



Teachers' Investment in ELT Materials Development and Its Perceived Impacts on Their Professionalism

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Abstract

This study examined Iranian EFL teachers' investment in ELT materials development and its perceived effects on professionalism. Since course books do not always address the needs of every class, teachers are often expected to design their own materials. Using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, 346 Iranian EFL teachers completed the Teachers' Investment in ELT Materials Development Questionnaire (TIMDQ), and 10 teachers participated in follow-up interviews. Qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed through content and thematic analysis using MAXQDA. Findings revealed that Iranian English language instructors generally hold positive views toward investing in materials development ($t = 43.5, p < .001$). They believe such engagement strengthens teacher professionalism by deepening awareness of educational needs, classroom realities, and current trends. The study also identified anticipated challenges, problems, and benefits related to developing ELT materials. Overall, teachers' role as material developers was found to enhance educational quality and represent a sustainable professional responsibility, as planning lessons, modules, and courses is a continuous process requiring ongoing development and refinement.

Keywords: investment, ELT materials, materials development, teachers' professionalism

1 Introduction

In English language teaching (ELT) and related fields, there is an increasing call for L2 teachers to invest in the use and development of educational materials. The concept of investment was

originally introduced by Norton (2000) as an extension of the psychological construct of motivation in language education. Unlike motivation, which is often viewed as an individual trait, investment considers the unequal power relations between learners and target language speakers (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). As a dynamic concept, investment involves individuals engaging in activities to gain resources such as job opportunities, social networks, and future possibilities, viewed as forms of capital. According to Bourdieu (1984), capital is closely linked to power. Later, Darvin and Norton (2015) expanded the investment model by incorporating identity, ideology, and capital, highlighting the importance of material resources in learning and investment.

Darvin and Norton's (2015) model of investment recognizes capital as a crucial factor, alongside identity and ideology in shaping an individual's investment decisions. Capital, as defined by Bourdieu (1986) refers to sums of benefits put to productive use. These perceived benefits can manifest in different forms such as economic (wealth, property, and income), cultural (knowledge, educational credential, and specific cultural forms), and social capital (connections to the networks of power) that are influential in elevating the chances of the individuals' success and investment. The concept of investment sheds light on how teachers and the target language have been related socially and historically. Teachers play a crucial role in education, so their investment in teaching deserves attention.

A common motivation for EFL teachers to develop their own materials is the need to personalize and contextualize instruction so it reflects local content, issues, and concerns (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Materials development is also considered a practical form of professional development, as it can strengthen teachers' commitment to the curriculum and enhance their sense of ownership and autonomy (McGrath, 2013). In contrast, excessive reliance on course books may limit teachers' professional freedom, encouraging rigid adherence to prescribed content and making it difficult to move beyond the materials due to their fixed sequencing and structure (Kuiper et al., 2015). Bouckaert and Kools (2017) note that although materials creation is recognized as beneficial for professional development, its specific effects on teachers remain under-researched, partly because such impacts are difficult to measure. Nevertheless, studies indicate that designing teaching materials can positively influence teachers' subject knowledge, pedagogical and curricular knowledge, and can also increase job satisfaction, autonomy, confidence, collegiality, and creativity (McGrath, 2013; Zeegers et al., 2012).

The main purpose of this study was to identify underlying factors influencing teachers' investment in ELT materials development and to examine EFL teachers' and experts' perceptions of its impact on Iranian teachers' professionalism. Although previous research, such as Afshar and Ghasemi (2018), has explored teachers' perceptions of professional development—showing improvements in pedagogical knowledge and student outcomes—no study has specifically investigated the perceived effects of teachers' investment in ELT materials development on their professional growth and professional identity.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background

Twenty years after Norton Peirce (1995) introduced the concept of investment, globalization, technological advances, and changes in the global economy reshaped the social context of language

learning. The digital age also required new perspectives on identity. In response to these changes, Darwin and Norton (2015) re-conceptualized investment in language learning. Their model places investment at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology, reflecting developments in theory since the concept was first proposed. This framework highlights how power relations shape language learning and helps explain the opportunities learners have to exercise agency (Darvin & Norton, 2018). It also captures the dynamic nature of identity, diverse linguistic repertoires, and the influence of power structures in language learning contexts.

Research on ELT materials development highlights the important role of teachers as active users and creators of instructional resources. Gray (2010) showed that ELT textbooks carry cultural and ideological perspectives and require teachers' critical adaptation. Harwood (2010) emphasized that teachers reshape materials through classroom interaction. Tomlinson (2011) described materials development as a principled and creative process, while Tomlinson (2012) proposed key principles for designing effective materials that respond to learners' needs. McGrath (2013) further argued that teachers' involvement in selecting, adapting, and producing materials strengthens their pedagogical awareness, professional autonomy, and decision-making in English language teaching contexts. Richards and Farrell (2005) identify reflective practices and materials adaptation as essential components of professional growth in language teaching. Building on this, Johnson (2009) argues that this development is a social process, where teachers construct professional knowledge through active engagement and reflection within their specific teaching contexts.

2.2 ELT Materials

ELT materials are designed to facilitate the process of language teaching and learning. According to Hyland (2013), they should stimulate language skills such as writing, help learners understand the language needed to perform tasks, and support teachers in organizing lesson activities, especially when materials are the main classroom resources. He also noted that materials used in a course should address two key issues: students' proficiency level and their reasons for learning English. Therefore, to meet learners' linguistic and communicative needs, teachers must understand both students' needs and the appropriate materials required for effective learning.

In an exploratory study, Cardoza Aguirre (2024) explored how English language teachers' beliefs about ELT materials affect their teaching approaches and professional growth. It was found that teachers' beliefs strongly influence how they choose, adapt, and apply instructional materials such as textbooks and authentic resources. It showed that these beliefs are shaped by personal experience, institutional contexts, and exposure to professional development. Aguirre emphasized that professional development plays a crucial role in helping teachers reflect on and possibly change their classroom practices. Therefore, teachers' beliefs, daily instructional choices, and professional learning are closely interconnected, and understanding this relationship is essential for improving material design and teacher education programs in ELT.

Garrido-Yagüe (2025) examined how pre-service teachers perceive materials development during their practicum. The study reveals that the practicum is crucial for future teachers to gain practical experience in creating and adapting ELT materials. Findings indicate that this hands-on experience helps novice teachers understand the challenges of developing effective materials that meet student needs and learning goals, thereby contributing to their professional growth and confidence in materials development.

2.3 Empirical Studies on Investment in Language Learning

Primary school EFL teachers' engagement in experiential learning for professional development using a mixed-methods design was investigated by Helate et al. (2022). Data from questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis involving 186 teachers and eight interviewees showed that teachers mainly participated in professional development activities but relied mostly on cognitive strategies and preferred diverger learning styles. The study found a gap between current practices and experiential learning principles, recommending professional development programs that promote teachers' self-directed and autonomous learning.

Norton and Darvin (2024) explored the ways in which generative AI is reshaping language learning by influencing learners' and teachers' identities, opportunities for participation, and forms of investment. Drawing on a conceptual review and recent empirical studies, they argued that AI-driven environments can expand access to language resources, create new possibilities for interaction, and support more personalized learning experiences. At the same time, they noted that these technologies raise important concerns regarding authorship, learner agency, and unequal access to linguistic capital, making it necessary to critically reconsider how language learning is understood in the digital age.

Darvin (2024) provided a comprehensive review of three decades of research on the model of investment in applied linguistics, mapping its evolution and expanding relevance across diverse contexts. Using a bibliometric analysis of over 400 publications indexed in the Web of Science, the study traces conceptual developments and emerging trends that connect investment with identity, teacher agency, multilingualism, and technology-mediated learning. The findings revealed how the model has increasingly been applied to understand teachers' professional growth and their investment in pedagogical innovation, particularly in multilingual and digital classrooms. Overall, the review underscored the model's enduring significance in examining how individuals and institutions commit to language learning and teaching as socially and ideologically situated practices.

Liu et al. (2025) investigated how Chinese EFL learners engage with AI-mediated informal digital learning of English (AI-IDLE), using a mixed-method approach combining questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Their study revealed that learners' investment in language learning significantly increases when digital and AI tools enhance learner agency, broaden access to linguistic resources, and enable richer expressions of identity. The findings underscored the transformative role of AI technology in shaping learner engagement and evolving language learning practices within informal digital environments, highlighting new pathways for personalized and autonomous learning.

3 Research Questions

In line with the purpose of the study, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What are the major underlying factors of Teachers' Investment in ELT Materials Development (TIMD) questionnaire?
2. What are the perceptions of Iranian English language instructors toward teachers' investment in materials development?
3. To what extent do Iranian English language instructors perceive their investment in ELT materials development could impact teachers' professionalism?

