



A Narrative Inquiry of Language Teacher Identity Construction in Pre-Service Teachers' Practicum Experiences

Yuneth Pane¹

English Education Study Program, Pattimura University, Indonesia

Inggrit Tanasale^{2*}

English Education Postgraduate Study Program, Pattimura University, Indonesia

Corresponding e-mail: tanasaleinggrit@gmail.com

Stella Que³

English Education Study Program, Pattimura University, Indonesia

Halima Marasabessy⁴

English Education Study Program, Pattimura University, Indonesia

Abstract

This study examined how two pre-service teachers in Ambon, constructed their teacher identities during a month-long practicum in junior and senior high schools. Using in-depth interview and photovoice (via WhatsApp), the research explored pre-service teachers' identity development before and after the teaching practicum. Key findings revealed the practicum's significant role in shaping teacher identity, highlighting themes such as patience, classroom management, reflective practice, professional responsibility, and the challenges of teaching. The study also emphasized the importance of prior teaching experience and supportive school environment for a successful practicum. It is recommended that English department needs to build for the success of students' teaching practicum.

Keywords: *Identity development, Photovoice, Pre-service teachers, Professional development, Teaching practicum*

DOI: 10.30598/matail.v5i2.19654

INTRODUCTION

The concept of teacher identity has garnered significant scholarly attention for decades (Barkhuizen, 2017; Varghese et al., 2005; Yazan & Lindahl, 2020). Initially focused on in-service teachers, research has expanded to explore how pre-service teachers construct their professional identities—encompassing their self-perceptions, relational dynamics, influencing factors, and aspirational growth (Richards, 2023). Central to this development is the *teaching practicum*, a cornerstone of teacher education, a site of teachers training, that bridges theoretical knowledge from coursework with classroom teaching practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Masry & Saad, 2018, Richards, 2023). Trent (2013) conceptualizes the practicum as a crucible for identity formation, where pre-service teachers cultivate their evolving sense of self as educators. This identity, foundational to teaching professionalism (Sachs, 2005), emerges through interactions with mentors, peers, and students, shaping their dedication and pedagogical approaches. As Gebhard (2009) underscores, the practicum functions as a developmental process of "being and becoming," fostering reflective capacity to interrogate the beliefs and experiences underpinning teaching practices.

Although recent studies have begun exploring teacher identity and practicum experiences among pre-service teachers in Indonesia (Afrianto, 2014; Apriliani, 2020; Ardi et al., 2023; Dewi & Fajri, 2023; Kusumaningtyas et al., 2023; Mulyani et al., 2022), a critical gap remains. Research has predominantly focused on Java Island, neglecting the diverse educational contexts of Eastern Indonesia. As Ardi et al. (2023) suggested for the importance on the exploration of pre-service teacher identity development in different school contexts. This study takes step to redress this imbalance by investigating how pre-service teachers in Ambon, the capital city of Maluku province in the Eastern Indonesia, within this specific context, construct their teacher identities before and after a month-long practicum as one of the courses offered in the curriculum of English Education department in one of public universities in Maluku province. Through an exploration of their perceptions, challenges, and lived experiences, this research aims to explore the factors that shape teacher identity development of pre-service teachers in this under-researched setting by forming the research question: How do pre-service teachers construct their teacher identity before and after teaching practicum?

LITERATURE REVIEW

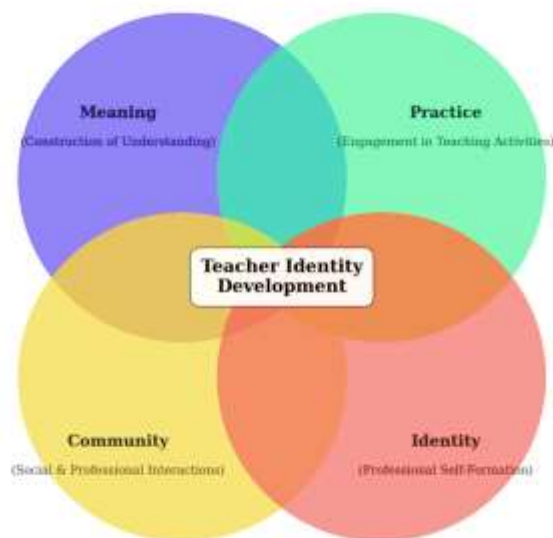
Teacher identity, as Olsen (2008) defines, is a complex interplay between individual subjectivity and contextual influences, shaping how teachers perceive themselves within their professional roles. Teacher identity construction informs individual's effective teaching, influencing pedagogical approaches, professional development, and commitment (Korthagen, 2004). One of the key factors for teacher identity construction is social interactions within cultural contexts, including educational settings and interpersonal exchanges (Burke & Stets, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

In the Indonesian context, this construction is further shaped by unique cultural, societal, and pedagogical elements, emphasizing ethical principles and the integration of indigenous knowledge. The relationship between teacher identity and pedagogical practices is inextricably connected (Reeves, 2018). emphasize psychological dimensions such as appreciation, connectedness, competence, commitment, and career vision in shaping teaching practices. Similarly, Kavrayici (2020) underscores the role of personal characteristics—including passion, communication skills, and patience—in teacher identity development. Together, these studies demonstrate that both internal (psychological and personal) and external (social and cultural) factors play a crucial role in shaping how teachers construct their professional identities.

