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EXPLORING PRE-SERVICE TEACHER'S IDENTITY DURING TEACHING PRACTICUM USING XU'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Examining PSTs' identity formation is essential since it will influence teachers' teaching pedagogies and development. Further, it can help determine what factors contribute to different outcomes. Teaching practicum is considered the most critical, valuable, and demanding experience for pre-service teachers (PSTs) to apply the theoretical knowledge and practical skills they learned in their teacher education program. Building on Xu's (2013) conceptual framework, the researcher sought to understand PSTs' identity formation during teaching practicum. Furthermore, the study was aimed to identify the factors influencing PSTs' identity development. This research involved two female English as a Foreign Language (EFL) PSTs. The researcher used the biographical narrative inquiry method to gather data, which involved in-depth interviews and thematic analysis of participants' lesson plans. The study found that EFL pre-service teachers (PSTs) developed their identity through thorough lesson planning, students' readiness, and correct pronunciation. They valued professionalism and responsibility in delivering accurate information. The PSTs used various assessment practices, created supportive classrooms, utilized diverse learning resources, and sought students' feedback. Building positive relationships with students was also recognized as important. Factors influencing pre-service teacher's identity development included past experiences, content knowledge, and positive student relationships. However, the study has limitations that should be considered. Firstly, the findings may only apply to the EFL context and might not be generalizable to other subjects. Secondly, the reliance on self-reported data introduces a potential bias. Lastly, the study does not examine the long-term effects of the identified factors on PSTs' identity development.

Keywords: EFL Pre-Service Teacher; Teaching Practicum; Teacher Identity; Xu

INTRODUCTION

The discussion of identity construction has become one of the essential issues in teaching and by teachers of professional identity development (Wright, Loughlin, & Hall, 2017; Kennedy & Lees, 2016). Zare-ee and Ghasedi (2014) suggested that a clear understanding of professional identity is essential for student teachers (PSTs) to establish their roles and characteristics as teachers

in their professional and personal lives. Some studies (Palmer, 2009; Alsup, 2005) stated that identities would influence teachers' teaching pedagogies and development. Examining PSTs' professional identity formation can help teacher educators determine what factors contribute to different outcomes for individual students.

In recent years, research on teacher identity has shifted towards investigating identity development during the teaching practicum because studies have highlighted that learning to teach involves more than just acquiring skills; it also consists of forming teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Teaching Practicum is considered the most critical, valuable, and demanding experience for pre-service teachers (PSTs) to apply the theoretical knowledge and practical skills they learned in their teacher education program (Dang, 2013; Gebhard, 2009; Cohen, Hoz & Kaplan, 2013). Through this experience, PSTs can learn about themselves and the kind of teacher they aspire to be (Brizman, 2003; Furlong, 2013).

Studies have used several frameworks to analyze the identity of PSTs, such as the Onion Model (Mulyani, Gunawan, Kusuma, 2022), Community of Practice (Vallente, 2020), and Positioning Theory (Hapsari & Ena, 2019). Meanwhile, none of the previous frameworks gives a particular category and indicator of teacher identity. The current study, therefore, sought to contribute to this field by using a deep understanding of the conceptual framework proposed by Xu (2013) to explore PSTs' identity as the importance of personalization and an explorative attitude is stressed in building and developing one's teacher identity. Further, the study also identified the influencing factors that might affect the PSTs' identity development. Therefore, this research is exciting and urgent to conduct.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Pre-Service Teachers' Identity

1. *The Notion of Identity*

Identity develops throughout one's life (Erikson, 1968). As stated by Mead (1934) and Nias (1989) in Beijaard, Meier, and Verloop (2004, p. 107 & p. 124), identity forms part of the self where the self is developed through the environment. According to Darvin and Norton (2015), identity refers to an individual's perception of their connection with the world, the organization of that connection over time and space, and their perception of the potential for the future (p. 36). As cited in Tsui (2007, p. 660), Wenger's framework outlined that one's identity did not lie only in how one talked or thought about oneself but in how one's identity was lived day-to-day. Additionally, identity was dynamic rather than stable, and a teacher's identity shifted under the factors both internal the individual and external to the individual, such as job and life experiences in particular contexts (Beijaard et al., 2004 in Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009, p.177).

2. *Contributing factors to exploring PST's identity*

a. *Past Experience*

The past experiences of PSTs play a critical role in shaping this evolving process because the formation of identity is an ongoing journey wherein the knowledge and lessons that PSTs acquire about themselves over time assist them in defining and refining their sense of self as they engage in future endeavours (Beijaard et al., 2000).

