

Influential factors cultivating Indonesian EFL educators' professional identity construction

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Abstract. One of the essential underlying premises that need to be kept in mind to maintain Indonesian EFL educators' professionalism is the support of the robust establishment of professional identity. Previously-reviewed studies conducted in Indonesian EFL teaching-learning contexts strongly contended that a higher level of professional identity construction would enable language teachers to fully show their best educational endeavor to fulfil the educational demands. This current small-scale qualitative study was initiated with the support of a library analysis approach to generate more comprehensible and applicable research results. To attain this primary study objective, the researcher conducted an in-depth thematic analysis of 20 previously-conducted Indonesian EFL teachers' professional identity construction studies to yield more orderly research outcomes. Two significant factors are believed to cultivate Indonesian EFL educators' professional identity construction: (1) possible motivation to advance an entire educational quality and (2) rigorous external support emanating from educational stakeholders. To this end, it can be inferred that Indonesian EFL educators can fully possess a higher degree of professional identity in an occasion where internal motivation and mutual external support are embedded within their professional lives.

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INTRODUCTION

Principally speaking, becoming more high-quality EFL educators has always been one of the challenging issues in this modern second language learning enterprise. As a consensus, educationalists are frequently labeled as critical determinants of educational quality. Thus, it is crucially essential for educational institutions to elevate their educators' competencies. Kusumaningrum et al. (2019) theorize that fostering EFL educationalists' qualities has remained a taxing impediment educational institutions face as it will bring about specific outcomes towards the daily-based teaching-learning enterprises. In Indonesian EFL learning contexts, transforming Indonesian EFL educators' teaching quality is not an to equip EFL educationalists with a higher level of motivation, confidence, and resilience overnight mission, as teachers often confront various demands requested by their educational institutions and societies. This truth is justified by Berger and Lê Van (2019), articulating that to improve the whole educational qualities meaningfully, it is indispensable for educational institutions to dwell in their complex professional careers as professional teachers.

Regarding professionalism, it is worth keeping in mind that sustaining Indonesian EFL educationalists are closely correlated to the robust construction of professional identity. It is

believed that with the accompaniment of professional identity, educators can potentially infuse more robust volition, confidence, and commitment to consistently showcase their best educational efforts transfiguring their learners' lives. Mulyani et al. (2022) state that the current professional identity inculcated by educationalists can be influential or debilitating and contributable to the particular learning encounters they address with their learners.

Anchored on all the conceptions mentioned above, it is concurrently crucial for Indonesian EFL educators to gain a more profound understanding of their professional identity at the commencement of their teaching careers. This underlying principle needs to be thoroughly inculcated as newcomer teachers will begin to inquire about the nature, purposes, and reasons for becoming educators. Through this constant process, EFL teachers can obtain more obvious professional identity formation regarding who they are as they have sincerely embraced all the educational complexities they face. This contention is in agreement with the professional identity theory proposed by Rahman and Kurniawan (2022), mentioning the critical importance of constructing a more robust professional identity at the onset of teaching professions in which EFL educators can attain more detailed portrayals of themselves as professional teachers who are ready to face a vast range of severe educational impediments. Furthermore, professional identity construction can be interpreted as a complex and long-lengthy process since freshly-graduated Indonesian EFL educators are highly demanded to apply all of the theoretical and pedagogical knowledge they have obtained in their universities through their tangible teaching practices. Additionally, the challenges hindering these young educationalists' spirit will be more formidable when dealing with classroom learning, administration, and school policy complexities that may dissuade them from showcasing their authentic professionalism as qualified educators. All these hindrances mentioned above are mutually interlinked with Lomi and Mbato (2020) finding out that pre-service Indonesian EFL teachers' early teaching careers will be an arduous journey as they begin to question their genuine professional identity amidst heavy working loads assigned by their school institutions by which they can experience a higher level of stress, burnout, and exhaustion prompting them to take an early departure from their teaching career.