Pre-service teachers often encounter pivotal moments during their training, particularly in teaching practicums, which help shape their perspectives as future educators. These experiences allow them to navigate dual roles—both as learners and as emerging teachers (Weise & Sasso, 2024). Brock and Grady (1998) emphasize that the teaching practicum serves as a site for professional identity formation, where pre-service teachers engage in authentic classroom experiences in teaching practices. Yuan and Lee (2016) argue student teachers intensively associate various emotions with their process of identity formation within their teaching discourse. Through these opportunities, they develop essential professional knowledge, skills, and competencies (Fecich, 2023; Richards, 2023).

To understand the process of identity construction of teacher identity in teaching practicum, this study underpinned Wenger's (1998) theory of communities of practice (CoP). The practicum experience can be considered as a process of participation in a community of practice, where pre-service teachers engage with experienced teachers, mentors, and students in the authentic context of the school. Masry and Saad (2018), Practicum, as one of CoP can create tensions to what pre-service teachers believe and what they encountered in the classroom, however, through collaborations, student teachers can develop their professional identity.

Wenger's Communities of Practice in the Teaching Practicum



This study applies Wenger's framework to examine how pre-service teachers develop their professional identity during the practicum. Through observation of cooperating teachers and interactions with students, pre-service teachers construct and negotiate their understanding of teaching—a process central to meaning-making. Norton (2000) argues that this process of self-understanding, including the development of values, norms, and beliefs, unfolds across time and contexts. During the practicum, pre-service teachers engage in core teaching practices such as lesson planning, instruction delivery, classroom management, and assessment. As Richards (2023) notes, while their initial knowledge derives from teacher preparation programs, repeated application during the practicum further hones their skills and solidifies their professional competencies. A critical dimension of this development occurs within the community of the school, where pre-service teachers collaborate with mentors, peers, students, and staff, gaining new knowledge and experiences. However, as Ardi et al. (2023) emphasize, these interactions—and the collaborations they foster—are mediated by power dynamics that shape pre-service teachers' positioning. Within this community, pre-service teachers gradually negotiate their professional identity, reconciling personal beliefs with both pre-practicum expectations and their evolving teaching practices. Thus, the practicum—through meaning-making, practical engagement, community participation, and identity negotiation—not only enhances teaching skills but fundamentally transforms their sense of becoming a teacher.

The body of scholarly work on language teacher identity focusing on pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum in Indonesia remains relatively limited (Afrianto, 2014; Apriliani, 2020; Ardi et al., 2023; Dewi & Fajri, 2023; Kusumaningtyas et al., 2023; Mulyani et al., 2022). Afrianto (2014) took the initial step by investigating language teacher identity among 52 pre-service teachers during their practicum in Riau. Data were collected through interviews and focused group discussions, revealing that, alongside personal and educational influences, *dakwah* served as a motivation for the participants to teach, as they perceived teaching as a holy profession. Another study by Apriliani (2020), an undergraduate student, employed narrative inquiry with three student teachers. Her findings indicated that while the student teachers struggled with classroom challenges, they received strong mentor support in exploring classroom management strategies. Similarly, Ardi et al. (2023) conducted a narrative inquiry with two female pre-service teachers over a two-month teaching practicum.

The study demonstrated that the participants constructed their professional identities through identification, self-internalization, and reflection on their socialization experiences within school communities. Kusumaningtyas et al. (2023) adopted a quantitative approach, studying 60 pre-service teachers across two internship phases. Their findings highlighted the complexity of in-class experiences, showing how social support and personal values contribute to teacher identity construction.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Drawing on the approach of narrative inquiry, this present study aims to explore the experiences of two pre-service teachers and their construction of teacher identity during their teaching practicum. Narrative inquiry, as defined by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) and Moen (2006), focuses on understanding human experiences through the stories individuals tell, revealing the meanings and values embedded within those narratives. This approach aligns with Tanasale's (2021) work, which demonstrates how narrative inquiry can uncover the complexities of professional identity development within educational contexts. By focusing on individual stories, this study aims to gain in-depth insights into the pre-service teachers' feelings, perceptions, and experiences related to their developing teacher identity during their practicum.

Participants

At the outset, Author 1 distributed the invitation in Whatsapp group in Cohort 2020 students who did teaching practicum. Two pre-service female English teachers, Mawar (20 years old) and Jelita (21 years old), participated as volunteers for the study and gave their oral consent. Both enrolled in the four-year English Education program under the Faculty of Teachers Training and Educational Sciences in Pattimura university. Teaching practicum is a form of course offered for pre-service teachers in their 6th semester to teach in junior and senior high school students. Neither had prior teaching experience, as the practicum marked their first time teaching in a formal classroom setting. Mawar was placed in a junior high school, while Jelita taught at a senior high school. Author 1, who was part of the same cohort, was acquainted with both participants. This shared background helped maintain an "equal partnership" with a "low-hierarchical" dynamic (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2008, p.281) during data collection, as Author 1 had also undergone the teaching practicum experience.