Teacher identity formation is influenced by various factors such as personal and professional backgrounds, pre-service training, and school culture and leadership, as

indicated by Flores and Day's (2006) study. As highlighted by several researchers, memories and prior experiences also play a crucial role in this process (Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Chong, Ling, & Chuan, 2011; Lamote & Engels, 2010; Lim, 2011; Sugrue, 1997). Teacher experience leads to developing extensive and well-organized knowledge bases, enabling them to draw upon past experiences quickly (Calderhead, 1996).

b. Content Area Knowledge

Aspiring EFL teachers must acquire theoretical knowledge to comprehend and effectively teach the subject matter. Beijaard et al. (2000) suggested that their content knowledge largely influences teacher effectiveness. Coe et al. (2014) also argued that the most effective teachers possess a deep understanding of their subjects, and insufficient knowledge can significantly impede students' learning. Teachers must comprehend the material, understand students' thought processes, and identify common misconceptions (Coe et al., 2014). Rohandi et al. (2013) stated that teachers must provide real examples and correct students' errors. Thus, Beijaard et al. (2000) contended that content knowledge transforms pre-service teachers' identities.

c. Teaching Pedagogy

Teaching and learning activities are closely linked to a teacher's belief in designing practical exercises (Beijaard et al., 2000), referred to as their pedagogy. Voss, Kunter, and Baumert (2011) also defined pedagogy as a teacher's principles and strategies for managing and organizing the classroom. Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, and Major (2014) argued that a teacher's pedagogy is crucial in achieving learning objectives by creating effective teaching and learning activities. Therefore, Beijaard et al. (2000) suggested that a teacher's pedagogy influences the transformation of pre-service teachers' identities.

d. Relationship with students

Teachers and pre-service teachers who establish a positive, supportive, and close relationship with their students can better understand them and motivate them to achieve higher academic success. According to Beijaard et al. (2000), when pre-service teachers cultivate a productive relationship with their students, they become more knowledgeable about them and show a particular interest in their learning progress. This relationship also influences pre-service teachers' strategies to help their students attain their individual best, as noted by Beijaard et al. (2000).

B. Review of Teaching Practicum

The teaching practicum has been widely acknowledged as an indispensable part of teacher education (Santoro, 1997) and is often considered the "culminating experience" in teacher education programs (Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009, p. 931). Its primary benefit is that it allows PSTs to apply the teaching and learning knowledge gained during their university coursework (Beeth & Adadan, 2006). According to Chan (2014), PSTs were exposed to valuable opportunities to acquire professional knowledge, improve their teaching skills, and gain teaching competence through practice. Thus, the teaching practicum offers pre-service teachers the chance to obtain professional knowledge, teaching skills, and teaching competence.

Apart from the advantages pre-service teachers (PSTs) gained during their teaching practicum, they also formed their teacher identity by interacting with their students and mentors. Teacher identity research has identified the teaching practicum as a significant factor

in developing PSTs' professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Izadinia, 2013). It aligns with the view of Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) that a teacher's identity is formed and transformed through interactions with others within a professional context (p. 178). According to Sumara and Luce-Kapler (2001), the teaching practicum plays a crucial role in developing a teacher's identity. This idea has been reflected in much research on teacher identity in teacher education programs, with many studies focusing on the teaching practicum (e.g., Afrianto, 2015 in Riyanti & Samoub, 2016; Dang, 2013; Kuswandono, 2013; Trent, 2010, 2012, 2013).

C. Review of Xu's Theoretical Framework

Xu (2013) proposed that teachers did not establish their identities through practices but formed them by observing various teaching methods and limited experiences. Xu's study used Moscovici's (2000) social cognition classification to create three categories of teachers' identity: language expert, learning facilitator, and spiritual guide. These categories will serve as the framework for the current study.

1. *Language Expert*

The concept of a "language expert" was introduced by Xu (2013) as a category of teachers' professional identity. This identity is characterized by teachers' strong content knowledge and pedagogy. Language experts perceive themselves as the primary source of knowledge and prioritize teaching specific content to their students. They assume the role of the sole authority in the classroom, making decisions on objectives, outcomes, instructional methods, and evaluation with minimal student input. These teachers are considered experts in the language and employ a structured approach to impart knowledge to their students. Xu (2013) also identified additional traits of a language expert, including excellent language skills in English, encompassing grammar and fluency, effective teaching methods and classroom management skills.

