking new resources ($M = 4.57$), receiving institutional support ($M = 4.53$), and feeling emotionally prepared ($M = 4.17$). Teachers perceived students as more engaged in face-to-face lessons ($M = 4.57$) and themselves as more effective, but also reported a heavier workload ($M = 4.53$), more classroom-management challenges, and higher stress ($M = 4.17$); interviews showed that these experiences were not uniform. The findings suggest that post-pandemic EFL teaching is best understood as a sustained blend of digital and social-constructivist classroom practice that requires continued professional development, institutional support, and attention to teacher well-being.

Keywords: post-pandemic teaching; EFL teachers; blended learning; teacher preparation; teacher well-being; social constructivism

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic forced schools worldwide to move abruptly from classroom teaching to online delivery. Hodges et al. (2020) distinguished this emergency remote teaching (ERT) from carefully planned online learning, and Dolenc et al. (2021) described forced online distance education (FODE) as an unplanned shift that obliged teachers and students to work online with little preparation and that produced unintended side effects, perceived differently by educators and students. The pandemic reshaped teaching and learning across levels and contexts (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021), and instructional strategies for online teaching became a major concern (Mahmood, 2021).

Once the acute phase of the pandemic ended, schools moved back toward face-to-face instruction. This second shift is not a simple return to the pre-pandemic classroom, and the evidence on it is mixed. Bird et al. (2022) reported modest negative effects of the move online on course completion in a community college system, while Alzahrani (2022) presented a more favourable view of online learning for student performance. Salta et al. (2022) found lower emotional engagement among university students in online than in traditional environments, largely explained by reduced human interaction. More recently, Topping et al. (2024) compared online-heavy and face-to-face-heavy years of an EFL degree and found that a larger share of face-to-face teaching was not more effective in terms of examination results; if anything, the more online year performed modestly better. Taken together, these studies indicate that each shift has gains and costs, and that teachers must decide how to adapt.

For EFL teachers the question is particularly pressing because language learning depends on interaction, speaking, and listening practice, all of which were affected by remote delivery. Social constructivism offers a useful lens for this concern. Vygotsky (1978) argued that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction mediated by language and culture, a view that supports pair work, group discussion, and communicative tasks in which learners build meaning with peers and the teacher. Gillies (2006) showed that the verbal behaviours of teachers and students during cooperative small-group learning shape the quality of that interaction, and Windschitl (2002) cautioned that enacting constructivist practice confronts teachers with conceptual, pedagogical, cultural, and political dilemmas. From this perspective, the return to the classroom restores opportunities for direct social interaction, but it also demands that teachers re-establish the conditions under which such interaction can be productive.

The second theoretical strand concerns how the pandemic shift is conceptualised. Hodges et al. (2020) and Dolenc et al. (2021) frame it as a crisis-driven change in which preparation, support, and technology were uneven, which implies that teachers entered the post-pandemic period with very different resources and experiences. Daniel (2020) viewed the pandemic as a catalyst for rethinking education, which suggests that digital practices adopted in the crisis may persist alongside face-to-face teaching rather than disappear. The “new normal” in EFL classrooms is therefore better understood as a deliberate blend than as a return to the past.

The third strand is teacher learning, preparation, and well-being, because teachers' capacity to adapt depends on continuing professional learning and on their emotional resources. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) described teacher learning as an ongoing process of inquiry within communities, and Desimone (2009) identified the features through which professional development affects practice. König et al. (2020) showed that teacher education and teacher competence mattered for adapting to online teaching during school closures, while Kim and Asbury (2020) documented the emotional strain the pandemic placed on teachers. Westphal et al. (2022) reviewed stress and burnout among K–12 teachers and concluded that self-efficacy in online teaching and school leadership were relevant factors. On this basis, the study examines three analytic domains: *strategies* (what teachers do), *preparation* (what enables them), and *impact* (how the shift affects them).

