

DIGITAL Competence as Influenced by Professional Learning Community and Professional Development at Higher EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the influence of the professional learning community and professional development on the digital competence of teachers in the tertiary level. This study employed a quantitative research method using the descriptive correlational design. A random sampling technique was used to determine the respondents from among the tertiary teachers population. Through random sampling the sample size was determined using the online Raosoft calculator. Adapted questionnaires were used to obtain information from the respondents. Mean, standard deviation, Pearson-r, and multiple regression analysis were used for the data analysis. The findings revealed the level of the professional learning community was high, the professional learning community and digital competence were very high. Based on the correlation analysis conducted on the empirical data gathered, there was a significant relationship of professional learning community and professional development to the digital competence among tertiary teachers. However, there was no significant influence between the professional learning community and digital competence among tertiary teachers. Furthermore, professional development significantly influences digital competence among tertiary teachers.

KEYWORDS: *Education, Digital competence, Professional learning community, Professional development, Philippines.*

INTRODUCTION

In Higher Education Institutions, it has been noted some faculty are less digitally literate (Fernández-Morante et al., 2023). In the modern field of academia, various studies have explored the issues and challenges about digital competence of teachers. (Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos et al., 2022; Vásquez-Pajuelo et al., 2024; Possaghi & Papavlasopoulou, 2024., Ng et al., 2023; Saluky et al.,

2022). The European framework highlights problems in teachers' digital competence, including professional involvement, working with digital resources, teaching and learning, evaluation of results, expanding student opportunities, and developing digital competence in education subjects, highlighting the need for modern learning spaces (Tkachov et al., 2023). According to the survey conducted by Liesa-Orus et al. (2023) of 7470 teachers working across Europe and Latin America with experience between six and fifteen years some teachers demonstrated low digital competence thus requiring higher education institutions to remedy training and institutional deficiencies.

Study shows that insufficient digital competence among Mexican educators exists on a large scale because teachers face two main barriers including their age and insufficient training about ICT tools. The current situation demands specialized development programs for educators to fix this urgent skill deficiency since educators have been facing additional challenges with remote teaching because of the pandemic (Ruiz del Hoyo et al., 2023). The educational system of Thailand demonstrates problems in digital competence among teachers because it faces several global market competitiveness barriers stemming from outdated curriculum and educational inequalities and limited digital offerings. The low international assessment results from PISA and TIMSS demonstrate the urgent need for extensive reforms (Sarasean, 2024). Relatedly, teachers face significant problems in digital competence, including limited digital literacy, difficulties selecting appropriate ICT resources, and insufficient training to adapt their pedagogy to effectively integrate technology in the classroom (Boonmoh & Sanmuang, 2024).

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) mandated flexible, blended, and online teaching during the pandemic. However, Filipino teachers face challenges in developing digital competencies to implement the long-distance learning requirement. Specifically, some notable problems among teachers' digital competencies are addressing logistical issues like weak internet connections and access to digital devices which are all crucial. Hence, strengthening institutional support for ICT infrastructure and teachers' ICT training can enhance their digital competencies and attitude towards online and long-distance learning. Addressing these issues is essential for implementing the CHED's flexible learning mandate effectively (Ballano et al., 2022).

Additionally, in the context of Davao del Norte, the shift to flexible learning has improved teachers' digital competencies, but it also presents

challenges such as network access issues, economic instability, digital divide, device shortages, distractions, expensive internet data, health issues, resource scarcity, digital illiteracy, and reduced motivation. Other issues include unstable internet connectivity, inadequate resources, power interruptions, vague learning content, overloaded lesson activities, limited teacher guidance, poor peer communication, conflicts with home responsibilities, subpar learning environments, financial constraints, compromised physical health, and mental health challenges (Gocotano et al., 2021). However, instructors, especially Davao de Oro State College-Maragusan have inadequate digital proficiency because they barely had any experiences in using the digital platform, most especially during the global pandemic that took place. Moreso, teachers who are best at using technology can create fun, interactive, and inspiring learning activities and experiences for their students with the help of a wide range of digital resources (Enclonar and Belleza, 2024).

