## TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AMONG INDONESIAN NON-SPECIALIST EFL TEACHERS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the development of teacher self-efficacy and professional identity among non-specialist English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Indonesian primary schools who lack formal training in English language teaching (ELT). It investigates how these teachers construct their professional roles and self-beliefs through experiential learning within a low-support educational environment. Using a qualitative multiple-case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis which involves four primary school teachers. The findings indicate that mastery experiences - particularly successful classroom teaching - were the most influential in building self-efficacy and shaping professional identity. Vicarious experiences, often accessed through online resources and personal educational histories, also contributed significantly by enhancing instructional strategies and confidence. However, emotional challenges such as imposter syndrome and identity vulnerability emerged, especially in under-resourced schools. The study underscores the dynamic interplay between self-efficacy and professional identity and highlights the need for targeted, context-sensitive support for non-specialist teachers. These findings offer new insights into teacher development in marginalized educational contexts and suggest practical strategies to promote professional growth in similarly resource-constrained settings.

Keywords: *Teacher self-efficacy, professional identity, non-specialist teachers, English language teaching, experiential learning.*
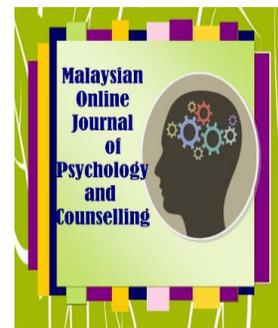
INTRODUCTION

ELT at the primary school level has gained increasing importance in non-English-speaking countries, where early exposure to English is often viewed as a gateway to global opportunities (Tanu, 2016). Across many Asian contexts, including Malaysia (Senom et al., 2016), Vietnam (Hamano, 2008), and Taiwan (Tsao, 2000), governments have prioritized curriculum reforms and teacher training initiatives to ensure effective English instruction in early education. This emphasis stems from the recognition that young learners are at a critical stage of cognitive and linguistic development, making early English education pivotal for fostering long-term proficiency. Within this framework, teachers play a central role, serving not only as language instructors but also as models of communicative competence and facilitators of motivation in language learning.

In Indonesia, however, implementing English at the primary level presents unique challenges. Although the Kurikulum Merdeka (Indonesia's latest curriculum) allows for English instruction in primary schools, it remains an optional subject, and the lack of a nationwide support system means that many schools lack access to qualified English teachers. As a result, particularly in rural and non-urban areas, schools often rely on generalist educators: graduates of primary education programs who receive minimal or no training in English language teaching. These teachers tend to resort to trial-and-error methods, relying on personal resourcefulness rather than structured pedagogical knowledge (Widagsa et al., 2025). This gap between teaching responsibilities and educator preparedness raises concerns not only about instructional efficacy and learner outcomes but also about the broader issues of professional development and the psychological resilience of these teachers.

Despite growing policy initiatives aimed to improve English language education in Indonesia, research has largely overlooked a critical group of practitioners: non-specialist primary teachers who are tasked with teaching English despite lacking formal ELT qualifications. While much of the existing research focuses on the experiences of pre-service teachers or those with formal ELT qualifications, there is a significant gap in understanding how in-service, non-specialist teachers develop self-efficacy and professional identity in under-resourced settings. This gap is particularly consequential because these generalist educators, though untrained in ELT, serve as the primary implementers of English instruction in many Indonesian primary schools. Their lived experiences, instructional decisions, and adaptive strategies represent an underexplored yet valuable form of situated professional learning that is often overlooked by conventional teacher development models.

The Indonesian context presents a compelling case for examining practice-driven teacher development in low-support educational environments. These non-specialist teachers typically work in under-resourced public schools where English lacks formal subject status, and structured professional development is scarce. Occupying an ambiguous professional position (neither officially recognized as English teachers nor exempt from teaching English, they face institutional marginalization that simultaneously creates space for potential professional transformation. Their daily pedagogical decisions, growing confidence from classroom experiences, and developing a sense of professional belonging are crucial, yet understudied, dimensions of teacher development.