Studies of the return to classrooms point to continuity in digital practice alongside new strains. Charbonneau-Gowdy (2023) found marked advances in the digital literacy of Chilean EFL teachers and students returning to in-person teaching in blended settings. Rohmana (2025) reported that Indonesian EFL university teachers kept using technology for preparation, implementation, and assessment after classes returned offline. Kusuma (2022) showed how Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers relied on tools such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms for classroom management and speaking instruction during emergency remote teaching, and Lestarina et al. (2022) examined how EFL teachers' beliefs related to ICT integration during distance learning. Beyond the classroom, a scoping review of informal digital learning of English highlights the growing importance of digital literacies for communicative competence (Soyoof et al., 2023). On the well-being side, Rolf et al. (2023) reported that the return to in-person learning benefited students and teachers but brought stress and anxiety for school staff, and Gutentag and Asterhan (2022) linked teacher burnout during remote teaching to low online-teaching proficiency and work–family conflict.

What remains underexplored is how EFL teachers in Indonesian Islamic private senior high schools combine strategy, preparation, and perceived impact in the move from online to face-to-face teaching; research on the transition in Indonesia has largely focused on university teachers (e.g., Rohmana, 2025). This study addresses that gap and was guided by three questions:

1. What strategies do EFL teachers use in the shift from online to face-to-face teaching?
2. How do EFL teachers prepare for this shift?
3. How do EFL teachers perceive the impact of this shift on themselves?

METHOD

Research Design and Rationale

The study used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected in order and integrated at the interpretation stage (Creswell, 2014). The design follows from the nature of the research questions. Questions about which strategies teachers use, how they prepare, and how they judge the impact of the shift call for breadth, that is, evidence of how widely each practice or perception is shared. They also call for depth, that is, an understanding of why teachers act and feel as they do, particularly where their experiences differ. A questionnaire addressed the first need, and semi-structured interviews with a subset of respondents addressed the second. Because the interview participants were selected after the questionnaire had been analysed, the interviews could be used to elaborate and explain the survey patterns rather than to run in parallel with them.

Context and Participants

The study was set in Islamic private senior high schools in Indonesia, where EFL teachers had taught online during the pandemic and subsequently returned to face-to-face classrooms. Thirty EFL teachers took part. They were selected through purposive sampling

(Palinkas et al., 2015), a strategy aimed at identifying information-rich cases, using two criteria: (a) teaching English as a foreign language at senior high school level in an Islamic private school, and (b) having taught in both online and face-to-face settings during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The second criterion was essential because the research questions concern the experience of moving between the two modes.

A subset of participants [$n = 5$ or 10 – please confirm] was invited to interviews. They were chosen on the basis of their questionnaire responses so as to represent a range of teaching experiences and attitudes, including teachers who reported a smooth transition and teachers who reported difficulty. [Add the demographic profile of the participants, e.g., gender, years of teaching experience, and school location, if available.]

Instruments

Questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 18 statements in three domains of six items each, corresponding to the three research questions. Each statement was rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree; Likert, 1932). The items were adapted from the literature on post-pandemic teaching, and the blueprint below shows what each domain covers and the research it draws on.

Domain	Items	Focus of the six items	Conceptual anchors
Strategies	6	Regular use of digital tools; adapting strategies to students' online or hybrid experience; collaborative tasks; speaking and listening activities; integrating online resources into face-to-face lessons; encouraging out-of-class English use through digital platforms	Hodges et al. (2020); Vygotsky (1978); Gillies (2006); Soyoof et al. (2023)
Preparation	6	Adequacy of pandemic-period training; confidence with technology; continuous resource seeking; lesson planning for current needs; institutional support for blended or hybrid teaching; emotional preparedness	König et al. (2020); Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999); Desimone (2009); Kim & Asbury (2020)
Perceived impact	6	Smoothness of the transition; classroom-management challenges; student engagement; teacher productivity and effectiveness; workload; stress	Windschitl (2002); Kim & Asbury (2020); Salta et al. (2022); Rolf et al. (2023)

[Report how content validity was established (e.g., expert review or alignment with the literature), the language in which the questionnaire was administered, the mode of distribution, and a reliability coefficient (e.g., Cronbach's alpha) for each domain.]