Irrespective of these severe hurdles, there is always a glimmering of hope for Indonesian EFL educators to give their best commitment, motivation, and teaching endeavor in the light of solid professional identity construction. The first probable action that can be done to increase our teachers' professional identity is through the significant elevation of their target language proficiency. When Indonesian EFL educationalists already possess advanced target language competencies, they will be more capable of delivering subject-related materials successfully for their learners. As a result of this teaching achievement, our teachers will become more professional and vibrant in designing meaningful learning activities where language learners can improve their intended target language competencies to the utmost level. All these above-explicated conceptions align with Richards (2021) averring that in support of robust professional identity construction, EFL educationalists have a higher degree of tendency to promote more positively-sound learning environments in which learners are strongly motivated to escalate their desired target language proficiency to more advanced development. The second valuable action that Indonesian EFL educators can carry out to establish a more robust professional identity is through continual self-reflection practices. This thoughtful activity can promote significant impacts for the advancement of EFL teachers' teaching qualities as they critically inquire themselves regarding the successful teaching methods working best in their classroom circumstances, hurdles that impede the meaningfulness of classroom learning activities, and prior

learning experiences when becoming learners. These good teaching values echoed with Tsai et al. (2020) forthrightly avowing that it is essential for professional EFL educationalists to conduct in-depth self-reflection activities after accomplishing particular teaching-learning activities wherein they can profoundly evaluate the meaningfulness and drawbacks of their pedagogical practices as well as contemplate on their previous experiences when they played roles as learners. An eventual beneficial action that Indonesian EFL educators can embody to preserve their robust professional identity is through a constant balanced between their personal and professional lives. As teachers also face a wide array of intricate daily lives as family members and social community members, it is critically pivotal for them to create a little gap between their personal and professional life dynamics to avoid professional identity disorientation in which educators mingle their life matters into their working places and vice versa. Diasti (2021) posits that globalized EFL educationalists can be perceived as skilled organizers and judicious figures when they are capable of juggling their personal along with professional identities by not integrating these two elements either in their daily life or working dynamics as teachers.

Before commencing the upcoming subsection, the researcher attempted to review five previous studies concerning professional identity formation. Specifically, all these five prior studies have addressed a shed of enlightenment regarding the critical importance of cultivating Indonesian EFL educators' professional identity. Reversely, the research results from these five studies have not yet touched upon the influential factors that can sustain Indonesian EFL educationalists' professional identity construction amid this complex second language learning enterprise. The first study was conducted by Sinom and Kuswando (2022), revealing that Indonesian EFL teachers' professional identity formation can be intensively corroborated when educational institutions provide cognitive, affective, mental, and professional support for them to ultimately discover satisfying reasons for continuing their careers as educators. Raharjo and Iswandari (2019) strongly encouraged teacher training and education faculties in Indonesia to expose EFL teacher candidates to intensive teaching practicum practices to increase their readiness while grappling with real-time teaching activities in future working places. Rosari (2019) asserted that it is a must for both formal and informal educational institutions to devise more relevant, contextual, and meaningful teacher training programs that are in harmony with their teachers' profiles, competencies, and needs to preserve their robust professional identity formation better. Weni (2021) unfolded that it is progressively essential for educational institutions, together with teacher training and education programs to raise EFL teacher candidates' awareness of the factors that can support or impede their conducive professional identity growth to make them become more strategic educators who are adept at adapting themselves while being bombarded with varied unpleasant working situations. In the previous study, Wijaya (2021) highly prompted Indonesian EFL teacher candidates to unearth their true calling as educators to inculcate a higher level of resilience, commitment, and motivation to address their best teaching endeavors for diverse learners although a wide range of formidable obstructions they are struggling with. This small-scale qualitative study attempted to fill the gap enacted by the previous studies in which the influential factors cultivating Indonesian EFL educators' professional identity have not yet been investigated. Therefore, the specifically-obtained research results derived from this current investigation can provide more supportive assistance for our EFL educators in this archipelago to start prioritizing the constant cultivation of their professional identity by which a significant number of rewarding second language

learning outcomes will await to be reaped by our learners. To this end, the researcher investigated the main factors that can cultivate Indonesian EFL educators' professional identity construction.