4. How do Iranian English language instructors perceive the impact of their investment in ELT materials development on their professionalism?
5. What problems and challenges could be predicted by Iranian English Language instructors in developing ELT materials from the outset?
6. What are some perceived merits of English language instructors' investment in ELT materials development?

4 Method

4.1 Design of the Study

This research was conducted using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. The quantitative phase data was presented first, followed by the qualitative data, with integration occurring during the interpretation stage. The study was also non-experimental, observing phenomena naturally without introducing external variables or controlling the setting. This approach offers advantages in terms of real-life applicability and suitability for studying inherent human characteristics. Interview questions for the qualitative phase were developed based on the content of the designed questionnaire.

4.2 Participants and Setting

This study utilized convenience sampling to select 113 male and 233 female non-native EFL teachers from language institutes, schools, and universities in Tehran. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 52 and had varying teaching experience (less than two years or above five years). Their educational backgrounds included B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. degrees in English language teaching, translation, or English literature. All participants were Persian native speakers. For the qualitative phase, 10 teachers were selected from the initial 346 participants who agreed to be interviewed.

4.3 Instrumentation

To achieve the objectives of the study, different research instruments, namely a questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview were employed which are presented and thoroughly described in the following sections.

4.3.1 *Researcher-Made Teachers' Investment in ELT Materials Development Questionnaire (TIMDQ)*

A questionnaire, the Teachers' Investment in Materials Development (TIMD), was created based on expert opinions and literature review to assess teachers' investment in ELT materials and its impact on professionalism. This 30-item, five-point Likert-scale questionnaire (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) underwent expert review for face and content validity. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses (EFA and CFA) were conducted to establish reliability and construct validity, leading to item modifications. Data collection utilized both physical paper-and-pencil methods and Google Forms for efficiency and speed.

4.3.2 *Teacher's Semi-Structured Interview*

A semi-structured interview with 6 open-ended questions was conducted to gather qualitative data on teachers' investment in ELT materials and its impact on professionalism. The interview questions were developed by the researcher and refined with feedback from three applied linguistics

professors. The focus was on the challenges and benefits of teacher investment and its link to professionalism, with results reported as extracted themes.

4.4 Data Collection Procedure

To address the research questions of the study, a number of steps were taken. The procedure for the data collection is discussed below in two phases as described below.

4.4.1 Quantitative Phase

In the quantitative phase, a thorough literature review on investment in ELT materials development was conducted to create questionnaire items. This aimed to identify existing models and instruments. Both deductive (literature-based) and inductive (individual responses) approaches were employed for item generation. Standard procedures for developing a valid and reliable instrument, as outlined by Dornyei (2005), were meticulously followed. A comprehensive literature review enabled the researcher to draft key concepts related to investment in ELT materials development and identify the study's initial framework and model components. The questionnaire format and item number were determined, and overlapping items were removed, reducing the list to 41. Face validity (layout and appearance) and content validity (alignment with study purposes and constructs) were then evaluated. A panel of field-specific experts reviewed the draft, assessing components and suggesting improvements. Based on their feedback regarding clarity and structure, some items were revised or removed. After these revisions, the TIMDQ's content validity was established.

Following expert review, 33 items remained for the final TIMDQ draft, focusing on clarity, domain accuracy, and suggestions for improvement. A pilot study with 60 EFL teachers then assessed item structure, redundancy, clarity, and readability. Participants provided feedback on directions and questionnaire length, ensuring clarity in procedures, instructions, and wording, and estimating completion time for the main study. Dornyei's (2005) benchmarks guided this development process. Finally, all items were reviewed to validate and measure sub-components of investment in ELT materials development for the quantitative phase. Main study participants completed the questionnaire, and results were analyzed. Construct validation was achieved through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). A hypothetical questionnaire was then designed based on factor relationships and tested using Structural Equation Modeling to confirm data support for the theoretical model, as per Schumacker and Lomax (2004).

4.4.2 Qualitative Phase

In the qualitative phase, 10 Iranian EFL teachers participated in 20-minute online interviews to discuss their perceptions of teacher investment. Informed consent was obtained, and the study's purpose was clarified to motivate participants. Interview data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using content and thematic analysis to extract themes and subthemes. Intercoder reliability was established by three applied linguistics experts. Content validity of interview questions was ensured by feedback from three subject-matter experts on language and content appropriateness for measuring the intended construct.

4.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures involved in this study are explained in the following sections:

4.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Data from the researcher-constructed questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS 22. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Cronbach's alpha assessed the scale's reliability and validity. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and AMOS were then employed based on EFA results. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean) and inferential statistics (one-sample t-test) were used for the second and third research questions, with statistical outputs interpreted to infer results.

4.5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher used convenience sampling and conducted semi-structured interviews in the second qualitative phase. MAXQDA was used for content analysis of interview data, while thematic analysis was applied to answer the fourth, fifth, and sixth research questions. With guidance from a statistician and the thesis supervisor, the recorded interviews were transcribed, coded, and interpreted by identifying dominant patterns. Coding followed Ary et al. (2014), and content analysis followed Cohen et al. (2007).

5 Results

5.1 Quantitative Results

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze the gathered data. The results for each question are presented in the following sections.

5.1.1 Addressing Research Question One

The study employed Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to identify the primary factors influencing the Teachers' Investment in ELT Materials Development Questionnaire (TIMDQ) and to validate the scale's reliability and structure.

5.1.1.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

The results indicated a KMO value of 0.97 and a significant Bartlett's Test ($p = .000$), confirming the data's appropriateness for factor analysis. To perform exploratory factor analysis, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was utilized with Varimax rotation on the 33-item Teacher Investment in Materials Development Questionnaire. As shown in Table 1, SPSS extracted five factors, each with an Eigenvalue greater than 1, collectively explaining 61.08% of the variance. Data for each item was collected using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5).

Table 1

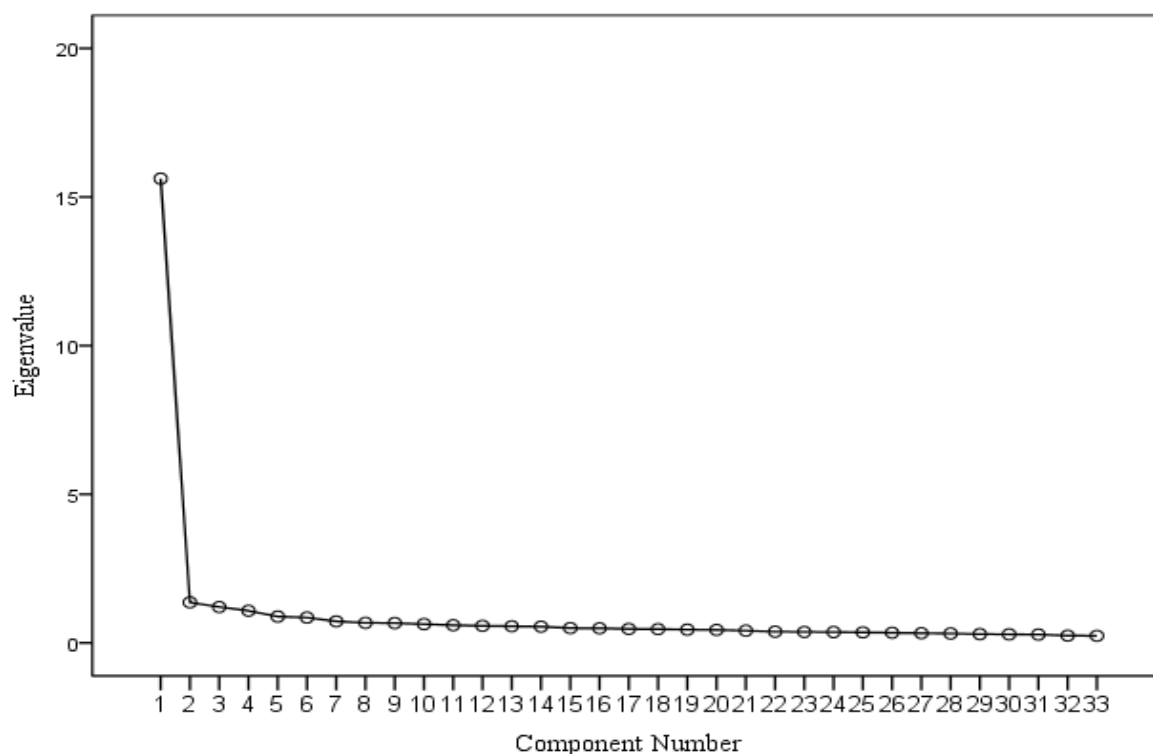
Principal Component Analysis on TIMDQ in the 33-Item Scale

Com.	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative % Total	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	15.619	47.329	47.329	15.619	47.329	47.329	12.370
2	1.363	4.129	51.458	1.363	4.129	51.458	7.907
3	1.208	3.661	55.119	1.208	3.661	55.119	10.502
4	1.081	3.276	58.395	1.081	3.276	58.395	7.144
5	.887	2.688	61.083	.887	2.688	61.083	6.262

The results showed that all communalities are high ($>.30$), therefore acceptable. Communality values for this scale ranged from 0.31 to 0.70. The Scree plot in Figure 1 shows that after the first five components, differences between the Eigenvalues decline (the curve flattens), and they are less than 1.0. This again supports a five-component solution.