Further, various studies have been conducted exploring about professional learning community (Zhang, 2024; Paulakovich, 2024; Ling & Amzah, 2022; Yu & Chao, 2023; Pan, 2023; Mydin et al., 2024; Meesuk et al., 2021). Additionally, there have been studies also concerned with teachers' professional development (Aparicio-Molina & Sepúlveda-López, 2023; Salmerón Aroca et al., 2022; Bran dão et al., 2024; Sancar et al., 2021; Surahman & Wang, 2023). In the context of modern education, studies have explored as well the teachers' digital competence (Arstorp et al., 2024; Maghfiroh et al., 2023; Basantes-Andrade et al., 2022; Colás-Bravo et al., 2021; Ruiz-Cabezas et al., 2020). However, none of these studies directly assess the relationship between the teachers' professional learning community, professional development, and digital competence in the field of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). To the best observation of the researcher, most of these studies were carried out primarily in an international context and locally but not in the particular locality of Davao del Norte. Consequently, this research aspires to fill this immense gap in the existing body of knowledge in the field of Higher Education. The research strongly emphasizes the need for urgent investigation because it reveals significant differences about its main focus areas and methodology along with research settings.

Moreover this research investigates the essential role of digital competencies in educational instruction and student education. The program gives educators essential capabilities that improve their ability to maximize student learning by using technology in their educational spaces. This is crucial

for developing 21st-century skills and ensuring equitable access to quality education. The study also emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and adaptation in the digital age, encouraging teachers to embrace lifelong learning to stay updated with technological advancements and pedagogical approaches. This fosters a culture of continuous improvement within the teaching profession and prepares teachers for the evolving demands of the digital age. The findings can inform future research and best practices in teacher education, benefiting students and society.

Conversely, the researcher hopes to effectively share the results in forums, conferences, and seminars for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This will be accomplished by actively participating with the study, making use of networks, and utilizing online and offline platforms that may be essential resources for disseminating the findings. The research aims further to give a comprehensive body of knowledge by submitting the study to peer-reviewed journals, producing a brief report with helpful recommendations, and presenting the findings at conferences, workshops, webinars, online seminars, and social media platforms.

Statement of the Problem

1. What is the level of the professional learning community among tertiary teachers in terms of shared and supportive leadership; shared values and vision; collective learning and application; shared personal practice; supportive conditions –relationships; and supportive conditions-structures?
2. What is the level of professional development among tertiary teachers in terms of Thematic knowledge; learning environment; cooperation; educational technology; research base; educational planning; evaluation; and development of human resources
3. What is the level of digital competence among tertiary teachers in terms of professional engagement; digital resources; teaching and learning; assessment; empowering learners; and facilitating learners' digital competence
4. Is there a significant relationship between: professional learning community and digital competence among tertiary teachers professional development and digital competence among tertiary teachers
5. Do Professional Learning Community and Professional Development significantly influence digital competence among tertiary teachers

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This investigation employed a quantitative approach specifically a descriptive correlational design. In this study, descriptive research design has been utilized to describe the professional learning community, professional development, and digital competence of tertiary teachers, whereas correlational research design has been used to describe and measure the relationships between professional learning community and digital competence, as well as professional development and digital competence of tertiary teachers. In general, the combination of descriptive correlational research design was the most appropriate composition to address the statement of the problem regarding the variables under investigation. As such, the research design did not only describe the levels of professional learning community, professional development, and digital competence of tertiary teachers, but it further looked into the significant relationship between professional learning community and digital competence, as well as professional development and digital competence of tertiary teachers.

Research Locale. The research was conducted in the province of Davao del Norte, a region chosen for its dense concentration of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which facilitates an in-depth study. Specifically, data were gathered from three selected schools within the province: School A, contributing 60 faculty members; School B, with 40 faculty participants; and School C, with 50 participating faculty members.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of ICT Orientation among Junior High School Teachers

Shared and Supportive Leadership. The category mean of 4.14 reflects a high level of agreement, indicating that shared and supportive leadership is widely regarded as an effective driver of educational quality and system efficiency. This positive perception aligns with findings in the global literature. For example, Aas and Vennebo (2021) reported that tertiary educators in European institutions exhibit shared and supportive leadership to a significant extent. Pearce and Conger (2023) also found that such leadership practices enhance collaborative student environments. Additionally, Alghamdi (2024) demonstrated that elevated levels of shared and supportive leadership among tertiary teachers promote a sense of belonging and substantially improve

students' academic efficacy and performance.