3.3 Instruments

This study employed semi-structured interviews and PhotoVoice as data collection instruments administered by author 1. The semi-structured interviews served as the central instrument for exploring pre-service teachers' identity construction (Tegan, 2022) through their stories during their practicum at junior and senior high schools. The ten guiding questions were adapted from Hahl and Mikulec's (2018) framework on student teacher identity aligning with Wenger's Community of Practice, focusing on four key dimensions: (1) teaching reflections, (2) social interactions, (3) institutional influences, and (4) participants' evolving perceptions of themselves as teachers. While the prompt questions provided, participants were encouraged to openly reflect on their practicum experiences. In this term, the participants could use Bahasa Indonesia or English, but preferred to use English to answer the questions.

To complement the interview data, the study incorporated PhotoVoice (O'Malley & Munsell, 2020), a participatory visual method to amplify underrepresented voices through photos. The two pre-service teachers captured images reflecting critical aspects of their practicum, such as classroom instruction and student engagement. These photographs—shared

via digital platforms (WhatsApp or Google Drive)—were accompanied by written captions explaining their significance. By triangulating visual and narrative data, the study achieved a nuanced, multi-dimensional understanding of teacher identity formation. Data collection spanned two months, coinciding with the participants' teaching practicum.

Data Analysis

After conducting the interviews, Author 1 manually transcribed the data and shared the transcripts with participants via WhatsApp for verification. The research team (Authors 1, 2, and 3) then engaged in collaborative discussions to prepare for data analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. This method was selected for its flexibility in identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data while allowing for rich descriptive insights. The analytical process began with Author 1 immersing herself in the data through repeated readings and comparative analysis of Mawar's and Jelita's responses. Initial coding organized data extracts into categories aligned with Wenger's CoP framework dimensions, which were subsequently synthesized into broader thematic categories representing participants' development of their teacher identity during their practicum. To ensure analytical rigor, Author 1 conducted multiple reviews of the dataset to verify interpretations and identify any overlooked information. The final analysis was presented through both tabular and narrative formats, with Authors 2 and 3 providing critical feedback that led to further refinements of the findings. This iterative process strengthened the study's credibility by incorporating multiple perspectives in the data interpretation.

FINDINGS

The story of Mawar: From Reluctance to Awakening

Mawar, a pre-service teacher who did her teaching practicum in junior high school, has experienced challenges on her preconceptions and shaped her understanding on teaching roles and also her career aspirations.

Being anxious but learning to "feel the vibes"

At the outset, Mawar entered her teaching practicum with deep skepticism. As the daughter of a teacher, she had witnessed the profession's challenges firsthand and initially resisted following the same path. *".....my umi was an educator...she was a teacher."* Her pre-practicum fears centered on losing patience with students

what I imagined was that later I would meet teenagers who were just growing up or teenagers who had just grown up and this would definitely make me impatient and I would get angry quickly or I might have conflicts (Mawar, 5 April 2024).

These anxieties reflected her narrow view of teaching as a discipline-centric role where teachers need to always control students. As a result it affects her initial expectation showing uncertainty.



Uncertainty marked her experience because she felt she was perceived more as a young student teacher than an in-service educator, especially when students referred to her as "kakak." This feeling improved, however, when students demonstrated good performance based on her guidance.

"...Regarding the uncertainty, for example, when I am a teacher, you go to the class, your student is excited, well, many students are excited, so that's why I am a teacher..." (Mawar, 5 April 2024).

Her capability as a teacher was validated by the students' excitement in her class and their understanding and responsiveness to instructions, which contributed to this positive feeling.

Learning to "be more patient" in the classroom

Mawar's reflection highlights their personal growth as a teacher, particularly in terms of patience and understanding towards students with challenging behaviors. They acknowledge that some students may exhibit disruptive behaviors such as talking excessively or not following instructions, but they have developed greater patience in managing these situations. Mawar recognizes that their role as a teacher extends beyond classroom management and encompasses nurturing and guiding students, demonstrating a shift in perspective towards a more holistic approach to teaching.

I increasingly realize that the role of the teacher is very important, even though many of the students are not as expected, such as being naughty or talking a lot in class and not listening to the teacher's instructions, but I feel that I am more patient, more patient as a teacher. understand that the role of a teacher is to protect and guide students. And I understand that I am the only person in the class who is responsible for controlling the class situation, so if the class condition is uncomfortable or the class is not controlled, it means I understand that it is all my mistake, not the student's fault (Mawar, 5 April 2024).

Mawar realized that she could manage some naughty or talkative students that makes classroom dynamics however she reframed herself for not blaming the students and took accountability for classroom management, showing a stark contrast to her earlier blame-shifting mindset. Mawar's willingness to take accountability over her classroom showing her adaptability and capacity to be patient and responsible.