Interview guide. The semi-structured interviews used open-ended questions aligned with the same three domains, so that each questionnaire theme could be explored in the teachers' own words: what they do differently now compared with online teaching, how they prepared and what support they used, and how the return to the classroom has affected their work, workload, and well-being. The semi-structured format allowed the interviewer to probe interesting responses and to follow up on points where a teacher's questionnaire answers suggested a particular experience. [State the interview language, mode (face-to-face or online), approximate duration, and whether interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.]

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected in four steps. [State the data collection period.]

1. The questionnaire was distributed to the 30 participating teachers, who completed it individually.
2. Responses were entered and analysed descriptively to identify the dominant trends and the items on which teachers differed.
3. Interview participants were selected from the respondents to represent diverse experiences and attitudes.
4. Interviews were conducted, transcribed, and coded, and the resulting themes were related to the questionnaire findings.

2.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis. For each item, frequency, percentage, mean (M), and standard deviation (SD) were computed, where M is the sum of responses divided by the number of respondents (N) and SD is the square root of the mean squared deviation from M (computed with N in the denominator). Means were interpreted using five bands of the scale: 1.00–1.79 strongly disagree, 1.80–2.59 disagree, 2.60–3.39 neutral, 3.40–4.19 agree, and 4.20–5.00 strongly agree. The percentage reported in the tables is the item mean as a proportion of the maximum score (M/5), equivalent to the sum of responses divided by the maximum possible total of 150 for 30 respondents. The SD was read as an index of consensus: low values indicate that teachers answered similarly, and higher values indicate more varied views.

Qualitative analysis. Interview transcripts were analysed with Saldaña's (2016) two-cycle coding. In the first cycle, descriptive coding labelled the basic topic of each passage, and In Vivo coding retained participants' own words so that their perspectives were represented faithfully. In the second cycle, pattern coding grouped the first-cycle codes into categories and then into overarching themes, which were organised under the three research domains. Reflexive memos were written during coding to record analytic decisions and the researcher's assumptions.

Integration. Quantitative and qualitative results were integrated by comparing, item by item, each questionnaire result with the interview excerpts that elaborated it. Where interview accounts supported a questionnaire trend, they were treated as corroboration; where they diverged from it, as in the accounts of workload and stress, the divergence was reported and used to qualify the survey result (Creswell, 2014).

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Several procedures supported the credibility and dependability of the findings. Triangulation was achieved by combining questionnaire and interview data. Member checking was carried out by asking interview participants to review summaries of their responses. Peer debriefing was used to discuss coding patterns with another researcher, and reflexive memoing during coding reduced the risk of researcher bias (Saldaña, 2016).

Permission was obtained from the participating Islamic private schools, and all participants agreed to take part. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by reporting interview excerpts without identifying information, and participants were free to withdraw at any time. [State how the data were stored and who had access to them, if applicable.]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers’ Strategies in the Shift from Online to Face-to-Face Teaching

Results. Table 1 shows that all six strategy items fell in the “agree” or “strongly agree” bands. Collaborative tasks (M = 4.57, SD = 0.57) and the integration of online resources into face-to-face lessons (M = 4.53, SD = 0.57) received the strongest agreement, and the low standard deviations indicate consensus.