METHOD

The researcher initiated this current small-scale qualitative investigation with the support of a library study approach. It is believed that more apprehensible and trustworthy research results can potentially be obtained through this research methodology. Cardno (2018) believes that in the light of the library study approach, researchers are more likely to generate more up-to-date research findings currently suitable to their specifically-investigated fields. To actualize this main study objective, the researcher conducted an in-depth review of 20 previous studies delving specifically into the impactful factors that amplified Indonesian EFL educationalists' professional identity construction. All these 20 prior studies were held in Indonesian EFL teaching-learning contexts, and the year of these scientific journal articles ranged from 2020 to 2022. The researcher purposively selected these up-to-date research studies to generate more contextual, applicable, and feasible research results concord with today's EFL teaching-learning enterprises. The researcher had two reasons for conducting this qualitative library investigation. The first reason pertained to the scant Indonesian EFL educators' awareness of internalizing the robust construction of professional identity formation. As a result, they are frequently trapped by the daily teaching-learning routines they deal with, which in turn affects them to infuse emotional burnout, negative feelings, and working exhaustion. Therefore, it is hoped that the following research results obtained from this profound library investigation can have a more enlightening pathway for our EFL educationalists to start cultivating their professional identity construction, which can benefit the entire teaching-learning processes they are conducting. The second reason is the scant professional identity construction studies initiated in Indonesian EFL teaching-learning settings. Hence, a higher level of professional identity development is crucial for second language teachers to gradually realize the saliency of becoming high-quality, compassionate, and strongly-dedicated educators. All these matters can propel our educationalists to start garnering reasons and objectives to become highly-spirited and transformative educationalists responding to this ever-changing learning era. A thematic analysis approach yielded more relevant, contextual, and applicable research results. Simply stating, the focal point of this research methodology is to subcategorize the most-appeared research results forming in 20 prior professional identity construction studies into some specific themes to help Indonesian EFL educators, practitioners, and policy-makers fully understand the impactful factors promoted by the prolific cultivation of professional identity. After completing this data analysis stage, the researcher delineated the already-subdivided research themes argumentatively with the presence of previously-related professional identity theories and findings. Through this eventual step, educational stakeholders, educators, and policy-makers can potentially establish more solid collaborative networking in which Indonesian EFL teachers' professional identity construction can be transformed to a greater extent.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the profound thematic analysis initiated by the researcher, two factors can potentially amplify Indonesian EFL educators' professional identity construction: (1) possible motivation to advance an entire educational quality and (2) Rigorous external support emanated from educational stakeholders. More comprehensive argumentations can be observed in the following lines.

Table 1. Theme 2: Viable Motivation to Advance an Entire Educational Quality

Theme 1	Authors
Viable Motivation to Advance an Entire Educational Quality	Averina and Kuswandono (2022); Diasti (2021); Florida and Mbato (2020); Kamil (2022); Mahendra (2020); Prabandari (2020); Sinom and Kuswandono (2022); Widodo and Allamnakhrah (2020); Yumarnamto and Prijambodo (2020).