In keep doing sustainable improvement in her teaching, Mawar maintained a daily journal to critique her teaching. This practice helped her recognize growth: *"I reflect on mistakes... then improve."* One memorable lesson—facilitating a student-led discussion where peers critiqued each other's presentations—became a touchstone for her capability. *"The students followed my directions... I felt happy, like a real teacher." I saw students excited to learn from me... I felt I could control the class."* Her genuine expressions after finding out that the students enjoy her teaching which motivates her to continually doing it. Mawar also try to memorize each student by name and their needs as she can support them in her teaching.

Navigating skeptical eye to trustworthy intreractions

Mawar believed that it is important to build relationships with colleagues, teachers and our mentors or lecturers. However, her journey was not easy. In the beginning she got initial skepticism from mentors and school adminstrators.

"... It was the same with teachers, and maybe mentors. At first, they were cynical or rejected us. But because they saw we followed the rules and instructions, over time they started including us in school activities" (Mawar, 5 April 2024).

At the same time, School administrators treated pre-service teachers as inferior, enforcing arbitrary rules (*"detained after school despite fulfilling duties"*).

Yet, Mawar found different feeling when she sat with her supervisor teachers (rather than students) and introducing herself to the school community, she felt different from what she thought.

"I felt that moment. while I was going down to practice introducing the school environment. And there I really felt the vibes of the school itself, we had the vibes of a student and the vibes of a teacher were different when I came to PLP [teaching practicum], those vibes. What I feel is that as a teacher, I usually sit with other teachers and it turns out that the feeling we get when we are students is different when we become teachers" (Mawar, 5 April 2024).

Yet, by adhering to school norms, she gradually earned inclusion in projects like the *Pancasila e-learning* initiative, proving her competence. Over time, this dedication earned them respect and led to greater involvement in school activities, signifying a successful integration into the school community.

Being passionate in teaching but pragmatics

Mawar found her calling to teach she starts the class. Her experiences that resonated with Mawar's natural strengths and interests, leading to a strong sense of belonging in the teaching profession and the students.

"... Whether I have become a good teacher or not, whether the children understand the material or not... and afterwards, if there are indeed some obstacles, such as the children not understanding, the very next day I will evaluate myself and make

improvements to do my best again in the classroom. So, in my opinion, that impacts identity” (Mawar, 5 April 2024).

Mawar demonstrates a strong sense of ownership for their students' learning. She believes their effectiveness as a teacher is directly tied to student understanding. This commitment extends beyond just delivering material. Mawar actively reflects on her teaching, seeking improvement to better serve their students. This dedication to continuous learning shapes their identity as pre-teacher, where success is measured by the positive impact they have on their students.

Ultimately, Mawar's decision-making process for her future aspiration is pragmatic.

"If you look at my practical experience, Yes, I could have become a teacher, and actually if I followed my conscience I would have wanted to be a teacher,"

She admitted However, external factors weigh heavily: *"As we know in Indonesia, a teacher's salary is very small. with lots of work demands."* Comparing the workload and compensation, she concluded, *"...it is better to be both lecturers."* Yet, she leaves the door open, stating, *"...if one day teachers are given a salary that is worth it or worth it, I want to be a teacher."* Mawar's journey reveals a pre-service teacher who discovered her capability and affirmed her identity as a teacher, while simultaneously realize the fact of the profession's realities and her own preferences for the future.

The story of Jelita: Finding Joy Amidst Great Responsibility

Jelita, a pre-service teacher embarking on her practicum in a senior high school, found herself navigating the complex path filled with moments of inspiration, challenge, and reflection, as she stepped into the classroom.

The spark of teaching: The calling from the Classroom

For Jelita, the initial confirmation of her calling came not from textbooks or lectures, but from the students themselves. She vividly recalls the feeling that washed over her as she began her lessons. *"So, I feel like my teacher identity I found [it] when I start the class,"* she shared, attributing this spark to seeing the students' "enthusiastic and excited" faces. This initial connection was powerful. She realized students saw her not just as an instructor, but perhaps as something more: *"...in reality they saw me as role models In Front of the class."*

"...I also have the values of what it means to be a teacher, which forms my background, and my personality at home is similar because my mother is a teacher,..... but a big big responsibility that cannot be underestimated but one side of being a fun teacher, it is related to as you said that there are students who are interested and you believe that your background influence the process during practicum " (Jelita, 16 April 2024).

Influenced by her mother, who is also a teacher, Jelita aimed to be a "fun teacher," understanding that engagement was key.

She incorporated this into her practice, often starting lessons with activities to connect with the students. *"I start the class with games and build on the students,"* she explained. One particularly memorable experience reinforced this approach: after playing a game related to the material, she gave out small gifts.

"I brought gifts and they were very interested when the teacher brought and gave something, so it was very impressive," (Jelita, 16 April 2024).

She recounted, highlighting how tangible appreciation and fun could significantly impact the classroom atmosphere.