Table 1. Teachers’ strategies (N = 30)

Item	M	SD	% of max.
1. I use digital tools (e.g., Zoom, Google Classroom) regularly	3.97	0.72	79
2. I adapt my strategies to students’ online/hybrid experiences	3.87	0.86	77
3. I frequently use collaborative tasks	4.57	0.57	91
4. I focus more on speaking/listening activities	4.10	0.80	82
5. I integrate online resources into face-to-face teaching	4.53	0.57	91
6. I encourage students to use English outside class via digital platforms	4.17	0.75	83

Interviews explained these patterns. Teachers kept Google Classroom because it helps manage assignments and archive tasks and assessments. They changed strategies after the pandemic: “When I teach in the class, I mostly don’t use the same strategies like when it was in online class,” and some combined tools such as Padlet with face-to-face tasks because students were used to online collaboration. Collaborative work was described as building confidence (“I use pair work in almost every lesson. It encourages students to speak English without fear”). Teachers designed discussions and role-plays to rebuild speaking confidence and added audio clips because online classes had reduced listening exposure. They used Kahoot, Quizizz, YouTube, and news websites in lessons, and encouraged students to use YouTube, Duolingo, and WhatsApp, Discord, or Telegram groups to keep using English outside class.

Discussion. The strategy results are best read through four interpretive threads.

Interaction as the organising principle of post-pandemic practice. Collaborative tasks ($M = 4.57$) and communication-focused activities ($M = 4.10$) were endorsed strongly, and teachers justified them in terms of confidence, speaking without fear, and real-life communication skills. This pattern is consistent with a social-constructivist view that language is learned through interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). The interviews add a point about affect: teachers said pair work lets students speak because they address a peer rather than the whole class, which suggests that small-group interaction lowers the affective barrier to speaking that remote and large-class formats may have raised. Gillies (2006) indicates that the benefit of group work depends on the quality of talk within groups and not merely on grouping students; the present data cannot show whether teachers structure talk in that way. Windschitl (2002) adds that enacting such pedagogy is demanding, which may help explain why the same teachers later report heavier workload and management difficulty (Section 3.3). Because the data are self-reported and consensus was high ($SD = 0.57$), the results show what teachers believe and say they do, and classroom observation would be needed to establish how these practices are enacted.

Digital tools as retained infrastructure rather than an emergency measure. Hodges et al. (2020) distinguished emergency remote teaching from planned online learning, and the retention of Google Classroom, quizzes, and video after the return to the classroom suggests that teachers have moved from emergency use toward deliberate use. Two functions can be distinguished in the interviews: administrative (managing assignments, archiving tasks and assessments, coping with absences) and pedagogical (Kahoot, Quizizz, YouTube, news websites). The difference between means is informative: integrating online resources into lessons ($M = 4.53$) was endorsed more strongly than regular use of platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom ($M = 3.97$). Teachers therefore appear to use technology to enrich face-to-face lessons rather than to replicate online teaching. This is in line with Rohmana's (2025) finding that Indonesian EFL university teachers kept using technology for preparation, implementation, and assessment, and with Charbonneau-Gowdy's (2023) report of gains in digital literacy among teachers and students returning to in-person teaching. The use of WhatsApp and YouTube also echoes the tools Kusuma (2022) identified in Indonesian emergency remote teaching, suggesting continuity of tool repertoires across the shift. Read with Daniel's (2020) view of the pandemic as a catalyst for rethinking education, the data indicate that the crisis changed what teachers regard as ordinary practice.

Adaptation is real but uneven. Adapting strategies to students' online or hybrid experience had the lowest mean in the domain ($M = 3.87$) and the largest dispersion ($SD = 0.86$). Some teachers said they no longer use the strategies they used online, while others described combining tools such as Padlet with classroom tasks, which points to partial and varied adaptation. Teachers' beliefs about technology are one plausible source of this variation (Lestarina et al., 2022), although the present design does not test it. The unevenness matters because the evidence on the relative effectiveness of modes is itself mixed: Topping et al. (2024) found no advantage in examination results for more face-to-face teaching in an EFL degree, and Bird et al. (2022) and Alzahrani (2022) reached different conclusions about online learning. If neither mode is uniformly superior, the

pedagogical value is likely to lie in how modes are combined, which makes teachers' adaptive judgement central.