Figure 1

Scree Plot for TIMDQ in PCA



Following the exploratory factor analysis, the factor loadings of the 30 remaining items ranged from .352 to .738. Items with loadings below .30 were removed, which led to the exclusion of items 11, 17, and 30. The final solution included 30 items distributed across five interpretable factors. Factor 1, labeled professionalism, contained 10 items and explained 47.32% of the variance, sorted from highest factor weight (item 7) to lowest loading (item 12). Factor 2, problem, included 5 items and accounted for 4.13% (highest: item 27, lowest: item 31). Factor 3, needs, comprised 6 items and explained 3.66% (highest: item 3, lowest: item 32). Factor 4, collaboration, had 5 items and accounted for 3.28% (highest: item 20, lowest: item 6). Factor 5, adaptation, included 4 items and explained 2.69% of the variance (highest: item 33, lowest: item 13). Overall, the factors were conceptually meaningful and showed acceptable item loadings.

Table 2
Rotated Factor Matrix in PCA in the 30-Item Scale

Item	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
q7	.841				
q10	.743				
q29	.738				
q22	.719				
q21	.699				
q4	.612				
q5	.598				
q25	.577				
q14	.472				
q12	-.386				
q27		.769			
q23		.739			
q19		.584			
q18		.574			
q31		.549			
q3			-.750		
q15			-.610		
q16			-.598		
q26			-.558		
q2			-.479		
q32			-.371		
q20				.592	
q28				.562	
q1				.562	
q9				.470	
q6				.451	
q33					-.527
q8					-.479
q24					-.456
q13					-.352

After rotating loadings of each of the items on the 30 components, the item loadings on the five factors with 10 items loading above .3 on Component 1, 5 items loading on Component 2, 6 items loading on Component 3, 5 items loading on Component 4, and 4 items loading on Component 5 (Table3). According to the results, not only have those 5 factors been confirmed, but also the developed items were confirmed too. The TIMDQ has been established as a valid and reliable instrument for data collection. Exploratory factor analysis resulted in five main factors, with their corresponding reliability indices detailed in Table 3. Table 3 contains the categorization of five factors with the pertinent acceptable reliability indices.

Table 3*Five Factors of TIMDQ with Related Reliability Indices in the 30-Item Scale*

Factor	No. of Items	Reliability Method	Reliability Value
1) Professionalism (Items 7, 10, 29, 22, 21, 4, 5, 25, 14, 12)	10	Cronbach's Alpha	.859
2) Problems (Items 27, 23, 19, 18, 31)	5	Cronbach's Alpha	.771
3) Needs (Items 3, 15, 16, 26, 2, 32)	6	Cronbach's Alpha	.835
4) Collaboration (Items 20, 28, 1, 9, 6)	5	Cronbach's Alpha	.797
5) Adaptation (Items 33, 8, 24, 13)	4	Cronbach's Alpha	.824

5.1.1.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

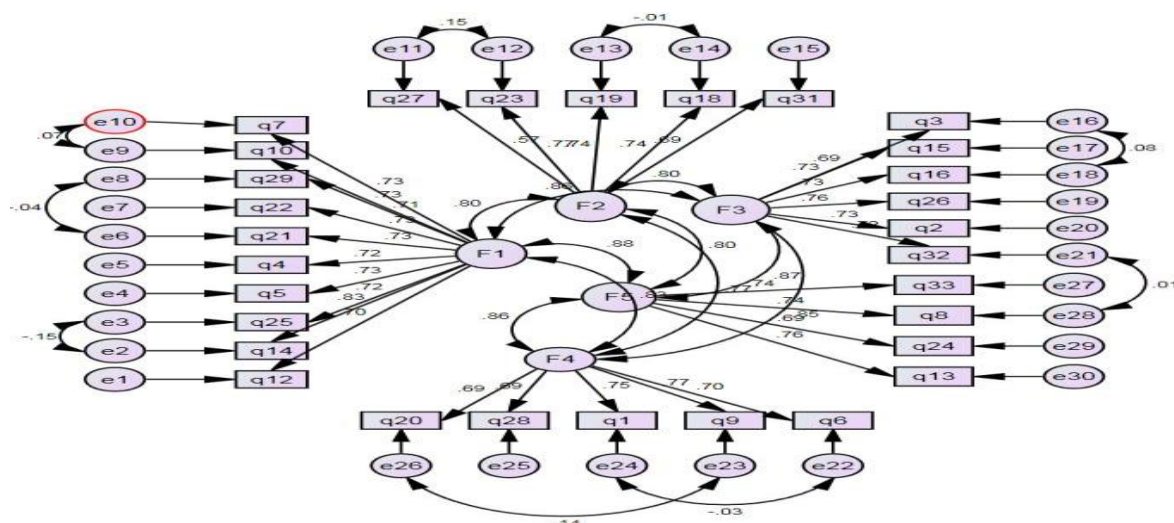
Based on the results of exploratory factor analysis, the researcher hypothesized a five-factor model for TIMDQ. Using AMOS 20, CFA was conducted to verify and extend the factor model of TIMDQ and to examine how well the factor model and the empirical data match each other. Because no single universally accepted criterion exists to judge model fit, several widely accepted goodness-of-fit indices were computed (Table 4). The value of normed chi-square less than 3 is considered acceptable. Besides the normed chi-square, the other criteria usually reported in CFA-AMOS studies as indicators of a model fit include CFI (Comparative Fit Index), GFI (Goodness of-Fit Index), TLI (Tucker & Lewis Index), PNFI (Parsimonious Normed Fit Index), and the RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). Models with a GFI and CFI greater than 0.90 are considered acceptable; however, RMSEA is expected to be less than 0.08. It appeared that CFI and GFI, and TLI are greater than 0.90. Bearing in mind the point that, the closer the value to 1, the better fitness, this scale shows a good fit. Inspecting the normed chi-square and other goodness-of-fit indices showed a significantly fit model with $X^2/df = 2.22$, CFI = .915, GFI = .904, TLI = .901, and RMSEA = .046 (Table 4). The internal consistency of the total scale was found to be .82. Overall, the TIMDQ shows a good and high model fit, confirming the five-factor structures behind the instrument.

Table 4*Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the CFA Model*

Model	X ²	df	X ² /df	CFI	GFI	TLI	RMSEA
5-factor model	855.538	386	2.216	.915	.904	.901	.046

The CFA results showed that all 30 items had factor loadings above .30 and were significant at .001, indicating meaningful contributions to their respective components. These findings confirm the EFA results and demonstrate that the final instrument has strong construct validity. Figure 2 presents the final hypothesized SEM model for TIMDQ, illustrating the relationships among the scale's factors.

Figure 2
SEM Model for the TIMDQ



5.1.2 Addressing Research Question Two

To address the second research question on Iranian English instructors' perceptions of teachers' investment in materials development, the TIMDQ questionnaire (30 items, 5-point Likert scale) was administered to 346 Iranian EFL teachers. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a one-sample t-test. To answer the third research question on how teachers' investment in ELT materials development affects professionalism, the professionalism component of the TIMDQ was analyzed using descriptive statistics and a one-sample t-test. Data screening was conducted in three phases to ensure accuracy. In the first phase, data entries were checked for out-of-range values, and a few incorrectly scored items were identified and corrected.

Data screening was conducted to identify and correct missing data. Participants with over 30% missing responses (16 participants) were excluded. The remaining data from 346 participants were analyzed using the one-sample t-test, a parametric test suitable for determining if the sample mean significantly differs from a hypothesized population mean. In this study, the midpoint of the 5-point Likert scale (3) was used as the hypothesized population mean.

The results, as appears in Table 5, shows that generally, Iranian English language instructors have good positive perceptions toward teachers' investment in materials development. Regarding professionalism subscale, as provided in Table 5, on the whole, one sample t-test was significant ($M = 4.11$, $t = 43.5$, $p = .000$, $p < .001$) reflecting that the majority of Iranian EFL instructors agree with the all ten statements about the professionalism caused by investment in ELT materials development.