One of the major driving forces to preserve Indonesian EFL educators' professional identity construction is incorporating emotional encouragement to improve the whole educational quality. This laudable behavior needs to be fully possessed by our EFL teachers, even at the onset of their teaching careers, to enable them to become more highly-committed educationalists who are highly eager to educate the future generations' lives despite a wide variety of adverse working challenges such as excessive administrative workloads, extreme pressure from the educational institutions, and continual educational demanded by society. This characteristic mentioned above is positively linked with Diasti (2021), which highly prompts Indonesian EFL educationalists in this modern age to start putting their sincere heart, mind, and commitment to give the best educational services for diverse learners, irrespective of the constant working obstructions they are confronting. To better cultivate this lofty behavior, it is crucial importance for Indonesian EFL educators to transfigure into more transformative learning facilitators who are willing to adapt to the abrupt educational shifts flexibly, establish solid collaborative networking with other working colleagues, sincerely embrace their true identities as unique, and infuse life-long learning characters during their entire lifetime. Through all these positive trajectories, our EFL teachers will become more compassionate and professional educators deciding the best learning outcomes to be fully reaped by their learners. This argumentation lends support to the previous research result unearthed by Averina and Kuswandono (2022), mentioning four underlying principles of becoming more spirited EFL educators who inculcate a higher level of professional identity, namely adjusting themselves to fulfill the educational demands, maintaining positive relationships with all educational stakeholders, acknowledging their vulnerability, and willing to learn world-transforming conceptions to educate their learners better.

To fully release those coveted educational outcomes, it is worth advocating for Indonesian EFL educationalists to start prioritizing the intensive development of their professional identity at the beginning of their teaching vocation. By keeping this in mind, our EFL teachers can experience a higher degree of enjoyment in their prospective working circumstances where a vast range of positive appraisals is granted to their teaching performances, reinforcing their self-motivation to maintain or even improve these gratifying professional achievements to the fullest potential. Mahendra (2020) has likewise confessed that one of the critical determinants of internalizing more robust professional identity construction within Indonesian EFL educators is through their self-realization and self-actualization regarding the saliency of maintaining as well as fostering their identity resulting in more fruitful working rewards enabling them to remain in the teaching vocation. The last and pivotal factor that can meaningfully sustain Indonesian EFL educators' professional identity is the utilization of self-critical reflections. It is believed that through the continual implementation of this contemplative practice, our EFL teachers will be more capable of arranging a series of efficient pedagogical approaches to be integrated with their daily teaching-learning basis as they have become more conscious of their particular strengths and weaknesses. In the same vein, Prabandari (2020) strongly encouraged Indonesian EFL

educationalists to conduct insistent self-reflective activities after accomplishing specific teaching-learning dynamics to allow them to quickly locate their particular strengths as well as weaknesses that may be useful for the further advancement of their professional identity and teaching performances.

Table 2. Theme 2: Rigorous External Supports Emanated from Educational Stakeholders

Theme 2	Authors
Rigorous External Supports Emanated from Educational Stakeholders	Analisti (2021); Hidarto and Christine (2021); Lomi and Mbato (2020); Mulyani et al. (2022); Nue and Manara (2022); Rahman and Kurniawan (2022); Siahaan and Subekti (2021); Triutami and Mbato (2021); Wijaya (2022); Wijaya (2021); Mbato and Wijaya (2020).

It is worth underscoring that the sustainable development of a robust professional identity cannot be gained through isolation. Instead, it can be attained through various external supports imparted by educational stakeholders. Anchoring on this belief, one of the external figures that are responsible for cultivating our EFL teachers' professional identity is an educational institution. An educational institution is highly recommended to continually provide more supportive learning-sharing community groups among language teachers where they can disseminate a wide array of rewarding teaching experiences, strategies, and knowledge to other colleagues. By experiencing all these positive external supports, EFL teachers will be more confident and motivated to continue their teaching careers as they believe that other working colleagues are always ready to support their teaching dynamics in the light of meaningful and novel insights. These above-explicated contentions accord with Hidarto and Christine (2021), proposing that with the presence of more collaborative learning-sharing community groups, Indonesian EFL educationalists begin to cultivate a higher level of professional identity, transform into more insightful educators, and rebuild their teaching motivation since mutual learning-to-teach supports are intensively addressed to them.