Table 1
Level of Professional Learning Community among Tertiary Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Shared and Supportive Leadership	4.14	.66	High
Shared Values and Vision	4.29	.60	Very High
Collective Learning and Application	4.23	.61	Very High
Shared Personal Practice	4.20	.60	Very High
Supportive Conditions - Relationships	4.24	.62	Very High
Supportive Conditions – Structures	4.25	.58	Very High
Overall Mean	4.01	.52	High

Shared Values and Vision. The category achieved a mean score of 4.29, which is qualitatively described as very high. This indicates that tertiary educators possess a common vision and core values, fostering a robust institutional culture and providing a foundation for effective teamwork. These shared ideals promote greater passion and investment in professional responsibilities. This result is consistent with Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2023), who emphasized that tertiary teachers often maintain a high level of shared values within their institutions. Similarly, it aligns with the findings of Frányó and Sándor (2024), who demonstrated that congruent values and visions among educators facilitate progressive student development and establish supportive learning environments. Additionally, this finding supports the insights of Castillo and Barrameda (2024), who noted that shared organizational alignments encourage educators to consistently adhere to institutional rules and regulations.

Collective Learning and Application. The category recorded a very high mean score of 4.23, indicating that tertiary educators place significant value on innovation, continuous learning, and collaborative problem-solving. This collaborative ethos contributes to performance improvement and fosters a supportive workplace culture. These findings are strongly supported by existing literature. Specifically, they align with Yang et al. (2021) regarding teachers' strong support for collective learning and are consistent with Van Schaik et al. (2020), who noted that educators implement collective learning to a very high extent. Furthermore, this result parallels the findings of Loughland and Nguyen (2020), which highlight the critical role of collaborative peer groups among teachers who demonstrate a high commitment to collective application.

Shared Personal Practice. The category achieved a mean score of 4.20, which is qualitatively described as very high. This result indicates that tertiary instructors actively acquire new insights into teaching methods, classroom management, and assessment strategies. It also suggests that when students participate in learning assessments and teachers exchange and develop their practices, instruction becomes more effective, interactive, and student-centered. This finding aligns with Heilporn et al. (2021), who noted that tertiary educators secure behavioral and emotional engagement by fostering experience-sharing and the co-construction of knowledge with learners. Similarly, this outcome is consistent with Tarrayo et al. (2020), who emphasized that high levels of peer-sharing among teachers underscore the importance of fostering engagement through experiential knowledge. Additionally, this high rating parallels the research of Miranda and Girvacio (2023), who posited that consistent sharing of personal practices drives professional development and continuous improvement among higher education instructors and learners.

Supportive Conditions-Relationships. The findings indicate a category mean of 4.24, which is qualitatively described as very high. This result suggests that supportive conditions and relationships promote open communication between college students and tertiary teachers. As a result, students feel comfortable expressing unconventional ideas and challenging established norms without fear of ridicule or negative consequences. This finding aligns with McKay and Macomber (2023), who emphasized that tertiary teachers establish supportive relational conditions to a significant degree. Similarly, it reflects the study by Lobo (2023), which posited that tertiary educators frequently employ supportive relationships with their students. Furthermore, this high score is consistent with Dvorská et al. (2024), who noted that tertiary educators who actively cultivate supportive environments tend to employ effective teaching practices that enhance students' academic motivation.

Supportive Conditions – Structures. A very high mean rating of 4.25 indicates that supportive structures effectively promote student enthusiasm and motivation for continuous improvement. This result is consistent with Yang et al. (2022), who highlighted that tertiary teachers provide robust student support through impactful professional development. Similarly, this finding echoes Bagdžiūnienė et al. (2022), who established that teachers who strongly embrace supportive conditions contribute substantially to instructional quality and advocacy for fairness.

Level of Professional Development

Thematic Knowledge. The results indicate a category mean of 4.48, classified as very high, which reflects strong collaboration among colleagues across institutions. This extensive academic network implies that, although students from resource-rich families already receive substantial home support, institutional collaboration further helps to close achievement gaps for underserved students. This finding builds upon Latif’s (2021) assertion that tertiary educators possess high thematic knowledge, and suggests that such expertise is effectively disseminated through collaborative efforts. Furthermore, this observation is consistent with Çam and Koç (2021), who argued that high thematic knowledge enhances academic achievement, a benefit that is magnified when educators collaborate across institutions. These results also corroborate the work of Lawrie et al. (2019), demonstrating that collaboration among knowledgeable educators fosters interdisciplinary learning, which enables students to comprehend diverse concepts and attain higher levels of understanding.