Embracing Responsibility and Enthusiasm

Despite the rewarding moments, Jelita quickly understood that teaching was far more than just a profession; it was a profound "responsibility." This realization brought its own set of challenges. While initial enthusiasm was high, maintaining consistent engagement and ensuring comprehension proved difficult. She observed that "some could understand the material, but some didn't seem to be paying attention." This discrepancy was a significant hurdle. The core challenge, she felt, was "to make sure that the children in the class understand." This sometimes led to moments of uncertainty about her path.

Reflecting on her practicum, Jelita holds a nuanced view of her future in teaching. When asked if she definitively wanted to be a teacher, her answer was honest:

"yes but not really like 70% I want but 30% I don't want."... "I see that a teacher has a big responsibility in educating students to make students understand what the teacher or I say 30% because of that big responsibility the teacher has challenges, the challenge is to make sure that the children in the class understand" (Jelita, 16 April 2024).

The 70% stemmed from recognizing the vital role teachers play and the satisfaction derived from it. The hesitation, the 30%, came directly from the weight of the role: "because of that big responsibility the teacher has challenges." Her background in education and observing her mother had prepared her for the idea that being a teacher involves a *"big big responsibility that cannot be underestimated,"* even while striving to be engaging and fun. Ultimately, the experience helped her to understand of the dual nature of teaching – the joy and the burden.

"To be a teacher I'm happy when a student understands that material I'm happy with their enthusiasm... but, on the other hand being a teacher is a big responsibility," she concluded.

Seeking Guidance

Jelita observed an initial burst of excitement and enthusiasm from their students during the first class. However, as the lesson progressed, some students lost focus and may not have fully understood the material. This prompted them to seek feedback from their mentor, who provided positive reinforcement and offered guidance on effectively engaging students in a senior high school setting.

Jelita Her interactions with her mentor teacher (guru pamong) were crucial.

"I received good feedback and got suggestions for mentor teachers on how to deal with students at the senior high school," (Jelita, 16 April 2024).

Jelita also felt the peer support. Her fellow pre-service teachers who recognized her ability to manage the classroom. *"They asked me for tips and tricks on how I managed the class, regarding my method and demeanor, and I said that you need to bring the fun part,"* she noted. Over time, her persistence and adaptive methods yielded results. She initially worried

about her ability to manage the class, but *"after the 1st and 2nd initial meetings, I saw that there was a change in the students' willingness to listen and pay attention."*

Being Teacher In The Future

Jelita has perceived teaching practicum as a venue to learn to be teacher besides what she has received in her program.

"My background is in the education and teacher training faculty so that's I have the value is also what to be a teacher which is my background ...also For me teaching practicum as like a learning process activity where I as a service teacher shapes me as a teacher in the future, about experience and my experience is a teacher as we know it" (Jelita, 16 April 2024).

This impacts her to perceive teaching responsibly, as she said *"for me teacher is just not a profession but responsibility."* This suggests that Jelita is driven by a strong sense of duty towards their students and their education, going beyond the typical expectations of a job.

This responsibility came with challenges. . She noted *"... Teachers have challenges, the challenge is to ensure that all the students in a class understand..."*

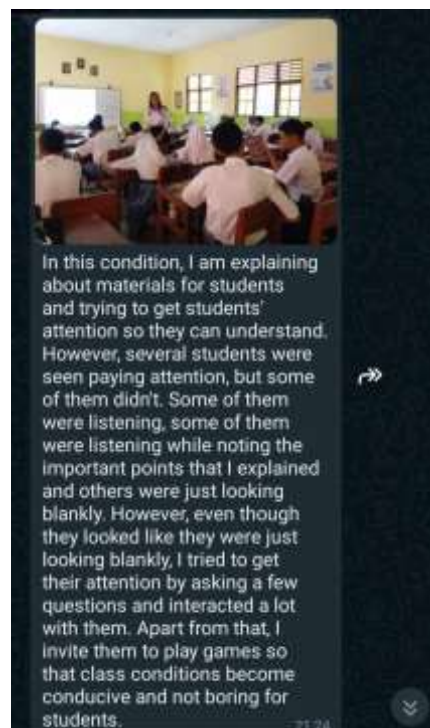


Figure 3. Jelita Photovoice 16 April 2024

Despite explaining the material, a Jelita struggles to capture all students' attention, with some actively participating while others seem disengaged. To address this, she tried interactive methods and incorporating games to make the learning environment more engaging and effective.

Despite acknowledging the significant challenges, the positive experiences and the inherent value of the work left a lasting impact. *"I think the challenging is big but I'm more*

grateful to be a teacher make me and great teacher." Jelita's journey shows a developing teacher grappling with the realities of the profession, finding joy in connection, learning from challenges, and cautiously but gratefully embracing the significant responsibility that lies ahead.

DISCUSSION

This narrative inquiry explored the construction of teacher identity among two female pre-service English teachers, Mawar and Jelita, during their month-long practicum in Ambon, Eastern Indonesia. The findings reveal that the teaching practicum served as a transformative period, influentially shaping the participants' perceptions of themselves as student into teacher, moving them from initial anxieties and preconceptions towards a more embodied, albeit complex, professional identity. This teacher identity construction is influenced by their classroom realities and the way they dealt with it, navigating social interactions within the school community, engaging in reflective practice, and reconciling intriguing personal aspirations due to reality and expectations.