Extending learning beyond the classroom. Encouraging students to use English outside class through YouTube, language apps, and chat groups ($M = 4.17$) positions the teacher as a designer of out-of-class practice as well as of lessons. This fits the view that digital literacies contribute to communicative competence (Soyoof et al., 2023) and complements the speaking-focused emphasis of in-class tasks. It also assumes that students have devices and connectivity, which the present data cannot confirm and which may vary across schools.

Teachers' Preparation

Results. Table 2 shows that teachers most strongly endorsed continuously seeking resources ($M = 4.57$) and institutional support for blended or hybrid teaching ($M = 4.53$). Confidence in using technology had the lowest mean ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.86$).

Table 2. Teachers' preparation ($N = 30$)

Item	M	SD	% of max.
1. I received adequate training to teach during the pandemic	3.97	0.72	79
2. I feel confident using technology to support my teaching	3.87	0.86	77
3. I continuously seek resources to improve my EFL teaching	4.57	0.57	91
4. I plan my lessons differently to match students' current needs	4.10	0.80	82
5. I have institutional support for blended or hybrid teaching	4.53	0.57	91
6. I feel mentally and emotionally prepared for post-pandemic challenges	4.17	0.75	83

The interviews showed that school-provided workshops on Zoom and Google Classroom helped the transition, but that training was not always sufficient: "The initial training was adequate, but I had to explore a lot of online tutorials by myself." Teachers wanted more training on motivating students and on advanced applications for interactive materials. They searched for lesson plans and activities on sites such as the British Council and YouTube, revised lessons to include more revision and short, engaging tasks, and reported institutional support in the form of digital platforms, technical staff, webinars, and internet allowances. Several described becoming more emotionally stable through teacher support sessions and sharing experiences with colleagues.

Discussion. The preparation results show strong teacher initiative and institutional support alongside lower ratings for formal training and technological confidence.

From crisis training to sustained development. Pandemic-period training was rated as adequate by most teachers ($M = 3.97$), but the interviews describe workshops on specific platforms supplemented by self-study through tutorials, and a wish for more training on motivating students and on advanced applications. König et al. (2020) found that teacher education and competence mattered for adapting to online teaching, and the present

accounts indicate that competence was built partly outside formal provision. Desimone (2009) argues that professional development affects practice when it is sustained and focused on content and active learning; short, platform-oriented workshops are unlikely to meet that standard, which would explain why teachers still ask for training on motivation and advanced tools. This interpretation is tentative, because the study did not examine how the training was designed.

Agency compensating for gaps. Seeking resources was the most strongly endorsed preparation item ($M = 4.57$), while confidence with technology was the lowest ($M = 3.87$). Teachers therefore appear to compensate for uncertainty through initiative, using resources such as the British Council and YouTube tutorials. This is consistent with the view of teacher learning as continuous inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) and is a strength. It also places the burden of development on individual teachers, which can be demanding at a time when they also report a heavier workload (Section 3.3). The remaining need for advanced skills indicates that professional development should move beyond basic platform use toward the design of interactive materials.

Institutional support as an enabling condition. The high rating of institutional support ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.57$), expressed in platforms, technical staff, webinars, and internet allowances, suggests that schools have been an important resource. Westphal et al. (2022) identified school leadership as an organizational factor relevant to teacher stress and burnout, so the support reported here may also protect teachers' well-being, although the present design cannot establish this. Given the strong consensus, it is notable that teachers still describe gaps in training: support appears strong in infrastructure and access, and less certain in the depth of training.

Emotional preparedness and its limits. Most teachers reported being mentally and emotionally prepared ($M = 4.17$), and interviewees credited support sessions, collaboration with colleagues, and lessons learned during online teaching. This is more positive than accounts that emphasise the strain the pandemic placed on teachers (Kim & Asbury, 2020). One plausible explanation is that growing proficiency and peer support reduced distress: Gutentag and Asterhan (2022) linked low online-teaching proficiency to burnout, and Westphal et al. (2022) noted an indication that technology training combined with stress-management training may be superior to stress-management training alone. The moderate dispersion ($SD = 0.75$) and the stress findings in Section 3.3, however, show that preparedness is not uniform.