Table 5, for instance shows that most of the participants believe that their experience in ELT materials development could enhance their teaching effectiveness, Item 14 (303/346, 87.6% Agree/Strongly Agree, $M = 4.41$, $t = 46.1$, $p < .001$). As it's observable in Table 3, the second most agreed upon item related to professionalism, was Item 29: 'Teachers who invest time and effort in developing ELT materials can improve their knowledge and skills in this professional field,' (283/346, 81.8% Agree/Strongly Agree, $M = 4.16$, $t = 34.2$, $p < .001$); followed by Item 7: 'Teachers' engagement in preparing up-to-date and relevant ELT materials contributes to their professional

growth,' (284/346 = 82.10% Agree; M = 4.16, t = 34.5, p < .001); Item 22: 'Investing in ELT materials helps teachers manage classroom constraints (i.e. multilevel classes) more successfully by using a variety of resources.,' (274/346 = 79.2% Agree; M = 4.09, t = 31.3, p < .001); Item 21: 'Adequate investment in ELT materials development provides teachers with a wider range of authentic and engaging resources,' (277/346 = 80.0% Agree; M = 4.07, t = 32.7, p < .001); Item 4: 'Investing in ELT materials development has made my teaching methods more innovative and dynamic,' (274/346 = 79.2% Agree; M = 4.07, t = 32.5, p < .001); Item 10: 'Teachers' contribution to ELT materials development promotes their confidence in instructional practices,' (276/346 = 79.7% Agree; M = 4.06, t = 32.8, p < .001); Item 25: 'Teachers feel a sense of ownership, reputation, and pride when they develop their own ELT materials,' (267/346 = 77.1% Agree; M = 4.05, t = 29.6, p < .001); Item 5: 'Investing in ELT materials development empowers teachers to experiment with new pedagogical approaches,' (269/346 = 77.7% Agree; M = 4.02, t = 30.2, p < .001); and then Item 12: 'Teachers invest in research to stay updated on the latest trends in ELT materials development and keep up with changing educational trends,' (268/346 = 77.4% Agree; M = 3.99, t = 29.6, p < .001) as the least preferred item.

Table 5

Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and One-Sample T-tests for Professionalism Subscale of TIMDQ

Statement	D/SD		N		A/SA		M	t	Sig.
	f	%	f	%	f	%			
14. Teachers' experience in ELT materials development could enhance their teaching effectiveness.	4	0.7%	66	11.6%	303	87.6%	4.41	46.1	.000
29. Teachers who invest time and effort in developing ELT materials can improve their knowledge and skills in this professional field.	20	3.5%	84	14.7%	283	81.8%	4.16	34.2	.000
7. Teachers' engagement in preparing up-to-date and relevant ELT materials contributes to their professional growth.	22	3.9%	80	14.0%	284	82.1%	4.16	34.5	.000
22. Investing in ELT materials helps teachers manage classroom constraints (i.e. multilevel classes) more successfully by using a variety of resources.	24	4.2%	95	16.6%	274	79.2%	4.09	31.3	.000
21. Adequate investment in ELT materials development provides teachers with a wider range of authentic and engaging resources.	18	3.2%	96	16.8%	277	80.0%	4.07	32.7	.000
4. Investing in ELT materials development has made my teaching methods more innovative and dynamic.	20	3.5%	98	17.2%	274	79.2%	4.07	32.5	.000
10. Teachers' contribution to ELT materials development promotes their confidence in instructional practices.	16	2.8%	100	17.5%	276	79.7%	4.06	32.8	.000
25. Teachers feel a sense of ownership, reputation, and pride when they develop their own ELT materials.	30	5.3%	101	17.7%	267	77.1%	4.05	29.6	.000

5. Investing in ELT materials development empowers teachers to experiment with new pedagogical approaches.	24	4.2%	102	17.9%	269	77.7%	4.02	30.2	.000
12. Teachers invest in research to stay updated on the latest trends in ELT materials development and keep up with changing educational trends.	28	4.9%	101	17.7%	268	77.4%	3.99	29.6	.000
Total Professionalism (M = 4.11, t = 43.5, p = .000, p < .001)							4.11	43.5	.000

Concerning problems subscale, as represented in Table 6, on the whole, one sample t-test was significant (M = 3.96, t = 32.8, p = .000, p < .001) indicating that the majority of the participants agreed with the entire five statements about the problems of investment in ELT materials development. In fact, Table 6 indicates that the strongest item that attracted the attention of the most participants was Item 19: ‘Language institutes do not often provide adequate financial resources and support for ELT materials development,’ (263/346, 76.0% Agree/Strongly Agree, t = 27.9, M = 4.06, p < .001); followed by Item 18: ‘Teachers get overwhelmed in the process of materials development when they lack technology skills in the digital age,’ (263/346 = 76.0% Agree; M = 4.02, t = 29.5, p < .001); Item 23: ‘Teachers who invest in developing ELT materials are not sufficiently recognized and rewarded,’ (245/346 = 70.8% Agree; M = 3.94, t = 23.4, p < .001); Item 27: ‘Teachers have to waste much time and effort in creating ELT materials,’ (248/346 = 71.6% Agree; M = 3.89, t = 22.7, p < .001); and then Item 31: ‘Teacher-made ELT materials, despite their high relevance to the needs of particular students, do not have the same standard of design and production as commercial materials,’ (247/346 = 71.3% Agree; M = 3.88, t = 23.9, p < .001) as the least agreed upon item.

Table 6
Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and One-Sample T-tests for Problems Subscale of TIMDQ

Statement	D/SD		N		A/SA		M	t	Sig.
	f	%	f	%	f	%			
19. Language institutes do not often provide adequate financial resources and support for ELT materials development.	38	6.7%	99	17.3%	263	76.0%	4.06	27.9	.000
18. Teachers get overwhelmed in the process of materials development when they lack technology skills in the digital age.	26	4.6%	111	19.4%	263	76.0%	4.02	29.5	.000
23. Teachers who invest in developing ELT materials are not sufficiently recognized and rewarded.	54	9.5%	113	19.8%	245	70.8%	3.94	23.4	.000
27. Teachers have to waste much time and effort in creating ELT materials.	50	8.8%	111	19.4%	248	71.6%	3.89	22.7	.000

31. Teacher-made ELT materials, despite their high relevance to the needs of particular students, do not have the same standard of design and production as commercial materials.	42	7.4%	121	21.2%	247	71.3%	3.88	23.9	.000
Total Problems (M = 3.96, t = 32.8, p = .000, p < .001)							3.96	32.8	.000

Regarding learner needs subscale, as seen in Table 7, on the whole, one sample t-test was significant (M = 4.04, t = 39.7, p = .000, p < .001) implying that the majority of Iranian EFL instructors agreed with the all six statements about the learner needs caused by investment in ELT materials development. In fact, Table 7 shows that most of the participants believe that customized (personalized) materials can better cater to their students' learning styles and preferences, Item 2 (276/346, 79.7% Agree/Strongly Agree, M = 4.08, t = 33.0, p < .001). As evident from Table 7, the second most preferred item related to learner needs factor, was Item 3: 'Teachers who invest in ELT materials development can better support their students' use of successful learning strategies,' (269/346, 77.7% Agree/Strongly Agree, M = 4.05, t = 31.3, p < .001); followed by Item 32: 'Sufficient teachers' investment in ELT materials development expands their ability to address learners' specific language skills and competencies,' (272/346 = 78.6% Agree; M = 4.05, t = 31.5, p < .001); Item 16: 'Teachers' attempt to develop ELT materials helps to cater for students' special educational needs and disabilities,' (270/346 = 78.0% Agree; M = 4.05, t = 31.3, p < .001); Item 15: 'Teachers consider the needs and interests of their students when developing materials,' (267/346 = 77.1% Agree; M = 4.01, t = 28.8, p < .001); and then Item 26: 'Teacher-made ELT materials, despite their high relevance to the needs of particular students, do not have the same standard of design and production as commercial materials,' (272/346 = 78.6% Agree; M = 4.00, t = 29.7, p < .001) as the least preferred item.

Table 7

Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and One-Sample Tests for Learner Needs Subscale of TIMDQ

Statement	D/SD		N		A/SA		M	t	Sig.
	f	%	f	%	f	%			
2. Teachers believe that customized (personalized) materials can better cater to their students' learning styles and preferences.	16	2.8%	99	17.3%	276	79.7%	4.08	33.0	.000
3. Teachers who invest in ELT materials development can better support their students' use of successful learning strategies.	18	3.2%	109	19.1%	269	77.7%	4.05	31.3	.000
32. Sufficient teachers' investment in ELT materials development expands their ability to address learners' specific language skills and competencies.	22	3.9%	101	17.7%	272	78.6%	4.05	31.5	.000
16. Teachers' attempt to develop ELT materials helps to cater for students' special educational needs and disabilities.	22	3.9%	103	18.0%	270	78.0%	4.05	31.3	.000
15. Teachers consider the needs and interests of their students when developing materials.	34	6.0%	96	16.8%	267	77.1%	4.01	28.8	.000

26. Teachers who play a role in materials development can employ innovative experience-based teaching strategies to enhance their EFL students' language skills.	28	4.9%	95	16.6%	272	78.6%	4.00	29.7	.000
Total Learner Needs (M = 4.04, t = 39.7, p = .000, p < .001)							4.04	39.7	.000

In relation to collaboration subscale, as appears in Table 8, generally, one sample t-test was significant (M = 4.05, t = 38.8, p = .000, p < .001) showing that the majority of the EFL instructors agreed with the entire five statements related to the collaboration component of investment in ELT materials development.