This study investigates how such teachers develop self-efficacy and construct professional identity through experiential learning and reflection, rather than formal training. By addressing this gap in the literature, the research offers valuable insights to support teachers and inform policy reform in similar educational contexts. Specifically, the study explores the following question: How is teacher

self-efficacy manifested in non-specialist primary teachers' construction of professional identity as EFL teachers?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Second Language Teacher Self-Efficacy Construction
The construction of second language (L2) teacher self-efficacy is a multifaceted process influenced by various personal, professional, and contextual factors. Mastery experiences, or direct teaching experiences, are widely regarded as the most significant contributors to the development of self-efficacy in language teachers. Successful classroom management, facilitating student learning, and overcoming teaching challenges tend to enhance teachers' confidence in their instructional abilities (Pratt et al., 2021). Conversely, negative experiences can diminish self-efficacy, particularly for novice teachers.

In addition to mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, such as observing more experienced peers or mentors, are critical in shaping self-efficacy. These observations allow teachers to model effective teaching strategies and gain insights into handling various classroom situations, thus enhancing their confidence, particularly in the early stages of their teaching careers (Cooke & Faez, 2018). Social persuasion, such as encouragement and positive feedback from colleagues, supervisors, and students, is also an essential factor in developing self-efficacy. Constructive criticism and institutional support foster a sense of competence and reinforce teachers' belief in their abilities (Wyatt, 2021). Furthermore, physiological and emotional states, such as teaching-related stress and anxiety management, significantly contribute to teacher self-efficacy (Friedman, 2003). Teachers who develop emotional resilience and regulate their anxiety tend to maintain stronger efficacy beliefs and remain more engaged in their teaching practices.

Teacher training and professional development are crucial for enhancing L2 teacher self-efficacy. Formal education programs, pedagogical training, and ongoing professional development initiatives help improve teachers' instructional skills, language proficiency, and pedagogical knowledge (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Teachers who feel proficient in the target language and teaching methodology are better equipped to address student needs and create effective learning environments (Bandura, 1997). Additionally, support systems - such as institutional resources, peer collaboration, and collegial networks - contribute to a positive teaching environment, thus enhancing self-efficacy (Gao et al., 2021; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

The construction of teacher self-efficacy is a dynamic and ongoing process that evolves through continuous experiences, reflective practice, and professional growth (Zimmerman, 2000). Both positive and negative experiences, as well as efforts to enhance teaching competencies, contribute to continuous self-efficacy development. Therefore, fostering these elements through targeted support programs and professional development initiatives is crucial for promoting effective language teaching and improving student outcomes.

Second Language Teacher Professional Identity Construction
The development of L2 teacher professional identity is a dynamic and complex process shaped by personal, social, and contextual influences. It includes how teachers perceive themselves as professionals, how they relate to others in their field, and how they adapt and grow over time (Pennington & Richards, 2016). Teachers' personal experiences, particularly as language learners, significantly impact the development of their professional identity. Their own learning histories, including both positive and negative experiences with language acquisition, shape their teaching

practices and beliefs about language learning. These early experiences form the foundation of their professional self-concept and influence their pedagogical approaches (Beijaard et al., 2004).

Teacher education and professional development play a pivotal role in constructing professional identity. Initial teacher education programs provide essential pedagogical knowledge and introduce teachers to the norms and expectations of the profession. However, identity development extends beyond formal training and continues throughout a teacher's career. Ongoing professional development, such as workshops, seminars, and advanced degrees, supports reflective practice, critical thinking, and adaptability, which are central to the development of a teacher's professional identity (Kelchtermans, 2009). Social interactions and engagement in communities of practice are also crucial in identity construction. Collaboration with peers, sharing teaching experiences, and participating in professional networks help teachers negotiate and shape their identities. Constructive feedback from mentors, colleagues, and students strengthens their sense of belonging and professional growth (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Contextual and institutional factors also significantly influence the development of professional identity. The culture, policies, and resources within a school environment can either foster or hinder teachers' sense of professional identity (Mosquera-Pérez & Losada-Rivas, 2022; Richards & Farrell, 2011). Positive institutional support enhances job satisfaction and engagement, while negative experiences, such as a lack of support or unequal treatment, can lead to identity dissonance (Sachs, 2005). Teachers also undergo identity transformations through critical incidents and challenges, such as adapting to new teaching modalities, addressing classroom difficulties, or responding to policy changes. These experiences prompt reflection and negotiation of professional roles, often causing redefinition or reinforcement of their professional identity (Day, 2002; Day et al., 2005). As a teacher's career progresses, ongoing reflective practice, such as analyzing teaching practices and responding to feedback, continues to shape and redefine their professional identity.