2. *Learning Facilitator*

As described by Xu (2013), a learning facilitator is a pre-service teacher who prioritizes the student's learning process and acts as a facilitator in the teaching-learning dynamic. This approach emphasizes creating a two-way learning environment where students learn from each other and the teacher rather than solely relying on the teacher as the primary source of knowledge. The learning facilitator employs student-centred techniques, values student perspectives, and involves students in decision-making, viewing them as active participants in the teaching and learning process. In summary, a learning facilitator fosters a student-centred approach, encourages active student engagement, and integrates student input and ideas into the classroom.

3. *Spiritual Guide*

According to Xu (2013), a "spiritual guide" is a teacher who focuses on their students' academic and personal development and seeks to guide their spiritual growth. This approach involves nurturing virtues such as empathy, respect, and compassion, which the teacher models and encourages their students to adopt. Bashir et al. (2014) further supported this concept by highlighting that a teacher's influence can extend beyond the classroom and shape students' personalities, attitudes, and values. Spiritual guides see themselves as role models and prioritize guiding their students' moral and spiritual development alongside academic progress. They create a safe and supportive learning environment allowing students to express

their emotions freely. Additionally, spiritual guides aim to provide meaningful learning experiences that help students grow spiritually and morally, fostering a sense of purpose and responsibility towards society.

RESEARCH METHOD

The recent study used Xu's Theoretical Framework to identify the teacher identity of EFL PSTs during their teaching practicum and to investigate the factors that influence their identity development. The study employed narrative inquiry research and utilized in-depth interviews and analysis of participants' lesson plans. Two female EFL PSTs from a Public University in Surakarta, referred to as Ani and Fifi, were selected as participants. Individual interviews were conducted, recorded, and analyzed, lasting approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour. The interviews focused on the participants' teaching practicum experiences, and the open-ended questions allowed for detailed explanations. Participants also shared their lesson plans, which provided insights into their instructional practices and alignment with educational goals and approaches. Following the process outlined by Barkhuizen et al. (2014), thematic analysis was employed to analyze the collected data, involving repeated reading, coding, categorization, and organizing the data into specific themes.

FINDINGS

1. **The way EFL Pre-Service Teachers developed their identity during teaching practicum within Xu's Theoretical Framework**
 - a. **Language Expert**

Preparing oneself and everything else before entering the classroom

During the teaching practicum, Ani and Fifi shared that they had prepared themselves before entering the classroom to teach. They discussed the specific things they had done to prepare and also shared their perspectives on the matter.

“I was just trying to understand the material again and how I would convey it later. However, I did not learn the pronunciation of some vocabularies.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“It was essential to me as a teacher to prepare myself as thoroughly as possible before teaching. I felt responsible for my students and did not want to be uncertain about the material. That’s how I approached their teaching.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

Ani and Fifi both emphasize the importance of being well-prepared before entering the classroom to teach. Ani values being well-prepared and reflective in her teaching strategies, while Fifi is highly organized, detail-oriented, and highly values professionalism. Both teachers believe it is their responsibility to provide accurate and comprehensive information to their students and is willing to put in extra effort to ensure their students receive the best possible education.

Engaging in pre-learning activities

During the Teaching Practicum, Ani and Fifi shared that they thoroughly prepared their students gradually before delivering the learning material. They tried to build their students' curiosity about the material to be taught and provided an overview of the learning activities implemented in the classroom.

“Usually, I always asked the kids about their general knowledge so that they had an idea of what they would learn that day.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

Learning Session	Learning Activity
Orientation	The teacher asks the students about the text of the procedure to find out the student's general knowledge of the topic.

Table 1. Fifi's brainstorming activity

Ani and Fifi are educators who value preparing their students before delivering new material. Ani emphasizes reviewing previously taught material and reinforcing concepts to promote long-term learning. Fifi loves active engagement and participation from her students, and she uses brainstorming sessions and questions to understand their prior knowledge and guide her instruction. Both teachers prioritize understanding their students' existing knowledge and using it as a foundation to build.

Giving attention to pronunciation

Another thing shared by both participants is their attention to fluency and pronunciation elements when teaching. They focused on one of the English language skills, speaking, and emphasized emitting features such as pronunciation, particularly new words for both participants and their students. Although they acknowledged their struggle in mastering this aspect, Ani and Fifi tried to improve their teaching approach.