Table 8 indicates that the strongest item that attracted the attention of the most teachers was Item 20: 'Teachers ought to attend workshops or conferences focused on ELT materials development,' (272/346, 78.6% Agree/Strongly Agree, M = 4.11, t = 34.7, p < .001); followed by Item 1: 'Teachers who plan to develop ELT materials need support from publishers regarding their expertise in developing high quality resources,' (260/346 = 75.1% Agree; M = 4.08, t = 31.5 p < .001); Item 6: 'Teachers could actively participate in online communities to share and discuss ways of developing ELT materials,' (266/346 = 76.9% Agree; M = 4.07, t = 29.9, p < .001); Item 9: 'Teachers can cooperate with publishers to generate materials that incorporate authentic and real-world content,' (257/346 = 74.2% Agree; M = 4.04, t = 29.3, p < .001); and then Item 28: 'Teachers collaborate with colleagues to create or share ELT materials,' (260/346 = 75.1% Agree; M = 3.98, t = 26.6, p < .001) as the least agreed upon item.

Table 8

Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and One-Sample T-tests for Collaboration Subscale of TIMDQ

Statement	D/SD		N		A/SA		M	t	Sig.
	f	%	f	%	f	%			
20. Teachers ought to attend workshops or conferences focused on ELT materials development.	8	1.4%	115	20.1%	272	78.6%	4.11	34.7	.000
1. Teachers who plan to develop ELT materials need support from publishers regarding their expertise in developing high quality resources.	14	2.5%	128	22.4%	260	75.1%	4.08	31.5	.000
6. Teachers could actively participate in online communities to share and discuss ways of developing ELT materials.	26	4.6%	106	18.6%	266	76.9%	4.07	29.9	.000
9. Teachers can cooperate with publishers to generate materials that incorporate authentic and real-world content.	24	4.2%	122	21.4%	257	74.2%	4.04	29.3	.000
28. Teachers collaborate with colleagues to create or share ELT materials.	42	7.4%	100	17.5%	260	75.1%	3.98	26.6	.000
Total Collaboration (M = 4.05, t = 38.8, p = .000, p < .001)							4.05	38.8.	.000

With respect to adaptation factor, as manifested in Table 9, overall, one sample t-test was significant ($M = 4.01$, $t = 36.1$, $p = .000$, $p < .001$) suggesting that the majority of Iranian EFL teachers approved all four statements about the adaptation caused by investment in ELT materials development. Table 9 indicates that most of the participants believe that active teacher involvement in the design of materials promotes their flexibility and adaptability i.e., Item 24 (276/346, 79.7% Agree/Strongly Agree, $M = 4.4.05$, $t = 31.3$, $p < .001$). As provided in Table 9, the second most favored item related to adaptation factor, was Item 8: ‘Teachers’ investment in ELT materials development provides them with opportunities to better address cultural and ethnic diversity in the classroom,’ (266/346, 76.9% Agree/Strongly Agree, $M = 4.01$, $t = 29.5$, $p < .001$); followed by Item 13: ‘Investing in ELT materials development enables teachers to address global issues and perspectives,’ (268/346 = 77.4% Agree; $M = 4.01$, $t = 28.1$, $p < .001$); and finally Item 33: ‘Teachers’ investment in ELT materials development can promote EFL students’ cultural awareness and sensitivity,’ (263/346 = 76.0% Agree; $M = 3.97$, $t = 28.1$, $p < .001$) as the least preferred item.

Table 9

Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and One-Sample T-tests for Adaptation Subscale of TIMDQ

Statement	D/SD		N		A/SA		M	t	Sig.
	f	%	f	%	f	%			
24. Active teacher involvement in the design of materials promotes their flexibility and adaptability.	24	4.2%	92	16.1%	276	79.7%	4.05	31.3	.000
8. Teachers’ investment in ELT materials development provides them with opportunities to better address cultural and ethnic diversity in the classroom.	28	4.9%	104	18.2%	266	76.9%	4.01	29.5	.000
13. Investing in ELT materials development enables teachers to address global issues and perspectives.	36	6.3%	93	16.3%	268	77.4%	4.01	28.1	.000
33. Teachers’ investment in ELT materials development can promote EFL students’ cultural awareness and sensitivity.	30	5.3%	107	18.7%	263	76.0%	3.97	28.1	.000
Total Adaptation ($M = 4.01$, $t = 36.1$, $p = .000$, $p < .001$)							4.01	36.1	.000

5.1.3 Addressing Research Question Three

A one-sample t-test was employed to compare the sample mean to a known value (the midpoint "3," representing "Neutral"). This statistical test, according to Pallant (2013), is used to determine if the sample mean significantly differs from the hypothesized population mean.

As it is observable in Table 10, the mean score ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.61$) is noticeably higher than 3. The first assumption is not violated because the present data are measured on an interval scale. Bachman (2005, p. 236) states that the assumption of independence of subjects is met when “the performance of any given individual is independent of the performance of other individuals”. The third assumption is the normality of the data which was checked and met. According to the results shown in Table 10, one sample test was significant on the positive side of the scale ($M > 3$) for professionalism ($t = 43.48$, $p = .000$, $p < .05$) with the mean difference of 1.11; therefore, it can be

claimed that Iranian English language instructors perceive their investment in ELT materials development impacts teachers' professionalism.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics and One-Sample T-test for Professionalism Component of TIMDQ - Test Value = 2

M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
4.11	0.609	43.48	345	.000	1.108

5.2 Qualitative Results

To deeply investigate the perceived challenges and merits of EFL teachers' investment in ELT materials development, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 teachers. The interview also explored whether this investment promotes professionalism and gathered recommendations for teachers creating their own materials. Responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically using MAXQDA.

5.2.1 Addressing Research Question Four

The fourth research question investigated how Iranian English language instructors perceive the impact of investing in ELT materials development on their professionalism. The analysis identified six themes: skills development, pedagogical specialization, improved technical capabilities, strategic planning and socialization, enhanced subject knowledge, and increased job satisfaction. These themes, supported by participant extracts, are elaborated in the following sections (Table 11).

Table 11

Themes for EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Investment Impacts on Professionalism

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
Theme No. 1 Skills Development	8	80%
Theme No. 2 Pedagogical Specialization	6	60%
Theme No. 3 Enhanced Subject Knowledge	6	60%
Theme No. 4 Increased Job Satisfaction and Motivation	5	50%
Theme No. 5 Improved Technical Capabilities	3	30%
Theme No. 6 Strategic Planning and Socialization	2	20%

Skills Development (80%)

EFL teachers believe investing in ELT materials development enhances their professionalism by improving pedagogical skills, lesson planning, and the implementation of various teaching techniques, leading to more effective instruction. One teacher shared their personal experience in developing ELT materials to support this view:

I found that creating my own ELT materials has allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of different teaching methodologies and techniques. In fact, as I am more familiar with the needs of my students and the context of their language learning, I can make use of those methods and techniques which better suit my students' interests, styles, proficiency level, and so on. (Shakiba Ex.1)

Another participant talked about the effects such investment in ELT materials can have on their lesson plans:

I think investing in ELT materials development can enhance my lesson planning skills. It helps me to organize my lessons effectively by breaking down complex concepts into manageable chunks, allocating time wisely, and anticipating challenges. (Parsa Ex.1)

A further teacher interviewee stated that:

By providing their own materials with high-quality, teachers are better equipped to deliver effective instruction. (Nobahar Ex.1).

Pedagogical Specialization (60%)

Six out of ten participants believed that developing their own ELT materials enhances their instructional expertise in specific EFL teaching contexts (e.g., online courses, young learners). This allows for tailoring materials to unique learning needs and learner backgrounds, and empowers teachers to create customized assessments and evaluation tools. As one of the teacher interviewees stated:

By developing materials tailored to specific contexts, I've become more specialized in teaching EFL in various settings, such as corporate training or online courses. (Maryam Ex.1)

As mentioned by several participants, specific learning needs are of high importance:

To me, designing my own activities and resources has enhanced my ability to deal with different learning styles and student needs. Such practice will grant me autonomy in taking responsibility for decision making and creating various opportunities for my students to master language skills and components more efficiently. (Shakiba Ex.2)

Enhanced Subject Knowledge (60%)

Another factor influencing teachers' professionalism in developing ELT materials is the enhancement of subject knowledge. This involves staying updated with recent research in EFL pedagogy and language acquisition and incorporating new language trends into teaching materials. One participant also noted that engagement with research contributes to the broader field of EFL teaching.