The Interconnected Nature of Teacher Self-Efficacy and Professional Identity
Teacher self-efficacy, defined as educators' beliefs about their ability to organize and execute courses of action required to produce desired educational outcomes, is closely connected to the development of professional identity (Marschall, 2021). Research has shown that self-efficacy is not a standalone construct but operates as a task-specific aspect of a broader self-schema. This conceptualization suggests that self-efficacy appraisal processes involve aspects of individuals' past, present, and future selves, which are integrated into an ongoing transformation of self as a competent teacher. Studies have consistently demonstrated a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and professional identity, indicating that teachers with higher self-efficacy tend to develop stronger and more positive professional identities (Dong & Aziz, 2024; Wati et al., 2024). This relationship is particularly evident among pre-service teachers, where self-efficacy beliefs serve as crucial determinants of identity formation during the early stages of professional development.

The connection between self-efficacy and professional identity operates through several mediating mechanisms. Research on pre-service physical education teachers, for example, revealed that self-efficacy positively influences professional identity by motivating teachers and enhancing their engagement (Sun et al., 2025). This process is mediated by psychological factors such as meaning in life and self-esteem, which act as bridges between self-efficacy beliefs and professional identity formation (Sun et al., 2025).

Professional identity construction is a narrative process in which self-efficacy beliefs are embedded within teachers' evolving professional narratives. Teachers' self-efficacy is driven by agentic goal pursuit and influenced by cognitive processing of information from enactive, affective, vicarious, and

social experiences (Marschall, 2021). This meaning-making process allows teachers to integrate their efficacy beliefs with their developing sense of professional self. Teachers with higher self-efficacy tend to exhibit greater goal orientation and motivation, which helps them stay committed to their professional goals and perceive their efforts as meaningful (Sun et al., 2025). This connection between efficacy and meaning strengthens professional identity by enhancing teachers' sense of accomplishment and belonging within the profession.

Although research on teacher self-efficacy and professional identity has expanded in recent years, much of the scholarship has focused on pre-service teachers or those with formal ELT training. These studies often examine how structured teacher education programs, practicum experiences, and mentoring contribute to the development of teachers' self-efficacy and evolving professional identity (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Pennington & Richards, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). In contrast, in-service teachers, particularly those without formal ELT training, such as generalist primary school teachers who are tasked with teaching English, remain underrepresented in the literature. This imbalance causes a skewed understanding of how self-efficacy and professional identity are developed in low-resource, assignment-based teaching contexts.

Furthermore, the dominant focus on formal professional development (PD) programs, such as workshops, training, and mentoring, has left a gap in understanding how teachers learn in informal, workplace-based contexts. Teachers often engage in significant professional learning not only through structured training but also through reflection on classroom experiences, peer interaction, and school-based problem-solving. However, these informal learning pathways remain largely unexamined in much of the empirical research. This gap is particularly evident in countries like Indonesia, where institutional support for English teaching at the primary level is weak or inconsistent, forcing many teachers to rely on experiential knowledge and self-directed adaptation. Few studies have explored how teacher self-efficacy is constructed informally, and even fewer examine the relationship between self-efficacy and identity development in marginalized, ambiguous professional roles, such as non-specialist EFL teachers. Understanding this relationship is essential for designing support systems and policy interventions that reflect the real learning conditions of these educators.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states) serve as a foundational framework for understanding self-efficacy and can be extended to the development of professional identity (Menon, 2020; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016). Each of these sources contributes distinctly to shaping both constructs. Mastery experiences, which involve successful teaching performances, are the most influential source of self-efficacy. These experiences directly strengthen self-efficacy and reinforce professional identity (Menon, 2020). Vicarious experiences, on the other hand, enable teachers to build confidence by observing the success of colleagues or peers. Social persuasion, such as mentoring and feedback, plays a critical role in shaping both self-efficacy beliefs and professional identity, while physiological and affective states influence how teachers interpret their emotional responses to classroom challenges (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016).

To explore how non-specialist teachers navigate the complexities of teaching English without formal training, this study integrates Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation and Wenger's (1998) community of practice, particularly the mode of belonging. Bandura defines teacher self-efficacy as educators' confidence in their ability to facilitate student learning and effectively execute teaching tasks. For non-specialist

EFL teachers, self-efficacy serves as a critical psychological resource, influencing instructional strategies, classroom management, and evolving perceptions of themselves as language teachers. At the same time, professional identity (how teachers perceive themselves and are recognized within their professional role) is deeply intertwined with self-efficacy. As teachers face classroom challenges, reflect on their experiences, and receive feedback from peers or students, their sense of legitimacy as English teachers is either reinforced or undermined.