“...As a teacher, I paid close attention to my pronunciation and studied the material in advance to ensure I knew the correct pronunciation and meaning of new words...” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

“Yes, to be honest, I was still weak in speaking...” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“...during my teaching, I also found that students experienced pronunciation errors, but I didn’t correct the pronunciation errors right away, but I allowed them to finish their talk after that, and then I corrected their mistakes” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

Ani, a non-native speaker, acknowledges a deficiency in her pronunciation competency but pays close attention to her student's pronunciation errors and uses a communicative approach to provide targeted feedback. Fifi, a proficient speaker, models correct language usage for her students and values transparency in admitting when she is unsure of a new vocabulary word. Further, both participants commit to providing accurate information to their students and taking their responsibility as teachers seriously.

Conducting assessments to monitor students' understanding

Another thing shared by both participants was conducting assessments at the end of each topic or lesson to monitor students' understanding. Ani and Fifi undertook several activities to assess the success of the learning process that had been carried out and to understand their students' comprehension of the material they had learned.

Learning Session	Learning Activity
Main Activity	The teacher asks students to do practice questions independently.

Table 2 Fifi's activity to assess her students by doing exercise

“I always ask students orally whether they understand or not. ... So, I ask questions about the material every time a chapter is finished. I sometimes ask them to work on the questions individually or with a classmate. Then I directed the students to make presentations.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

Ani and Fifi conduct assessments at the end of each topic or lesson to monitor students' understanding. Ani values frequent student feedback and encourages active student engagement in the learning process. She regularly checks for students' understanding and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge through oral questioning and presentations. Fifi, on the other hand, focuses on ensuring her students are actively engaged in the learning process by providing exercises and quizzes, which allow them to practice and apply what they have learned and help solidify their understanding of the subject matter.

b. Learning Facilitator

Involve students in active learning

Based on some statements from both participants regarding how they teach, both are often found to encourage students to be active in the teaching and learning process. Ani shared her idea to make the students engaged in the lesson plan below:

Learning Session	Learning Activity
Main Activity	<p>The teacher asked the prompting questions related to the picture. These questions are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What do you see in the picture? Tell the class. How can you tell if someone is a loyal team or player fan? Which activity do you prefer? Why?

Table 3. Ani's activity involves her students being active.

In teaching, Fifi also tells some activities to facilitate her student's learning as her statement below:

“...I asked my students to do a presentation, and I always allowed their classmates to give feedback...” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

Ani and Fifi place a high value on students' engagement and participation in the classroom and encourage their students' critical thinking and independent thought. Fifi's approach involves assigning presentations and peer reviews to promote active learning and collaboration among students, whereas Ani's approach involves facilitating student-centred discussions and valuing students' input. Both teachers want to foster a collaborative classroom environment that values mutual respect and support among classmates.

Provide feedback on student's work

During the teaching practicum, Ani and Fifi also actively supported their student's learning by providing feedback on their student's work.

last meeting I had planned. As a result, I added one or more additional meetings....” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“I also asked my students to evaluate my teaching at times by giving their feedback to me.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

Ani and Fifi prioritize adjusting their teaching methods to cater to their students' needs and evaluating their teaching efficacy through feedback. Ani is curious about other teachers' methods and values students' comprehension and engagement in the classroom. She loves active learning and will change her teaching style to ensure her students fully understand the material. Fifi, on the other hand, solicits feedback from her students to assess her teaching effectiveness and to create a safe environment where they can provide honest feedback.

c. Spiritual Guide

Build a warm relationship with students

The next aspect shared by both participants was their experience with social interaction with their students.

“...However, what was even more beautiful as teachers was that we could socialize and be close to our students. So, we didn’t just build a professional relationship between teachers and students, but we also needed to build a fairly close relationship with students as someone more mature than them” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“In my opinion, to motivate students, an English teacher should make them feel comfortable with learning English, generate their interest, and help them become accustomed to the language.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

Both Ani and Fifi shared their experiences with social interaction with students. Ani believes teachers must form close relationships with students to improve their learning experiences, while Fifi believes establishing a positive and comfortable learning environment is crucial in motivating students to engage in the learning process. Both agree that building rapport and relationships with students is critical to creating a welcoming and supportive learning environment.

Advise students

Both Ani and Fifi believe that teachers should act responsibly and address problematic behaviour gently and respectfully, creating a positive and respectful classroom environment.