Researching and creating ELT materials has deepened my understanding of the latest trends and best practices in EFL teaching. (Sina Ex.1)

Regarding enriching teachers' knowledge, one of the interviewee participants put it:

I've gained a broader knowledge base in various EFL subfields, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, through the materials development process. In other words, before trying to develop teaching materials and relevant activities for different unit sections, I have to study and research, which could enhance my knowledge in different areas of language teaching. (Fateme Ex.1)

Increased Job Satisfaction and Motivation (50%)

Another important theme that almost half of the interviewees pointed out is feeling a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment from creating impactful teaching materials.

Seeing my students engage and succeed with the materials I've developed brings me immense satisfaction and reinforces my passion for teaching. It seems as if I have accomplished my educational goal and mission pretty well. (Parsa Ex.2)

The interview results indicated that observing students' participation and achievement with teacher-developed materials, receiving positive feedback from colleagues and students, and gaining recognition within the teaching community can enhance teachers' professionalism and confidence, as reflected in the following extract.

The recognition and appreciation I receive from colleagues and students for my materials development efforts boost my confidence and motivation as an EFL teacher. (Sina Ex.2)

Improved Technical Capabilities (30%)

Interviewees felt that developing their own teaching materials honed their technical skills. This expertise, including proficiency with digital content creation tools, multimedia software, interactive platforms, and online collaboration, enabled them to better benefit students. Teachers also gained skills in integrating technology into lesson planning and assessment, ultimately enhancing student engagement through educational technology.

I believe the process of developing ELT materials can help me gain proficiency in various digital tools and technologies for teaching and assessment. (AmirHosein Ex.1)

Mostly talking about using technical knowledge and technological tools in teaching, another teacher participant added that:

In my opinion, the process of developing ELT materials provides me with a chance to become better at using digital tools and technologies and learn how to incorporate multimedia resources, interactive activities, and online platforms into my lessons, making them more engaging and visually appealing for my students. (Mohammad Ex.1)

Strategic Planning and Socialization (20%)

Teachers who develop their own materials try to align them with curriculum goals and teaching objectives. They also collaborate with colleagues, attend workshops and conferences on materials development, and build professional networks with educators interested in improving and innovating language teaching materials. One participant noted that:

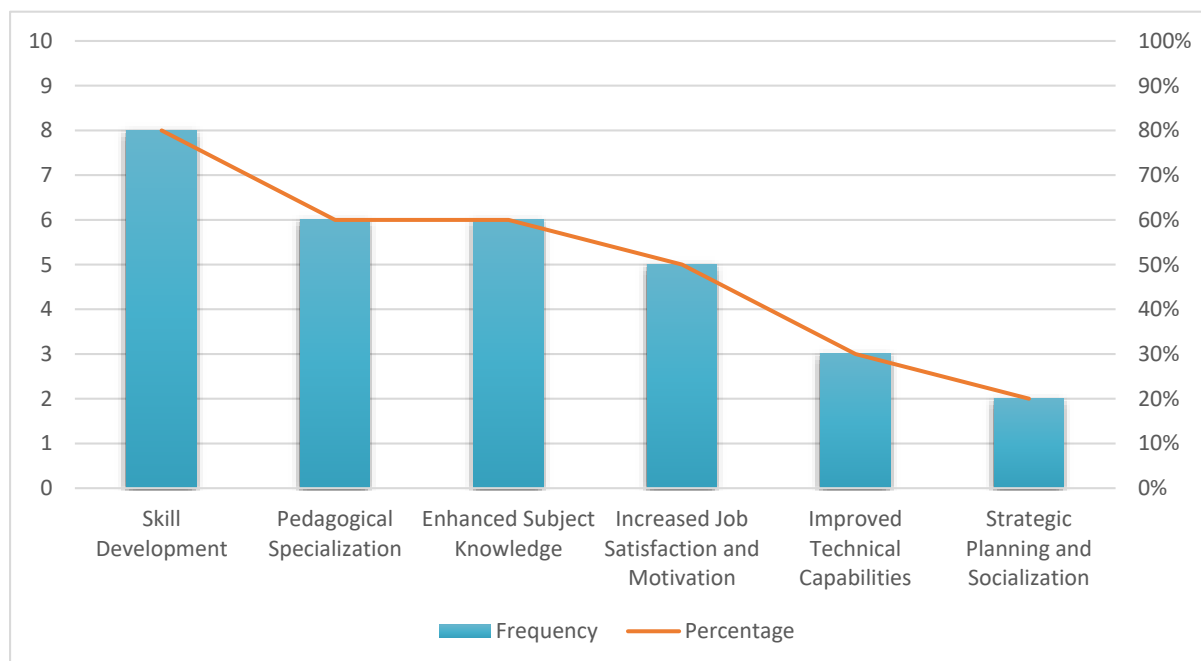
The way I see it, the materials development process allows teachers to plan strategically for lessons and ensure alignment with curriculum objectives. (Narges Ex.1)

A further interviewee mentioned the value of materials development as a means of establishing communication across colleagues.

I would say that developing ELT materials collaboratively with colleagues fosters a sense of community and relationship, which encourages the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and information across teachers. (Paria Ex.1)

Figure 3

EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Investment in ELT Materials Development Impacts on Their Professionalism



5.2.2 Addressing Research Question Five

A detailed analysis of qualitative data using MAXQDA identified major themes related to interviewees' perceptions of the challenges EFL teachers face in investing in ELT materials development. The analysis addressed a research question about the problems experienced by Iranian English instructors in this process. Six main themes emerged: inability to maintain quality standards, shortage of time and energy, lack of adequate training, insufficient technological knowledge, need for expert collaboration, and limited financial resources (Table 12).

Table 12

Major Themes of Problems and Challenges as perceived by EFL Teachers

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
Theme No. 1 Inability to Maintain Quality Standards	9	90%
Theme No. 2 Shortage of Time and Energy	8	80%
Theme No. 3 Absence of Adequate Training	5	50%
Theme No. 4 Lack of Technological Knowledge	4	40%
Theme No. 5 Need for Expert Cooperation	4	40%
Theme No. 6 Dearth of Financial Resources	3	30%

Inability to Maintain Quality Standards (90%)

A key challenge for English language teachers in developing ELT materials is maintaining high quality while balancing creativity and innovation with alignment to course objectives and learning outcomes.

I sometimes find it challenging to come up with creative materials that are also relevant to the curriculum. I want to make my lessons engaging, but I also need to make sure that they are teaching the students what they need to know. (Nobahar Ex.2)

Teachers may lack the expertise to properly evaluate their materials, which can result in errors, poor quality writing, and reduced effectiveness in teaching the target language.

I'm not always confident in my ability to create high-quality materials. I sometimes question whether my materials are engaging enough, accurate enough, or effective enough. (Mohammad Ex.2)

Shortage of Time and Energy (80%)

Heavy teaching workloads often leave English language teachers with limited time and energy, making it difficult to develop high-quality ELT materials aligned with their teaching objectives.

I'm constantly balancing my teaching responsibilities with other tasks, such as grading papers, preparing lesson plans, and meeting with parents. I rarely have the time or energy to dedicate to materials development. (Narges Ex.2)

Some other teachers had the same idea as participant 6, as participant 1 noted that

I often find myself cutting corners when it comes to materials development because I don't have enough time to do it properly. I'm afraid that if I take too long, I won't be able to finish everything else I need to do. (Teacher Participant #1)

Absence of Adequate Training (50%)

Half of the interviewees considered inadequate training a major challenge in ELT materials development. Creating materials requires instruction and mentoring, yet many teachers lack opportunities to attend workshops or courses, limiting their exposure to effective techniques, methodologies, and best practices in developing instructional materials.

Another challenge is the absence of adequate training for teachers in materials development. There are not enough chances for teachers to learn how to create their own materials, and this can lead to a lack of confidence and expertise I think. (Narges Ex.3)

Another teacher highlighted both formal and online training, noting that despite the abundance of online resources, teachers may still lack access to high-quality courses, webinars, and professional development opportunities related to ELT materials development.

I've tried to find online resources on materials development, but I've been disappointed with the quality of what I've found. I wish there were more reliable and up-to-date resources available online. '...' I've learned a lot about materials development through trial and error, but I would have appreciated having some formal training. This would have saved me a lot of time and frustration. (Maryam Ex.2)

Lack of Technological Knowledge (40%)

Interviewed teachers identified limited familiarity with technology—especially low proficiency in digital tools and software—as a significant challenge in investing in ELT materials development.