Table 2
Level of Professional Development among Tertiary Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Thematic Knowledge	4.48	.46	Very High
Learning Environment	4.49	.48	Very High
Cooperation	4.30	.56	Very High
Educational Technology	4.40	.51	Very High
Research Base	4.26	.53	Very High
Educational Planning	4.42	.49	Very High
Evaluation	4.41	.47	Very High
Development of Human Resource	4.50	.45	Very High
Overall Mean	4.41	.41	Very High

Learning Environment. This area received a very high category mean rating of 4.49, indicating strong collaboration among tertiary lecturers, students, and peers. Such collaboration fosters mutual understanding, improves academic performance, and supports a positive learning culture in higher education. This result is consistent with Alcaide-Pulido et al. (2025), who found that tertiary educators significantly facilitate a positive learning climate. It also supports Renaldo et al. (2025), who emphasized the central role of educators in creating supportive environments that engage students, encourage teaching innovation,

and promote professional excellence. Additionally, this outcome corroborates Cheung et al. (2021), who demonstrated that teachers maintaining high-quality learning environments effectively promote student development and academic achievement.

Cooperation. The category achieved a mean score of 4.30, described as "very high." This suggests that while students from resource-rich backgrounds may benefit from additional support, such advantages could unintentionally widen achievement gaps for families with fewer resources or lower educational attainment. The high mean underscores the importance of strong collaboration among tertiary educators and students. Such collaboration promotes peer learning, enhances educational outcomes, and supports a positive learning culture. Therefore, tertiary educators are encouraged to implement contemporary learning strategies based on interactive pedagogies. Through collaboration, faculty can share best practices and adapt these strategies to meet diverse student needs. This finding is consistent with Liebech-Lien (2021) and Arinaitwe et al. (2022), who both reported a high degree of cooperation among tertiary instructors. It also supports Damkuvienė et al. (2023), who concluded that increased faculty cooperation facilitates the exchange of best practices, experimentation with new pedagogies, and the creation of engaging, student-centered materials.

Educational Technology. The results show a category mean of 4.40, described as "very high." This demonstrates that technology tools are effectively integrated into teaching to improve both student performance and instructional effectiveness. Specifically, tertiary educators can efficiently share media such as photos, videos, and stories, which enhances parent engagement in the learning process. The high level of technology use also enables educators to design more interactive and stimulating lessons, moving beyond traditional passive methods. This finding is consistent with Sum and Oancea (2022), who reported extensive use of educational technology by tertiary teachers. It also aligns with Hossain (2023) and Roe et al. (2022), the latter of whom argued that integrating educational technology allows educators to create more engaging, interactive, and personalized learning experiences.

Research Base. The category achieved a mean score of 4.26, described as "very high." This suggests that research engagement significantly enhances the institution's visibility within local and international academic communities. As a result, the institution's reputation is strengthened, increasing its appeal to

prospective students, staff, and partners. This also indicates that tertiary educators contribute beyond personal career advancement, directly impacting the institution's academic, social, and economic influence. This finding is consistent with Lyu and Thurston (2024), who demonstrated that involving tertiary teachers in research-based systems significantly supports their learning processes. It also supports Comon and Corpuz (2024), who found that tertiary teachers exhibit critical thinking and inquiry-based learning, thereby improving analytical and writing skills within their institutions. Additionally, this aligns with Abella et al. (2024), who reported that tertiary teachers who extensively utilize research bases in educational settings effectively integrate knowledge-based innovations.

Educational Planning. The mean Educational Planning. The mean ratings for individual items ranged from 4.41 to 4.45, yielding an overall category mean of 4.42, which is described as "very high." This underscores the importance of establishing a strategic framework for developing, enhancing, and sustaining educational systems. Building a strong knowledge base provides students with essential cognitive tools for advanced critical thinking and problem-solving. This result is consistent with previous literature reporting high levels of educational planning among tertiary educators. Specifically, it corroborates Balanquit et al. (2022) and Booc (2024), who both observed a very high degree of educational planning among college instructors. It also supports Digo (2022), who found that comprehensive educational planning enables ongoing systemic improvements through curriculum development, teacher training, infrastructure upgrades, assessment systems, and digital professional learning communities. The category mean of 4.41 implies that parents feel immense pride and confidence in their child's capabilities and the quality of tertiary education. This high regard indicates that a robust focus on assessment motivates instructors to adopt innovative teaching practices that align curricular goals with student achievement measures. This outcome supports Sánchez and Moreira's (2021) finding that thoroughly evaluated tertiary teachers exhibit strong job performance. It also echoes Mardiana (2024), who noted that high-level evaluations of teacher knowledge enhance digital competence through a shared drive for collective improvement. Finally, this aligns with Nguyen (2024), who asserted that highly evaluated educators maintain well-organized working systems and strictly follow institutional policies.