“...There was even a school where makeup was not allowed, so I sometimes scolded girls who wore too much makeup.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“...other issues like using bad language or teasing each other, I would just give them a warning by saying “Hey!” or “What did you say?” like that.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

Ani believes in giving students advice during teaching practice and enforcing school rules and regulations, while Fifi emphasizes the importance of treating students with respect and avoiding negative comments or critiques to foster a positive and supportive learning environment.

2. Factors that influence EFL pre-service teachers to shape teacher identity.

a. Past Experience

Teaching Experience

The participants' experiences are one of the factors that influence Ani and Fifi in shaping their teacher identity. It includes their teaching experiences and the teachers who have taught them in the past.

“...So, apart from that [teaching experience], I gained this ability to be close to my students through teaching, whether it was through tutoring or volunteering.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“I did, but only taught my neighbours and relatives.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

The experiences of Ani and Fifi have influenced their teacher identity in different ways. Ani's extensive teaching experience, including private lessons and volunteering, has helped shape her teaching philosophy and approach. Ani places great importance on establishing strong connections with her students and fostering a favourable atmosphere for learning. Fifi, on the other hand, has minimal teaching experience, having only taught people English she knows, which means she is still creating her teaching identity and is unsure of the impact of teaching experience on her teaching practicum.

Past Teacher

Another point that possibly impacts participants' way of developing their teacher identity during teaching practicum is their past teacher who has influenced and given a model of a “teacher.”

“... I liked and idolized my teacher when I was still in school. So, during my PLP (Teaching practicum program), I wanted to be liked by my students, and I tried to be like my teacher in the past...” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“...I mean, some teachers don't want to embrace all of their students or interact more with the smart ones. Some teachers distance themselves from their students. But my English teacher was not like that. She interacted with and embraced all of her students.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

To sum up, the teachers who have influenced Ani and Fifi in the past have significantly affected how they perceive their teacher identity. Ani's desire to establish a welcoming and collaborative learning environment and build positive relationships with her students stems from her past positive experiences with teachers. On the other hand, Fifi's understanding of what constitutes good teaching and what approach she wants to adopt in her teaching practice

has been shaped by her experiences with both positive and negative teachers. These experiences will likely continue influencing their teaching styles and techniques as they progress in their careers.

b. Content Area of Knowledge

Awareness of mastering the subject

The common aspect shared by both participants was their awareness of the material they would teach their students.

“... Then the thing that should not have been done was that the teacher did not master the material to be given...” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“... I felt that I had a responsibility as a teacher. I did not want to be confused about the material...” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

Both Ani and Fifi recognize the importance of solid command of the subject matter they teach. They understand that knowledge about the material is necessary to effectively convey the information to their students and establish credibility and trust. Additionally, both participants exhibit a strong sense of responsibility towards their student's education and recognize the long-term impact it can have on their lives. They aim to provide an accurate and best learning experience and consider a thorough understanding of the subject matter essential for achieving this objective.

c. Relationship with Students

Consideration of Teacher-student Interaction

Ani and Fifi shared their viewpoint on developing interaction with their students in the interview session.

“In my personal opinion, socializing more with students was important. The students were also happy when the teacher could be friendly and close to them. In addition, we as teachers also need to be strict with students. So, not only friendly but also firm....” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“...If a student felt disappointed or disliked their teacher, they were likely to develop a negative attitude towards the subject.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

Ani and Fifi share a similar perspective on building positive relationships with students. Ani argues that it is essential to maintain a balance between being friendly and approachable while upholding authority and discipline in the classroom to establish a positive and effective learning environment for students. Fifi also stresses the significance of building a positive relationship with students, which can result in higher engagement and a positive outlook toward learning. Both educators see building positive relationships with students as integral to their teaching approach.

Consideration being an affective role-mode

Additionally, Ani and Fifi shared an opinion on giving a model that is crucial for their students.

“...And the teacher is a figure that students imitate, so as much as possible for the teacher not to show behaviour that is not pleasing in front of his students.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Ani-Interview)

“The teacher serves as a role model for students, and they need to avoid exhibiting any behaviour that may be unappealing or inappropriate in the presence of their students.” (EN-Translation)

(29/01/2023-Fifi-Interview)

Ani and Fifi believe that teachers serve as role models for students and significantly influence their behaviour and attitudes toward learning. Ani highlights the significance of teachers demonstrating positive conduct in the presence of their students while also refraining from negative behaviours that could influence how their students perceive them or their learning experience as a whole. Similarly, Fifi suggests that teachers must be mindful of their behaviour, model positive attitudes, encourage and motivate students, and create an inclusive and welcoming classroom environment. Both teachers agree that being a positive example is essential for establishing a constructive and efficient learning atmosphere for students.