The study corroborates existing literature emphasizing the practicum's role as a critical site for identity formation among pre-service teachers (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Masry & Saad, 2018; Richards, 2023; Trent, 2013). Mawar's initial reluctance, impacted by witnessing her mother's challenges, and Jelita's inherited sense of responsibility underscore how pre-existing beliefs and familial influences shape initial orientations, aligning with research on the personal dimensions of identity (Kavrayici, 2020; Olsen, 2008). However, their direct teaching practice in the classroom, engaging with the students and validation received from students' achievement through their teaching, became pivotal for both participants in affirming their teacher identities. This finding highlights the importance of relational dynamics and emotional connections in this process (Yuan & Lee, 2016). Mawar's shift from fearing impatience to embracing patience and taking accountability for classroom management, and Jelita's focus on creating a "fun" yet responsible learning environment, illustrate the development highlighted by Gebhard (2009) as a process of "being and becoming." Furthermore, the importance of reflection, evidenced by Mawar's journaling and both participants' contemplation on successes and challenges, supports findings by Ardi et al. (2023) on reflection's role in identity construction.

The findings strongly resonate with Wenger's (1998) theory of Communities of Practice (CoP). The practicum placed Mawar and Jelita within the school CoP, where they moved from peripheral participation towards fuller engagement. Their interactions with students, teacher mentors, peers, and school administrators were central to negotiating their identities. Students' enthusiasm during participants' teaching has motivated them to be more confident. This finding has resonated in Hapsari and Ena (2019)'s, emphasizing the role of student engagement in boosting teacher confidence. Also, Mawar's experience of initial skepticism from staff, followed by gradual acceptance through adherence to norms and demonstrating competence (e.g., the Pancasila project), exemplifies the negotiation of membership and the influence of power dynamics within the community, as noted by Ardi et al. (2023). Jelita's seeking and receiving feedback from her mentor teacher highlights the crucial role of experienced teachers guiding novices (Masry & Saad, 2018). Engaging in the core *practices* of teaching—lesson planning, delivery, managing student behaviour, assessment—allowed them to make *meaning* of their theoretical knowledge and solidify competencies (Richards, 2023). The tension described by both participants between the joy of teaching and the "big responsibility," alongside Mawar's pragmatic career considerations, reflects the ongoing *identity negotiation* inherent in becoming a member of the professional community (Norton, 2000).

This study contributes specifically by focusing on the under-researched context of Ambon, Eastern Indonesia, responding to the call by Ardi et al. (2023) to explore diverse school contexts. While themes like patience, classroom management, and reflection are common in teacher identity literature (e.g., Kavrayici, 2020; Richards, 2023), the nuanced experiences—such as Mawar's encounter with initial institutional skepticism potentially linked to perceptions of student teachers, and the explicit weighing of passion against pragmatic concerns like low teacher salaries in Indonesia—provide valuable contextual insights. Unlike Afrianto's (2014) findings in Riau where *dakwah* was a motivator, such religious framing did not emerge here, suggesting regional variations in identity influences. The use of narrative inquiry allowed for a deep dive into these individual lived experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Tanasale, 2021), while PhotoVoice offered a complementary visual layer to their stories (O'Malley & Munsell, 2020), capturing moments like Jelita's classroom interaction (Figure 3). The researcher's peer status potentially fostered a more open sharing environment (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2008).

Despite these insights, the study has limitations. The small sample size (two female participants) restricts the generalizability of the findings. A one-month practicum offers only a snapshot of a longer developmental process. Furthermore, relying on self-reported data through interviews and photo captions may be subject to participant recall and interpretation biases. The shared cohort relationship between Author 1 and the participants, while potentially aiding rapport, could also introduce bias. Future research could benefit from larger, more diverse samples (including male pre-service teachers), longitudinal designs tracking identity development over time, comparative studies across different regions and school types within Eastern Indonesia, and further exploration of the interplay between visual (PhotoVoice) and narrative data.

The findings hold significant practical implications for teacher education programs, particularly the English Department at Pattimura University. Firstly, there is a need to explicitly prepare pre-service teachers not only with pedagogical knowledge but also for the emotional and relational aspects of identity construction *before* the practicum. This includes addressing potential challenges like classroom management difficulties, navigating school hierarchies, and managing the emotional weight of responsibility. Secondly, strengthening the partnership between the university and placement schools is crucial to ensure supportive environments and effective mentorship, mitigating experiences like Mawar's initial reception. Training for mentor teachers on guiding identity development could be beneficial. Thirdly, incorporating structured reflective practices throughout the teacher education program and practicum is vital. Finally, openly discussing the pragmatic realities of the teaching profession in Indonesia, including workload and compensation, is necessary to help pre-service teachers align their passion with sustainable career planning. As hinted in the abstract, the English department needs to build stronger support systems, clearer communication channels with schools, and curriculum components focused on reflective practice and identity negotiation to enhance the success of students' teaching practicum experiences.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, this study illuminates the dynamic and often challenging process through which pre-service teachers in Ambon begin to construct their professional identities during their initial practicum. It underscores the practicum as a crucible where theoretical knowledge meets lived reality, forging identities through interaction, reflection, practice, and negotiation within a specific community context. Supporting this critical phase requires a concerted effort from teacher education institutions and placement schools to foster environments conducive to positive identity development.