Lesson planning for post-pandemic needs. Teachers' reports that they plan differently ($M = 4.10$), adding revision and short, engaging tasks for students who are still adjusting to in-person classes, imply that they perceive learning gaps and motivational changes. This resonates with evidence of negative effects of the online shift on course completion (Bird et al., 2022) and of reduced emotional engagement online (Salta et al., 2022), although the present study measured teachers' perceptions and not student outcomes.

Perceived Impact of the Shift on Teachers

Results. Table 3 shows strong agreement that students are more engaged face-to-face ($M = 4.57$) and that the shift increased workload ($M = 4.53$). Teachers also agreed that the

transition was smooth ($M = 3.97$), that classroom management is more challenging ($M = 3.87$), that they are more productive in a physical classroom ($M = 4.10$), and that their stress is higher ($M = 4.17$).

Table 3. Perceived impact of the shift ($N = 30$)

Item	M	SD	% of max.
1. The transition back to face-to-face teaching has been smooth	3.97	0.72	79
2. I face more classroom-management challenges than online	3.87	0.86	77
3. Students are more engaged in face-to-face learning	4.57	0.57	91
4. I feel more productive and effective in a physical classroom	4.10	0.80	82
5. The shift has increased my workload	4.53	0.57	91
6. I experience higher stress than during online teaching	4.17	0.75	83

Interviews revealed both consensus and divergence. Teachers who had already used blended learning found the transition smooth, whereas others found it difficult because students had become dependent on online tools and routines had to be rebuilt. Classroom management was harder because students had lost discipline and were more talkative and distractible; online, “I could mute them if needed.” Teachers felt students were more motivated and interactive in class because of peer collaboration and instant feedback, and teachers felt more productive because they could monitor progress and use body language and eye contact. Views on workload and stress diverged: some said face-to-face teaching demanded more preparation and energy, others said workload was similar, and some said online teaching had been more time-consuming and mentally exhausting because of isolation and constant screen time.

Discussion. Perceived impact is marked by a trade-off: gains in engagement and effectiveness, and costs in classroom management, workload, and stress.

Engagement and management as two sides of the same social conditions. Teachers strongly agreed that students are more engaged face-to-face ($M = 4.57$), citing peer collaboration, instant feedback, and fewer home distractions. This is consistent with Salta et al. (2022), who linked lower online engagement to reduced human interaction. The same conditions help explain the management challenge ($M = 3.87$): students who are more interactive are also more talkative and easily distracted, and online the teacher could mute them. Habits formed during online learning appear to have carried over, so teachers must re-establish rules and routines. This is an instance of the dilemmas Windschitl (2002) describes, in which the interaction that constructivist practice values also increases the complexity of orchestrating a class. Higher engagement and greater management difficulty need not be contradictory; both may reflect the return of social presence to the classroom.

Smoothness of the transition depended on prior experience. Teachers who had already used blended learning described a smooth return, whereas those who found it difficult mentioned student dependence on online tools and the need to redesign lesson plans. This suggests that prior blended experience acted as a buffer, in line with Charbonneau-Gowdy’s (2023) account of how growth in digital literacy shaped the return to in-person

teaching in blended settings. The moderate dispersion ($SD = 0.72$) indicates that smoothness is not uniform across teachers.

Productivity and the embodied nature of EFL communication. Teachers felt more effective in physical classrooms ($M = 4.10$) because they could monitor progress directly, adapt lessons immediately, and use body language and eye contact. For EFL teaching these cues matter, since language instruction relies on immediate feedback and non-verbal support for meaning. This is, however, perceived effectiveness. Topping et al. (2024) found no examination advantage for more face-to-face teaching, so teachers' sense of effectiveness should not be read as evidence of better learning outcomes.