Development of Human Resources. The analysis shows a category mean of 4.50, described as "very high." This indicates that employing diverse instructional methods and interdisciplinary collaboration promotes substantial

professional growth and increased teaching satisfaction. Integrating learning across courses and relating it to personal experiences also enhances content relevance, student comprehension, and long-term retention. This finding is consistent with Arinaitwe et al. (2024), who reported a very high level of human resource development in educational sectors. It also aligns with Harahap et al. (2020), who observed similarly high levels of institutional human resource development. Furthermore, this result supports Fadilla’s (2023) assertion that institutions with advanced human resource development prioritize individual learning differences and emphasize the importance of faculty understanding of student learning processes.

Level of Digital Competence

Professional Engagement. The category achieved a mean score of 4.42, which is qualitatively classified as "very high." This outcome indicates a proactive and collaborative approach to integrating technology in both instructional practices and professional development. These results are consistent with the findings of Lumeizi et al. (2021) and Manaig et al. (2024), who also reported high to very high levels of professional engagement with information and communication technology (ICT) among educators, particularly through participation in webinars and online learning communities dedicated to educational innovation. Additionally, the present data support the conclusions of Mugas and Tagadiad (2023), who found that tertiary instructors with exceptionally high professional involvement with ICT are more likely to adopt and implement innovative, technology-driven teaching methods in their classrooms.

Table 3
Level of Digital Competence among Tertiary Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Professional Engagement	4.42	.50	Very High
Digital Resources	4.41	.47	Very High
Assessment	4.39	.54	Very High
Empowering Learners	4.44	.49	Very High
Facilitating Learners Digital Competent	4.28	.57	Very High
Digital Environment	4.25	.61	Very High
Extrinsic Digital Engagement	4.31	.58	Very High
Overall Mean	4.36	.42	Very High

Digital Resources. Respondents' assessments produced a very high category mean of 4.41, indicating that educators assign considerable importance to modifying and developing instructional materials while adhering to copyright regulations. Both are recognized as essential competencies in digital learning environments. This result is consistent with Amhag et al. (2019), who demonstrated that tertiary instructors make extensive use of digital resources. Similarly, it reflects the findings of Messias and Loureiro (2024), who reported that higher education teachers rely heavily on digital resources, including online information. Additionally, these results support the study by Maziane et al. (2023), which found that tertiary instructors with strong digital resource integration are better prepared to incorporate multimedia into curricula and adapt to evolving educational technologies.

Assessments. The category mean of 4.39 is considered very high, reflecting strong agreement among educators that digital tools enhance student enjoyment and engagement while supporting learning through formative and summative evaluations. This outcome is consistent with previous literature indicating that tertiary educators extensively use digital assessment tools to create flexible and convenient learning environments (Edwards, 2020; Richmond et al., 2019; Wyatt-Smith et al., 2022).

Empowering Learners. Respondents rated this indicator with a very high category mean of 4.44. This suggests that offering alternative tools and diverse pathways facilitates self-paced learning tailored to individual student needs and preferences. The intentional integration of tools for various student profiles demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity, ensuring comprehensive support for learners with special needs. These findings are consistent with the literature showing that tertiary instructors strongly encourage the use of digital tools and platforms (Alshumaimeri, 2019; Kromthamma & Supakicco, 2023), which foster student collaboration and contribute to a dynamic learning environment (Qadhi & Abu-Shawicreate4).

Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence. The category received a very high mean score of 4.28 from respondents, indicating that developing students' digital competency is highly valued, though slightly less than assessment and learner empowerment. This reflects a growing recognition of the importance of digital literacy in contemporary education and highlights an area for further institutional development. These findings are consistent with literature demonstrating that tertiary educators actively foster students' digital

competencies (Cisneros-Barahona et al., 2022; Santos et al., 2022) and play a significant role in motivating students to achieve digital proficiency (Karimi & Khawaja, 2025).