One of the biggest challenges I face in developing my own ELT materials is the lack of technological knowledge among teachers. Many teachers are not familiar with the latest digital tools and technologies, which makes it difficult for them to create high-quality materials. (Fateme Ex.2)

The second teacher also stated that:

There's a real gap in technological knowledge among teachers, especially those who have been teaching for a long time. They may not be comfortable using computers or the internet, and they may not be familiar with software for creating multimedia materials. (Amir-Hosein Ex.2)

Difficulty in creating engaging multimedia materials was another issue mentioned by the participants to emphasize teachers' shortage of technological proficiency when trying to design their own materials.

I think it's important for teachers to get some training in materials development and adaptation as well as experience in the design of exercises and activities to support their teaching stuff during their teacher education programs. Besides, they need to have a basic level of technological literacy, so they can create materials that are engaging and effective for their students. (Parsa Ex.3)

Need for Expert Cooperation (40%)

Consulting curriculum specialists helps teachers align ELT materials with objectives and ensure they are relevant, engaging, and comprehensive.

I sometimes find it difficult to make sure my materials align with the curriculum. I wish I had someone to consult who could help me ensure that my materials are relevant to the learning objectives and that they fit into the lesson plan. (Nobahar Ex.3)

Collaboration with assessment experts helps teachers design valid, reliable assessments aligned with ELT materials to accurately measure students' language progress.

As the third difficulty I can name, I think teachers may struggle with creating effective assessment instruments for their lessons. They would appreciate some help from an assessment expert to develop quizzes and tests that match their materials and provide students with useful feedback. (Parsa Ex.4)

Dearth of Financial Resources (30%)

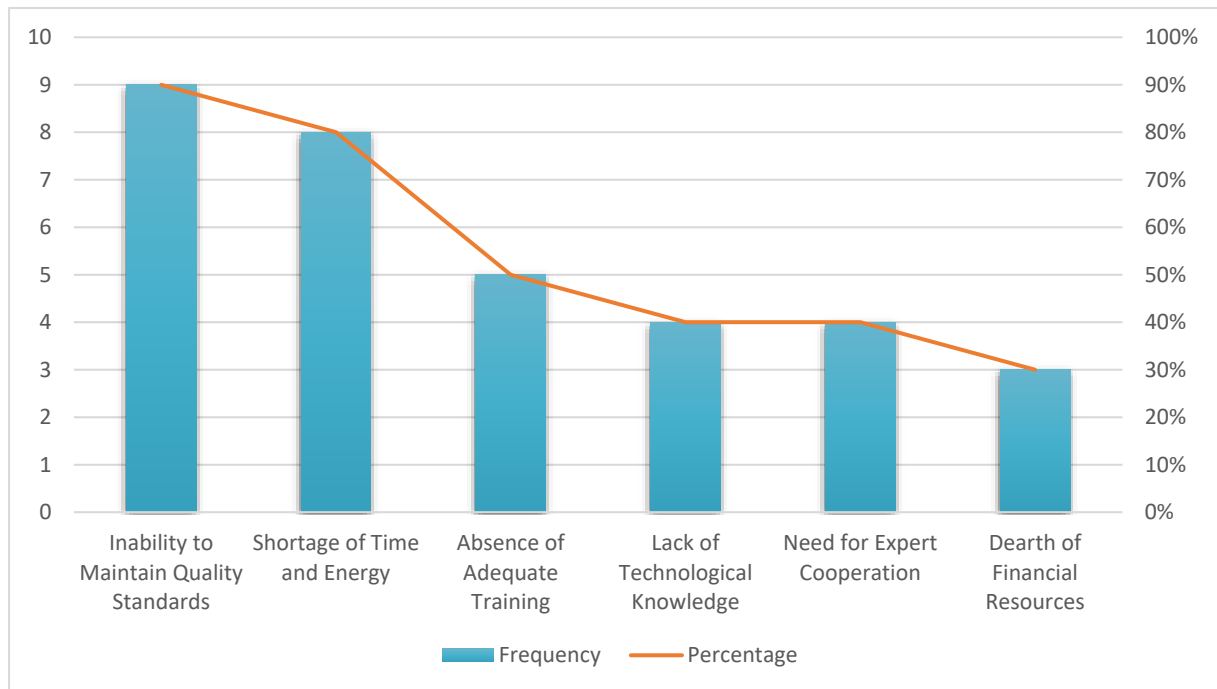
Participants noted that limited financial resources and the high cost of conferences, workshops, software, and design services restrict teachers' ability to develop up-to-date and effective ELT materials.

One of the biggest challenges is the shortage of financial resources for teachers who want to develop their own materials. There are no grants or funding available, and teachers often have to pay for the materials out of their own pockets. (Paria Ex.2)

One of the participants emphasized the role of schools and universities in supporting teachers financially:

It can be very expensive to develop high-quality ELT materials, especially if you need to purchase software or hire a graphic designer. This makes it difficult for teachers who have limited financial resources. I think it's important for schools and universities to provide more financial support for teachers who are developing their own materials. (Maryam Ex.3)

Figure 4
Major Themes of Problems and Challenges as perceived by EFL Teachers



5.2.3 Addressing Research Question Sixth

Interview data were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through thematic analysis and coding using MAXQDA. Table 13 presents themes reflecting the merits of teachers' investment in ELT materials development. Six themes emerged: fulfilling learners' needs, increasing expertise, localization and cultural adaptation, meeting instructional objectives, increasing flexibility, and enhancing institutional reputation (Table 13).

Table 13
Major Themes for Merits of EFL Teachers' Investment in ELT Materials Development

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
Theme No. 1 Fulfilling Learners' Needs	8	80%
Theme No. 2 Increasing Expertise	7	70%
Theme No. 3 Localization and Adaptation of Cultural Content	5	50%
Theme No. 4 Meeting Instructional Objectives	5	50%
Theme No. 5 Increasing Flexibility	3	30%
Theme No. 6 Advancing Institutional Reputation	1	10%

Fulfilling *Learners' Needs* (80%)

The first theme emerging from the interview data was “Fulfilling Learners’ Needs.” By developing their own ELT materials, teachers can better address students’ unique educational needs, goals, learning styles, and preferences; one teacher shared an insightful perspective on this.

Developing my own materials allows me to cater to the different learning styles and interest of my students. I can create materials that are visually appealing and interactive to engage all learners. (Sina Ex.3)

Another key benefit of teachers’ investment in ELT materials development is the ability to consider students’ language proficiency levels, identify their gaps, and align materials with their abilities. One teacher highlighted that:

Doing so, I can identify areas where my students are struggling and create materials that provide additional support and practice. (Narges Ex.4)

Increasing *Expertise* (70%)

The second theme, “Increasing Expertise,” shows that teachers’ involvement in ELT materials development promotes professional growth by helping them gain deeper insights into language learning, pedagogy, and effective ways to support students.

It provides teachers with opportunity to apply their pedagogical knowledge in a practical and creative way. They learn to design activities that are engaging, interactive, and aligned with teaching principles. (AmirHosein Ex.3)

Another participant hinted at gaining experience in needs analysis and evaluation of students as well.

I should say that through materials development, one can gain valuable experience in conducting needs assessments, implementing different methodologies, and evaluating student progress. (Nobahar Ex.4)

Localization and Adaptation of Cultural Content (50%)

The third theme, “Localization and Adaptation of Cultural Content,” highlights the importance of designing ELT materials that reflect students’ cultural context. Incorporating local references, idioms, and expressions makes materials more relatable and engaging, helping learners connect with the language and better understand cultural nuances during the learning process.

To me, incorporating local and cultural issues which are relevant to my students’ needs and, of course, more meaningful and understandable, into my lessons in addition to the target culture generally introduced in most global textbooks, could make my students more engaged and enthusiastic. They can relate themselves to the materials on a personal level, which makes the learning process more meaningful. (Mohammad Ex.3)

An experienced teacher emphasized adapting materials to respect local cultural sensitivities, avoid stereotypes, and prevent potentially offensive content.

I believe when teachers create their own ELT materials, a key advantage they have is a better chance of addressing cultural nuances and avoiding sensitive topics that could offend or confuse students. (Shakiba Ex.3)

Meeting Instructional Objectives (50%)

The theme “Meeting Instructional Objectives” highlights that teacher-developed materials can closely align with course objectives and learning outcomes. By addressing key concepts, skills, and language structures students must master, these materials become more targeted and effective in supporting language learning and improving the overall language acquisition process.

If I find an opportunity to develop my own ELT materials, I'll definitely try to create resources that are specifically designed to meet the instructional objectives of my course. This can help me ensure that my lessons are focused and effective, and most importantly, are relevant to the learners' needs and preferences. (Fatemeh Ex.3)

Increasing Flexibility (30%)

The fifth theme was “Increasing Flexibility.” Developing their own ELT materials allows teachers to easily modify and update them to reflect changing educational trends, curriculum requirements, and classroom dynamics.