Based on the study's scope, future research could significantly expand our understanding of pre-service teacher identity construction. Investigating a larger sample of participants from more diverse backgrounds and teaching contexts would provide a more comprehensive picture of this developmental process. Additionally, longitudinal studies that follow pre-service teachers beyond their initial practicum and into their early careers could offer valuable insights into how teacher identity evolves over time and is shaped by ongoing professional experiences. Further exploration could also delve deeper into the complex interplay between personal histories, individual beliefs, and external factors like school environment and mentorship quality, clarifying how these elements interact to shape a developing teacher's sense of self.

REFERENCES

- Afrianto, A. (2017). Pre-service teachers' integration into teachers' community during teaching practicum. *International Journal of Educational Best Practices*, 1(1), 3-18.
- Akkerman, S. F., & Meijer, P. C. (2011). A dialogical approach to conceptualizing teacher identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 308-319. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.013>
- Apriliani, Devi. (2020). A Narrative Inquiry Of Students Teachers Identity Construction Through Teaching Practicum: Voices From Secondary School Classroom In Indonesia. *Wiralodra English Journal (WEJ)*, 4 (2).
- Ardi, P., Mukti, T. W. P., Basthomi, Y., & Widiati, U. (2023). Delving into Indonesian EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Professional Identity Configuration in Teaching Practicum. *REFLECTIONS*, 30(2), 223-246.
- Arifatin, F. W. (2022) A Narrative Inquiry Study on Language Learning Through Pop-Up Book. *Ideas: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, dan Budaya*, 8 (3), 1021-1028. <https://jurnal.ideaspublishing.co.id/index.php/ideas/article/view/912>>.
- Blankenship, R., J. (2020). *Handbook for Research Online Discussion-Based Teaching Methods*. <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/which-window-is-open/254767>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Burke, P. J., & Stets, J. E. (2009). Identity theory. In Identity Theory. *Oxford University Press*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195388275.003.0012>
- Cline, J. M. (2020). Collaborative learning for students with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms: A qualitative narrative inquiry study. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. <https://resources.nu.edu/c.php?g=1007179&p=9632135#:~:text=Sampling%20and%20Sample%20Size&text=There%20is%20no%20rule%20for,is%20between%206%2D10%20participants>
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. Ms. (2000). Narrative inquiry: *Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Dewi, S. S., & Fajri, M. S. A. (2023). Investigating pre-service EFL teachers' initial motivations and identity formation: Evidence from an Indonesian university. *Sage Open*, 13(4), 21582440231209123.
- Genç, Z. S. (2016). More Practice for Pre-Service Teachers and More Theory for In-service Teachers of English Language. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232 (2016), 677 – 683.
- Gebhard, J. G. (2009). The practicum. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 250-258). Cambridge University Press.

- Gunawan J. (2015) Ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Belitung Nursing Journal*.1(1):10-11.
- Felice, K. T. (2017). *Going into the Field: Bringing The Experiences of A Teacher Education Field Placement to Life* (Doctoral dissertation, Northeastern University).
- Hahl, K., & Mikulec, E. (2018). Student Reflections on Teacher Identity Development in a Year-long Secondary Teacher Preparation Program. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(12). <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol43/iss12/4>
- Hapsari, B. S. & Ena. O. T. (2019). English Pre-Service Teachers' Identity During Teaching Practice : Narrative Inquiry. *International Journal of Indonesian Education and Teaching*, 3 (1), 11-20. <https://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/IJiet/article/view/1708>
- Hanifah, M., Damayanti, I. L., & Muslim, A. B. (2022). Indonesian English novice teachers' identity constructions and their teaching practices. *Indonesian Journal of Education*, 15(1), 38-49.
- Johnson et al. (2015). TEACHER IDENTITY. *Early Career Teachers*,103-121. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/300019065_Teacher_Identity
- Kadir, F. A., & Aziz, A. A. (2021). Teaching Practicum during Covid-19 Pandemic: A Review of the Challenges and Opportunities of Pre-service Teachers. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(4), 1175–1183. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i4/9646>
- Karnieli-Miller O, Strier R, Pessach L. Power Relations in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research*. 2008;19(2):279-289. doi:[10.1177/1049732308329306](https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732308329306)
- Kavrayici, Ceyhun. (2020). Evaluation of the Factors Affecting Teacher Identity Development of Pre-Service Teachers: A Mixed Method Study. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 89 ,93-110. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ejer/issue/57497/815852>
- Korkut, Perihan. (2017). Classroom Management in Pre-service Teachers' Teaching Practice Demo Lessons: A Comparison to Actual Lessons by In-service English Teachers. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*. 5. 1.10.11114/jets.v5i4.2164.
- Korthagen, F. A. J. (2004). In search of the essence of a good teacher: Towards a more holistic approach in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20(1), 77–97.
- Krashen, S. D, (2001). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*.
- Kusumaningtyas, B. W. D., Kuswandono, P., & Eda, O. T. (2023). The Development of Pre-service Teacher Resilience during Internship Programs in an Indonesian Private University. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching & Learning, Linguistics & Literature*, 11(2).
- Lankveld, V.,T. et all, (2017) Developing a teacher identity in the university context: a systematic review of the literature. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(2), 325-342, t: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305311179>
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press
- Lodico, M. D. & Voegtler, K. (2010). *Methods in Educational Research: From Theory to Practice*, 2nd Edition. 14 (3). <https://doi.org/10.33524/cjar.v14i3.103>
- El Masry, T., & Mohd Saad, M. (2018). On the Cultivation of Their Community of Practice: A Case Study of EFL Malaysian Pre-Service Teachers. *The Qualitative Report*,23(4), 952-977. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.2795>
- Memon, A., M. et all, (2020) Sample Size For Survey Research: Review And Recommendations. *Journal of Applied Structural Equation Modeling*. 4(2), i-xx. t: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343303677>
- Moen, T. (2006). Reflections on the narrative research approach. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(4), 56-69. doi:10.1177/160940690600500405