By combining the psychological lens of self-efficacy with the sociocultural perspective of identity formation, this study aims to understand how Indonesian non-specialist EFL teachers not only adapt to their roles but also develop professionally through experiential and context-driven learning. Wenger's (1998) concept of a "community of practice" will be especially valuable in exploring how teachers build a sense of professional identity through practices of belonging, sharing knowledge, and negotiating roles within their teaching contexts. The concept of legitimate peripheral participation, as proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991), further informs this framework by explaining how teachers, through participation in everyday teaching activities, gradually gain the knowledge, skills, and recognition needed to solidify their professional identity as English teachers.

This theoretical framework provides a robust lens through which the development of self-efficacy and professional identity among non-specialist EFL teachers can be understood. It highlights the interplay between individual beliefs, external influences, and the broader sociocultural context in shaping teachers' perceptions of their abilities and roles within the educational system.

METHODOLOGY

Design
This study is grounded in Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation. The aim is to capture the dynamic, context-specific processes of teacher identity development and self-efficacy among non-specialist teachers. Given the experiential and reflective nature of these processes, a qualitative multiple-case study design was selected. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of how teachers develop self-efficacy and professional identity through practice and interaction with their teaching environment (Yin, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The case study approach is particularly suited to this study's goal of uncovering the nuanced ways in which self-efficacy and identity are constructed through practice, reflection, and interaction within the context of under-resourced schools, rather than through formal training programs.

Settings and Participants
The study was conducted in four primary schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, due to their reliance on generalist teachers to provide English language instruction and the lack of certified EFL educators. Participants were purposively recruited to ensure they possessed extensive teaching experience and occupied a unique professional position as non-specialist English teachers. This selection criterion guaranteed that each case would provide rich insights into how teaching English without formal ELT qualifications influences professional development.

The participants are four in-service primary school teachers referred to by pseudonyms: Joi, Intan, Tina, and Ana (see Table 1). All participants hold primary school teacher education program degrees, which prepare teachers to teach core subjects such as mathematics, science, social studies, and Indonesian language, but do not offer specialized training in English language teaching. Despite this, these teachers were assigned to teach English at their respective schools. Their experiences provide a valuable lens through which to explore how professional knowledge, teaching competence, and

identity as English teachers are developed in the absence of formal ELT preparation. Before participating in the study, each participant was provided with an informed consent form outlining the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, and participants' rights. The form included assurances of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the option to withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. Participants were also informed of their right to ask questions and receive clarification on any aspect of the research.

Table 1
Demographics of Participants

Name	Background of Education	Teaching experience	Type of Institution
Joi	Bachelor (Primary School Teacher Education)	12 Years	Public primary school
Intan	Bachelor (Primary School Teacher Education)	10 Years	Public primary school
Tina	Bachelor (Primary School Teacher Education)	12 Years	Private primary school
Ana	Bachelor (Primary School Teacher Education)	11 Years	Private primary school

Data Collection

Data were collected over six months (one academic semester) using three primary methods:

1. Semi-structured Interviews: Interviews were conducted at multiple points throughout the semester with each participant to explore their perceptions of self-efficacy, professional identity, and personal teaching journeys. These interviews allowed for a deeper understanding of each participant's experiences, motivations, and challenges.
2. Classroom Observations: Observations were conducted to examine teaching practices, interaction patterns, and instructional strategies. These observations provided contextual support for interpreting participants' self-reports and offered insights into their instructional decision-making processes.
3. Document Analysis: Lesson plans, teaching materials, and school policies relevant to English instruction were analyzed. These documents offered additional perspectives on the instructional and institutional frameworks within which the participants operated.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), a method well-suited to identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data. The analysis followed six iterative steps: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, search for, review of, definition and naming of themes, and final write-up. Both within-case and cross-case analyses were conducted to explore recurring themes and divergent experiences among participants. Themes were interpreted through the theoretical frameworks of Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation, and Wenger's (1998) community of practice. This approach enabled a theoretically grounded analysis of the development of psychological and professional capacities among non-specialist teachers over time.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study are organized around three interrelated themes that reflect how the four non-specialist teachers developed self-efficacy and constructed their professional identity as English teachers. These themes are: (1) Learning Through Teaching: Mastery Experience as the Foundation of Self-Efficacy; (2) Vicarious Experience and Identity Aspirations; and (3) Emotional States and Identity Vulnerability.