To me, creating my own materials may give me the flexibility to adapt and modify them as needed; for example, I can use clear instructions, relevant themes, comprehensible topics, useful structures that can be commonly used in everyday conversations, appropriate digital formats, and adaptable templates. (Paria Ex.3)

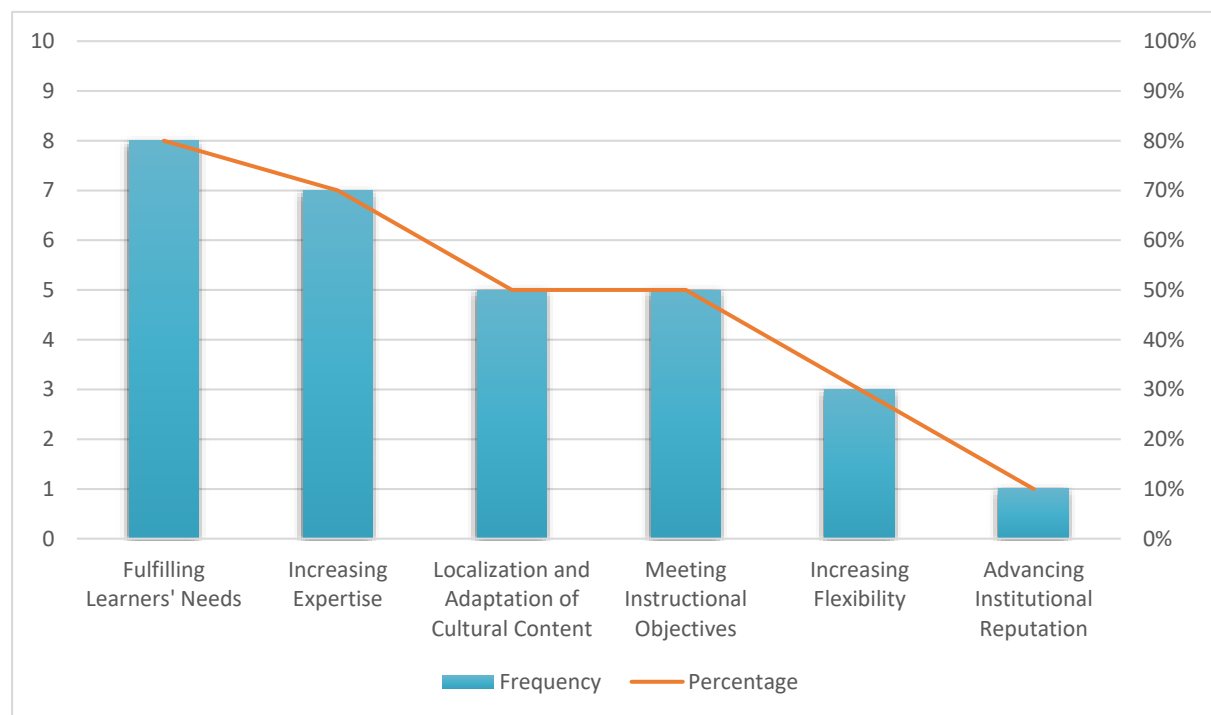
A young teacher cleverly touched on the idea of utilizing open-source resources as mentioned below:

In my attempt to customize my materials, I frequently use open-source resources and tools like freely available teaching aids, templates, and online resources. This allows me to personalize my lessons that are in line with my teaching goals. (Maryam Ex.4)

Advancing Institutional Reputation (10%)

The final theme, “Advancing Institutional Reputation,” indicates that teachers' investment in ELT materials development can enhance an institution's reputation by creating effective, engaging materials that support language learning and distinguish the institution from others.

By investing in materials development, an institution can demonstrate its commitment to providing high-quality English language instruction to its students and attract students seeking a unique and engaging learning experience. (Mohammad Ex.4)

Figure 5*Merits of EFL Teachers' Investment in ELT Materials Development*

6 Discussion

This study explored the multifaceted nature of teachers' investment in ELT materials development and its impact on their professionalism. Using the TIMDQ questionnaire, the researchers examined the underlying factors influencing such investment. KMO and Bartlett's Test confirmed the suitability of the data for factor analysis, and exploratory factor analysis identified five key factors: professionalism, students' needs, collaboration, problems, and adaptation. CFA further supported the instrument's strong construct validity. Findings showed that Iranian EFL instructors hold generally positive perceptions toward involvement in materials development. Notably, the professionalism subscale yielded a high mean score (4.11), indicating strong agreement that developing ELT materials enhances teachers' professional competence and effectiveness. This study highlighted the positive perceptions Iranian instructors hold regarding ELT materials development and its contribution to their professional growth. These findings are consistent with previous research: Darwin and Norton (2015) emphasized the importance of investment in English as a lingua franca for global connection and skill acquisition. Jiang et al. (2020) found that such investment reshaped teachers into mentors and change agents by enhancing their cultural and social capital, aligning with Kumaravadivelu's (2003) "post-method" approach emphasizing context-specific adaptation. Crowther (2019) further linked teachers' perception of communal acceptance to their investment in materials development. In the qualitative phase, interviews with ten Iranian EFL instructors explored the perceived impact of ELT materials development investment on professionalism, as well as predicted challenges and advantages.

Iranian English instructors generally held positive views on ELT materials development, recognizing its impact on professional growth. Six key themes emerged, ordered by frequency:

fostering skill development (80%), pedagogical specialization (60%), enhanced subject knowledge (60%), increased job satisfaction and motivation (50%), improved technical capabilities (30%), and strategic planning/socialization (20%). These factors collectively empower teachers for more effective instruction and student learning. The study also identified six primary challenges in ELT material development: maintaining quality standards, time and energy constraints, insufficient training, technological limitations, the need for expert collaboration, and financial scarcity. Benefits included meeting specific learner needs, enhancing pedagogical expertise, localizing cultural content, achieving instructional objectives, and providing flexibility in material adjustment.

Recent studies in ELT and teacher education strongly align with these findings. For example, Rahimi & Dastjerdi (2021) reported that teachers' active engagement in materials development significantly strengthens their reflective practice and professional identity, mirroring the strong professionalism scores in this study. Shin & Kang (2022) showed that teachers who design their own materials develop greater pedagogical specialization and feel more empowered in instructional decision-making, consistent with the themes of skill development and specialization identified here. Additionally, studies by Xiong & Fang (2023) and Ahmadi & Rezaei (2022) confirmed that localizing materials to cultural and contextual realities enhances teacher agency and motivation, supporting this study's finding that teachers value material development for its relevance and adaptability.

Regarding challenges, recent literature also corroborates the obstacles revealed in this study. Garton & Graves (2022) found that lack of time, limited access to digital tools, and insufficient institutional support remain persistent barriers to teacher-created materials. Similarly, Lee (2023) highlighted that quality assurance and collaborative expertise continue to challenge teachers worldwide, aligning directly with the challenges identified by Iranian instructors. Overall, the findings of this study are highly consistent with contemporary global research, reinforcing the view that investment in ELT materials development functions as both a catalyst for teacher professionalism and a practical strategy to support localized, learner-responsive pedagogy.

7 Conclusions & Implications

This study emphasizes that identifying the specific challenges teachers face in materials development is the foundational step toward effective resolution. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, the study advocates for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), enabling educators to stay aligned with empirical research and participate in the global ELT discourse. Educational institutions are encouraged to improve both teaching materials and classroom working conditions by consulting experienced teachers and ensuring resources meet high-quality standards. Such actions can create more motivating classrooms and help attract and retain committed educators. It also suggests that language institutes and associations should provide workshops, self-study opportunities, and professional development activities related to material development, while keeping members updated with the latest publications and resources.

The implications of these findings suggest that educational institutions must shift from top-down management to a collaborative model. By consulting experienced teachers and involving them in curriculum design, institutions ensure that materials are not only pedagogically sound but also contextually relevant. This collaborative approach fosters teacher agency and improves classroom working conditions, ultimately enhancing teacher retention and student motivation. Furthermore, language associations should leverage technology to provide asynchronous self-study modules and

interactive workshops that focus on digital material design, ensuring teachers remain versatile in an evolving educational landscape. Providing teachers with the time and resources to curate personalized content can transform materials development from a burdensome task into a core element of professional identity.

Regarding future research, it is recommended that scholars go beyond cross-national comparisons to explore the following areas:

1. **AI-Assisted Materials Development:** Future studies should examine how the integration of Generative AI tools affects teachers' investment, creativity, and professional workload. Understanding whether AI empowers teachers or diminishes their design autonomy is crucial for modern ELT.

2. **Longitudinal Impact on Professional Identity:** Research is needed to track how sustained engagement in materials development correlates with the long-term evolution of teacher professional identity and career satisfaction. This would provide nuanced insights into the psychological dividends of teacher-led material creation.

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Authors' Contributions

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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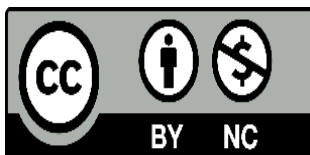
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