Furthermore, it is essential to accentuate that teacher training, and educational faculties must also provide teaching practicum programs that are relevant, contextual, and meaningful for Indonesian EFL teacher candidates to better survive and thrive in their future working environments. This action should be carried out shortly to arm our prospective EFL teachers with robust resilience, motivation, and emotions while facing various educational hurdles. All these fundamental conceptions are strengthened by Lomi and Mbato (2020), highly advocating teacher training and educational programs in Indonesia to design more authentic teaching practicum practices in their Micro Teaching course to increase better pre-service EFL teachers' readiness to overcome varied educational barriers in their upcoming working vicinities.

In addition to all these paramount teaching aspects, educational institutions, teacher training, and educational faculties should work hand-in-hand to invent various teacher professional development training programs in which Indonesian EFL educators' pedagogical are well-catered. Simply saying, all these programs should intensively expose our EFL teachers to become more professional, creative, and critical learning facilitators through the broader employment of various meaningful teaching strategies. By doing so, Indonesian EFL teachers'

professional identity can significantly improve due to the positive responses constantly addressed by learners, working colleagues, and school superiors. This aspect seems in accord with the prior finding of Siahaan and Subekti (2021), unraveling that with the assistance of intensive teacher professional development programs mainly focusing on the possible integration of varied meaningful pedagogical approaches, Indonesian EFL teachers have highly valued their current vocation as dignified due to the significant elevation of the professional identity and positive reactions addressed by their teaching-learning communities. Ultimately, it is vital for teacher training and educational programs in Indonesia to equip their new Indonesian EFL teacher candidates with advanced target language proficiency before entrusting them to plunge into apparent teaching-learning activities in future working places. By inculcating higher development of target language competencies, our EFL teacher candidates will be more confident and comfortable while delivering subject-specific materials to the targeted learners since the ultimate means of their communication has been comprehensively delivered to the desired audience. Triutami and Mbato (2021) pinpointed that there is a harmonious interconnectedness among Indonesian EFL teachers' target language proficiency, self-confidence, and professional identity formation, wherein teacher training and educational programs are responsible for elevating their existing English competencies to augment their conviction while delivering the specifically-made learning materials to diverse learners.

CONCLUSION

All in all, transfiguring Indonesian EFL teachers into more professional educators is not simply a one-night process. Instead, it requires talents, resilience, motivation, confidence, and commitment embedded within our educators' hearts. Therefore, Indonesian EFL educationalists highly determined to invest a higher growth of their professional identity are encouraged to become the self-initiators toward the dramatic educational changes that take place daily. By incorporating this commendable attitude, teachers eventually discover the centrality of dedicating their entire lives to becoming compassionate educators in the presence of diverse wide-ranging learners. Further, one pivotal note to be kept in mind is that Indonesian EFL educators can potentially cultivate their professional identity construction at its best level as long as meaningful external support is sustainably imparted by both educational institutions along with teacher training and educational programs in which more authentic, meaningful, and relevant educational practices are well-designed to prepare EFL teacher candidates to become more qualified and professional educators. Conversely, this current small-scale library study has some limitations despite careful attention executed to avoid them. Firstly, the prospective library investigation is encouraged to replicate this small-scale qualitative study by reviewing a significant number of studies delving more profoundly into impactful factors that reinforce globalized EFL educationalists' professional identity to address broader international perspectives concerning the crucial importance of this professional teaching construction to be firstly infused at the beginning of their teaching careers. Secondly, future library studies are concurrently prompted to conduct more exhaustive exploration into other indispensable aspects that can mold Indonesian EFL teachers' professionalism, such as collective agency, professional agency, and personal identity to thoroughly promote better-quality education for entire English language learners in this nation. Despite all the drawbacks mentioned above, the specifically-obtained research results can shed helpful light for our educational parties to devise more contextual, meaningful, and suitable

educational and teaching training programs in which Indonesian EFL teachers' professional identity can undergo significant transformation.

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