Workload and stress as redistributed rather than simply increased. The questionnaire showed strong agreement that workload increased ($M = 4.53$) and that stress is higher ($M = 4.17$), yet the interviews diverged: some teachers described face-to-face teaching as more demanding, while others said online preparation and monitoring were more time-consuming and mentally exhausting because of isolation and screen time. The consensus in the survey ($SD = 0.57$ for workload) contrasts with these divergent accounts, which illustrates the value of the mixed design: the survey shows the dominant tendency and the interviews show its limits. A reasonable reading is that the nature of the demands has changed, from digital content creation, individual monitoring, and technical problems to classroom management, physical preparation, and energy, and that individual teachers weigh these differently. This is consistent with research showing that stress and burnout depend on individual and organisational characteristics such as self-efficacy and leadership (Westphal et al., 2022) and on factors such as family–work conflict and online-teaching proficiency (Gutentag & Asterhan, 2022). It also resonates with the report that the return to in-person learning brought benefits but also stress and anxiety for school staff (Rolf et al., 2023). Because teachers' accounts conflict, uniform interventions may be less effective than support targeted to teachers' differing needs.

Integrative Discussion

Across the three domains, the findings can be read as a cycle. Teachers' strategies centre on interaction and on blending digital resources with classroom activity; these strategies are enabled by teachers' own initiative and by institutional support; and their consequences, namely higher engagement alongside heavier workload, management demands, and stress, feed back into teachers' capacity to sustain the strategies. This reading is interpretive and is not tested statistically, but it suggests that institutional support is the hinge of the cycle: where support is strong in infrastructure yet thinner in the depth of training and in workload relief, the demands of interaction-rich teaching fall on individual teachers.

For theory, the results support a social-constructivist reading of post-pandemic EFL practice in which the physical classroom is used to restore interaction and digital tools extend it (Vygotsky, 1978). They also suggest that such a reading needs to account for the conditions under which teachers can enact it, since the dilemmas of constructivist practice (Windschitl, 2002) and the continuing nature of teacher learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) bear directly on whether interaction-rich teaching is sustainable. Because the broader evidence on online and face-to-face learning is mixed (Alzahrani, 2022; Bird et

al., 2022; Topping et al., 2024), the post-pandemic classroom is better understood as a design problem, in which teachers decide how to combine modes, than as a return to a pre-pandemic norm.

For practice, schools can support teachers by providing professional development that is sustained and attentive to content and active learning (Desimone, 2009), by helping teachers re-establish classroom routines, and by recognising that workload and stress take different forms for different teachers. These implications are drawn from a small, purposively selected sample of self-reported data and should be treated as suggestions for further testing.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how EFL teachers in Indonesian Islamic private senior high schools manage the shift from online to face-to-face teaching. First, teachers have retained digital tools and online resources while foregrounding collaborative and communicative activities, creating a blended, interaction-oriented practice. Second, teachers prepare through self-directed resource seeking, lesson redesign, school-provided platforms and workshops, and peer support, although some need advanced training and more support for student motivation. Third, teachers perceive higher student engagement and personal effectiveness in physical classrooms, but also more classroom-management demands, workload, and stress, with interview accounts showing that these experiences differ among teachers.

The findings have three implications. Theoretically, they support a social-constructivist reading of post-pandemic EFL practice in which the classroom is used to restore interaction while digital tools extend it. Practically, teachers may benefit from deliberately blending digital resources with collaborative speaking and listening tasks, and from re-establishing classroom routines early. For policy, schools and education authorities should invest in digital infrastructure, advanced and continuing professional development, and mental-health and workload support for teachers.

The study has limitations: the sample was small ($N = 30$) and purposively selected from one school type, the data were self-reported, and learning outcomes were not measured. Future research could use larger and more varied samples, classroom observation, and longitudinal designs to examine how post-pandemic strategies relate to student achievement, motivation, and teacher well-being, including differences between urban and rural schools.

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