- Moleong, L.J. (2011). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Edisi Revisi*. PT. Remaja Rosdakarya. ISBN 979-514-0515-5
- Mufidah, Nida. (2019). The Development of Pre-Service Teachers' Teaching Performance in the Teaching Practice Program at English Department of State Islamic University of Antasari Banjarmasin. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 19(1), 97-113. https://journal.uinsi.ac.id/index.php/dinamika_ilmu/article/download/1469/pdf/
- Mulyani, M., Gunawan, M. H., Kusuma, I. I. I. (2022). Identifying Teacher Professional Identity in the Content of Pre-Service Teachers' Reflection on Teacher's Teaching Practicum. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 8(1), 23-32. <https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v8i1.5584>
- Nemtchinova, E. (2018). Teaching practicum in preparing NESTs and NNESTs. John Wiley & Sons, (1), 1-7.
- Norton, J. L. (1997). Locus of control and reflective thinking in preservice teachers. *Education*, 117(3).
- O'Malley, L. J. & Munsell, S. E. (2020). PhotoVoice: An Innovative Qualitative Method in Research and Classroom Teaching. *Educational Research: Theory and Practice*, 31(1), 26-32.
- Olsen, B. (2008). Introducing teacher identity and this volume. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 1-7. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23478977>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative social work*, 1(3), 261-283.
- Pramesti, Nadya. (2021) The Benefit Of Teaching Practice Subject On The English Student Teachers' Professional Identity At The University Of Jambi., 1-10. <https://repository.unja.ac.id/id/eprint/22615>
- Reeves, J. (2018) Teacher identity. In J. Lontas (Ed.), *TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell
- Richards, J. C. (2023). Teacher, learner and student-teacher identity in TESOL. *RELJ Journal*, 1(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688221991308>
- Ryan, T. G., Young, D. C., & Kraglundgauthier, W. L. (2017). Action Research within Pre-Service Teacher Education. *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching & Learning Journal*, 10(3), 1-18.
- Sachs, Judyth. (2005). Teacher Education And The Development Of Professional Identity: Learning To Be A Teacher 1. *Connecting Policy and Practice Challenges for Teaching and Learning in Schools and Universities*, 1(17), 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203012529>
- Sinom, P. A.P & Kuswandono, P. (2022). Indonesian English Teacher's Identity: Bridging the Gap between Teachers' Personal and Professional Identity. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 17 (1), 149-165. <https://journal.unnes.ac.id/nju/index.php/LC/article/view/38811>
- Tanasale, I, O (2021). Exploring Academic Identity Of Six Indonesian English Language Academics: Situating Positioning And Agency In Professional Space. Dissertation. Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- Tegan, G. (2022). Semi-structured interview: Definition, guide and examples. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/>
- Teng, F. (2017). Emotional Development and Construction of Teacher Identity: Narrative Interactions about the Pre-service Teachers' Practicum Experiences. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(11). <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol42/iss11/8>
- Trent, J. (2013). From learner to teacher: Practice, language, and identity in a teaching practicum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(4), 426-440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2013.838621>

- Weise, C., & Rojas Sasso, P. (2024). Neither student nor teacher? Possible selves in the development of faculty identity during the practicum. *Journal for the Study of Education and Development*, 47(4), 768-795.
- Yazan, B., & Lindahl, K. (2020). Language teacher learning and practice as identity work: An overview of the field and this volume. *Language teacher identity in TESOL*, 1-10.
- Yuan, R., & Lee, I. (2014). Pre-service teachers' changing beliefs in the teaching practicum: Three cases in an EFL context. *System*, 44, 1-12.