Mastery Experience and Identity Through Practice
All four participants described initial feelings of uncertainty and self-doubt when they were first assigned to teach English. Lacking formal training, they relied heavily on personal initiative, self-study, and classroom experimentation. Over time, however, successfully managing lessons and witnessing student progress became a source of self-efficacy. This was especially evident in Joi's case, who noted:

> At first, I was afraid to speak English in class. But when I saw my students understanding me, even just simple instructions, I felt more confident (1st Interview with Joi).

Classroom observations supported this progression. For example, Tina gradually shifted from reading directly from a textbook to creating her own visual aids and interactive activities. This shift in instructional style coincided with her growing confidence and increased student engagement. The development of mastery experience, a key source of self-efficacy in Bandura's theory, served as the foundation for participants' evolving sense of professional identity. Through repeated acts of teaching and reflection, the participants began to see themselves not merely as substitute teachers but as capable English instructors.

Vicarious Experience and Identity Aspirations
As all participants were the sole English teachers at their respective schools, they lacked immediate peer support. Consequently, they turned to observing other English teachers through online platforms and reflecting on their own past educational experiences for guidance. These vicarious experiences became significant sources of both confidence and teaching strategies. For instance, Joi described how she learned from her high school English teacher, stating:

> When it comes to teaching English, there's someone who has always been a role model for me - my high school English teacher. He was so patient in teaching students who were struggling, including me, since I didn't really understand English back then (1st Interview with Joi).

Similarly, Ana found inspiration from English teachers on YouTube, remarking:

> I enjoy watching how teachers teach English on YouTube, and it really inspires me - I want to be like them someday (1st Interview with Ana).

These vicarious experiences not only provided practical teaching ideas but also offered emotional reassurance, affirming that success in the field was attainable. This notion is further supported by Tina, who expressed the positive reinforcement she received from her students:

> When I see them willing to listen to me as I give instructions in English, or when they're curious about the sentences and words I teach, it makes me feel like I'm really making a difference for them (1st Interview with Tina).

Through this informal learning process, the participants gradually moved from passive observation to more active participation in English teaching practice. These social learning interactions had a profound impact, influencing both their efficacy beliefs and identity aspirations. The participants came to see themselves as legitimate members of the broader English teaching community.

Emotional States and Identity Vulnerability

A recurring theme across the participants' narratives was the experience of professional tension: feeling simultaneously responsible for teaching English yet undervalued due to their non-specialist status. This tension was particularly evident in public school settings, where English was often regarded as a non-core subject, receiving minimal administrative attention or professional development support. Intan, for instance, candidly expressed this duality:

> Sometimes I think, I'm not a real English teacher, just someone filling the gap. But then, when my students get excited to learn new words, I feel like I'm doing something important (2nd Interview with Intan).

This sentiment highlights how the professional identity of non-specialist teachers is both fragile and dynamic, constantly shaped by moments of self-doubt and affirmation. Teachers frequently navigate a delicate balance - at times questioning their legitimacy and role within the school, and at other times finding empowerment through their students' enthusiasm and their own perseverance.

Despite their progress, some participants, particularly those in public schools, voiced ongoing feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and imposter syndrome. Tina, for example, described her sense of invisibility and insecurity:

> There's no training, no help. I just teach and hope it's enough (2nd Interview with Tina).

These emotional states reflect how feelings of anxiety and stress can erode self-efficacy. From an identity perspective, such emotions underscore the fragile and unfinished nature of becoming a fully confident and recognized English teacher.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to explore how non-specialist primary school teachers in Indonesia develop their self-efficacy and construct their professional identity in the absence of formal ELT training. By focusing on in-service teachers, this study contributes to the limited body of literature on how teachers without specialized qualifications navigate the challenges of teaching English in primary school contexts.

The findings of this study emphasize the pivotal role that mastery experiences play in shaping the self-efficacy and professional identity of non-specialist teachers. As Bandura (1997) posits, mastery experiences, the direct, successful engagement in teaching, are the most significant source of self-efficacy. In this study, the participants, despite initial self-doubt and uncertainty, progressively gained confidence as they encountered success in the classroom. Through repeated teaching experiences and reflection on student progress, the teachers began to see themselves not merely as temporary substitutes but as capable English instructors. This aligns with previous research suggesting that teaching, when successful, solidifies teachers' beliefs in their abilities and strengthens their professional identity (Gao et al., 2021). For instance, Joi's account of growing confidence as her students demonstrated comprehension provides a clear illustration of how mastery experiences foster teacher self-efficacy.