Digital Environment. The category mean of 4.25 is considered very high, underscoring the importance of a supportive digital environment in enhancing instructional quality and learning outcomes. This result also suggests a need for ongoing improvement, particularly in delivering seamless digital experiences and implementing strategic initiatives to advance faculty technological proficiency. These findings are consistent with Barrot and Acomular (2018), who noted that tertiary educators work in highly digitized environments. Similarly, the results align with Nikou and Aavakare (2021), who observed extensive technology use among higher education instructors. This study also supports Barrot's (2023) conclusion that educators who utilize advanced digital classrooms integrate technology more effectively into their teaching.

Intrinsic Digital Engagement. Respondents rated this category with a very high mean of 4.31, highlighting the significant role of digital engagement in fostering a collaborative and supportive online learning environment. This result also reflects a strong institutional focus on inclusive strategies for deploying and optimizing digital technology. These findings are consistent with recent literature documenting widespread digital engagement among tertiary educators (Sang et al., 2022; Yan et al., 2024). Additionally, the results support Berkovich and Hassan (2024), who found that educators with high digital engagement employ a broader range of digital tools and resources in the classroom.

Significance of the Relationship between Professional Learning Community, Professional Development, and Digital Competence

The presence of a professional learning community demonstrates a significant, moderate positive correlation with the digital competence of tertiary educators ($r = .45$, $p < .05$), whereas professional development shows a significant, strong positive correlation ($r = .69$, $p < .05$). These results suggest that strengthening collaborative environments and professional training substantially enhances educators' digital skills. Facilitating peer collaboration and providing instructional support enables institutions to develop a digitally proficient faculty. This finding is consistent with Amka (2020), who linked

professional learning communities and professional development to digital competence. It also aligns with Zimmer et al. (2022), who identified digital competence as essential for effective higher education delivery. Furthermore, these results reflect Liu et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of institutional structures as extrinsic enablers of technology integration. As highlighted by Gouseti et al. (2024) and Krabonja et al. (2024), integrating a robust learning culture with high-quality professional development produces a synergistic effect that enhances teaching quality and student outcomes.

Table 4
Significance of the Relationship between Professional Learning Community, Professional Development, and Digital Competence

Variables	r	p-value	Remarks
Professional Learning Community and Digital Competence	.45	.00	Significant
Professional Development and Digital Competence	.69	.00	Significant

Significance of the Influence of Professional Learning Community, and Professional Development on Digital Competence

Table 5 displays the results of the multiple regression analysis. The professional learning community (PLC) demonstrated a positive but non-significant effect ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = .18$), suggesting that PLC is not a significant predictor of tertiary teachers' digital competence. Specifically, a one-unit increase in PLC engagement is associated with a minimal increase of 0.09 units in digital competence. In contrast, professional development (PD) was identified as a significant positive predictor ($\beta = .64$, $p < .05$), indicating that each one-unit increase in professional development increases digital competence. These findings highlight the essential role of ongoing professional development in enhancing digital literacy and technological preparedness among higher education faculty.

Table 5
Significance of the Influence of Professional Learning Community, and Professional Development on Digital Competence

Singular Influence of the Predictors	Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	Remarks
Professional Learning Community	0.09	1.33	.18	Not Significant
Professional Development	0.64	9.10	.00	Significant
Combined Influence of the Predictors				
R	.70			
R ²	.49			
F	70.14			
p	.00			Significant

The two independent variables together exert a significant joint influence on digital competence ($p < .05$). The model accounts for 49 percent of the variance in tertiary teachers' digital competence ($R^2 = .49$), indicating that the remaining 51 percent is due to external factors not examined in this study. These results are consistent with Cabero-Almenara et al. (2021), who observed that the influence of institutional frameworks on faculty digital competence may be limited or context-dependent. In contrast, the non-significant effect of professional learning communities (PLCs) differs from Whalen (2020), who emphasized the importance of intentionally designed PLCs that prioritize digital competence. This discrepancy may be attributed to specific contextual factors. The substantial effect of professional development supports the conclusions of Gleason and Manca (2023), who found that targeted, well-implemented professional development programs significantly enhance teachers' proficiency with educational technologies.

Theoretically, these findings are situated within Lave and Wenger's Communities of Practice (CoP) and Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory. The limited influence of PLCs indicates a need to reconsider the role of instructional leadership within these communities. In contrast, the significant effect of professional development provides strong support for Transformational Learning Theory, consistent with the findings of Fernández-Batanero et al. (2022). Although professional development should remain a priority in capacity-building initiatives, the unexplained variance in the model suggests that future research and program development should investigate additional factors to more comprehensively enhance the digital competence of tertiary educators.

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