While mastery experiences were critical, this study also underscores the importance of vicarious experiences in the professional development of these teachers. With limited access to peers or mentors in their immediate teaching contexts, the participants turned to external sources for guidance, particularly from online platforms and past educational experiences. Their reliance on vicarious experiences not only helped them acquire teaching strategies but also provided emotional reinforcement. Joi's and Ana's reliance on role models, whether past teachers or online educators, reflects the role of social learning in teacher development. This finding corroborates the work of Cooke and Faez (2018), who emphasized the significant role of observed behaviors in the development of teachers' self-efficacy.

However, developing self-efficacy and professional identity was not without its challenges. The study reveals that emotional states and identity vulnerability are integral to understanding the teachers' lived experiences. Non-specialist EFL teachers, particularly those in public schools, feel undervalued and insecure in their roles as English instructors. Intan's sentiment of being "not a real English teacher" despite her active teaching role highlights the fragile nature of professional identity among non-specialist teachers, especially when institutional support is lacking. These feelings of imposter syndrome and insecurity underscore the psychological toll that teaching in a marginalized role can take. The tension between perceived competence and lack of formal recognition exacerbates the identity struggles these teachers face. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that teachers in marginal roles often experience identity dissonance and self-doubt (Kelchtermans, 2009; Sachs, 2005).

This study contributes to the theory of teacher self-efficacy and professional identity by examining the dynamic interaction between these two constructs in non-specialist teachers. The integration of Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation offers a robust framework for understanding the continuous process of professional identity construction in low-support contexts. The findings suggest that teacher self-efficacy and professional identity are not static; rather, they evolve over time through the dynamic interplay of mastery experiences, vicarious learning, and emotional resilience.

In practical terms, this study highlights the urgent need for contextualized professional development programs for non-specialist teachers. As evidenced by the teachers in this study, their lack of formal ELT training necessitates experiential learning that is often overlooked in conventional teacher education models. Programs that prioritize reflective practice, peer collaboration, and supportive mentoring could significantly enhance teachers' self-efficacy and help solidify their professional identities. Furthermore, policymakers and school administrators must recognize the value of these teachers' experiences and offer institutional support to mitigate the emotional and professional challenges they face. This may include creating professional learning communities, promoting collaboration among teachers, and providing access to training resources tailored to their specific needs.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how non-specialist primary school teachers in Indonesia construct their professional identities and develop self-efficacy in the absence of formal ELT qualifications. Through mastery experiences, vicarious learning, and emotional resilience, these teachers navigate the complexities of their roles, gradually building confidence and professional identity despite significant challenges. This research underscores the importance of supporting these educators, whose informal learning experiences are critical in their professional development. Further research is needed to explore the broader implications of informal learning and self-efficacy in educational contexts where teachers face resource constraints and limited institutional support.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the development of teacher self-efficacy and professional identity among non-specialist English teachers in Indonesian primary schools, where teachers lack formal ELT training. The findings reveal that mastery experiences (successful teaching practices) are central to building both self-efficacy and professional identity. Over time, participants gained confidence through trial and error, student progress, and reflective practice, in alignment with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory. Vicarious experiences, such as learning from online resources and past educational experiences, also contributed significantly to their growth. However, emotional states such as imposter syndrome and professional tension were evident, particularly in public school settings where English was undervalued. These emotional struggles highlighted the fragility of their professional identities. The study exemplifies the interconnectedness of self-efficacy and professional identity, in which each reinforces the other through ongoing practice and reflection. This research contributes to both theory and practice by highlighting the dynamic, context-driven nature of teacher development in marginalized roles. It emphasizes the need for contextualized support for non-specialist teachers, such as peer collaboration and reflective practice, to foster their professional growth. This study also provides insights into the informal learning pathways that non-specialist teachers navigate, offering valuable implications for policy and practice in similar educational settings. Moving forward, further research could expand the sample size, incorporate quantitative methods, and explore teacher self-efficacy and identity in various educational contexts, particularly those in which teachers face resource constraints and limited institutional support.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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