DISCUSSION

1. EFL PSTs demonstrate the possession of three Teacher Identities during teaching practicum.

Based on the study above, participants possess various teacher identities ranging from Learning Facilitator, Spiritual Guide, and Language expert. It is discovered by knowing their point of view and activities during teaching practicum. The findings echo previous research in which learning to teach is part of identity construction (Britzman 2003; Smagorinsky et al. 2004).

Ani and Fifi both emphasize the importance of being well-prepared before entering the classroom to teach. This finding aligns with the emphasis on thorough lesson planning discussed by Rotgans and Schmidt (2011) and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that pre-service teachers should possess, according to Abbott (2017), which include subject matter knowledge, pedagogy, classroom management, flexibility, and a willingness to learn. Ani and Fifi are educators who value preparing their students before delivering new material. This finding reflects a previous study by Zhang (2019), who found that brain-based learning strategies, including warm-up activities, can enhance student achievement and retention by engaging multiple brain areas and facilitating more profound learning. Further, Liu, Wang, & Wu (2020) also found that well-designed warm-up activities can improve students' learning performance and engagement, especially when aligned with learning goals and content. Both Ani and Fifi face similar challenges in pronunciation, which is linked with Wu and Kim's (2019) study that suggested EFL teachers may face challenges related to their fluency, which can impact their confidence in teaching pronunciation and speaking skills. Further, both participants commit to providing accurate information to their students and taking their responsibility as teachers seriously. It aligns with Arikan et al. (2008), who emphasized that precise pronunciation is crucial for successful communication. Ani and Fifi conduct assessments at the end of each topic

or lesson to monitor students' understanding. Ani and Fifi's approach to assessment aligns with the findings of Rotgans and Schmidt's (2011) research, which emphasized the importance of preparing lesson plans, assessing what students have learned, and providing timely feedback. However, Sagala & Nasution's (2019) study showed that pre-service EFL teachers often rely on traditional assessment forms such as quizzes, tests, and assignments, which focus on testing the students' knowledge of the subject matter.

Ani and Fifi place a high value on students' engagement and participation in the classroom and encourage their students' critical thinking and independent thought. Both teachers want to foster a collaborative classroom environment that values mutual respect and support among classmates. Oktaviani's (2018) study showed that active learning activities positively impacted language learning outcomes and student engagement, which aligns with Fifi's practice of assigning presentations and peer reviews. Additionally, Wang's (2016) research showed that student-centred teaching methods positively affect student motivation, engagement, and language proficiency, which aligns with Ani's approach of facilitating student-centred discussions and valuing students' input. During the teaching practicum, Ani and Fifi actively provide feedback and support to their student's learning. According to Hattie and Timperley's research, Ani and Fifi value specific, timely, actionable, goal-oriented feedback (2007). According to Hattie and Timperley's research, Ani and Fifi value specific, timely, actionable, goal-oriented feedback (2007). They also prioritize positive reinforcement as a strategy for shaping and maintaining desirable student behaviour, supported by Mandah and Gbarato's (2016) research. Ani and Fifi both attempted to provide learning media and design learning activities. Their teaching is consistent with earlier studies that stress the importance of providing diverse learning media to support students' learning (Xu, 2013; Naz and Akbar, 2005). Ani and Fifi prioritize adjusting their teaching methods to cater to their students' needs and evaluating their teaching efficacy through feedback. This finding supports Chen & Wang (2017), who found that pre-service teachers who engaged in reflective practices and used student feedback were better equipped to improve their teaching performance. Studies (Liu & Jiang, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2018) believed pre-service teachers who received feedback from students could adjust their teaching strategies to meet their students' needs better. Meanwhile, Chen & Shi (2017) indicated that pre-service teachers evaluate their teaching performance based on their perceptions and observations.

Both Ani and Fifi shared their experiences with social interaction with students. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Yang et al. (2021), which found that positive emotions were crucial in learning. Furthermore, Ani and Fifi's emphasis on building relationships with their students aligns with previous research (Roorda et al., 2011), which indicated that teachers prioritizing building positive relationships with their students could better promote academic success and positive student outcomes. Ani and Fifi believe that teachers should act responsibly and address problematic behaviour gently and respectfully, creating a positive and respectful classroom environment. Both teachers recognize the critical role that teacher-student relationships play in a student's learning experience and personal development, and research has shown that positive teacher-

student relationships lead to improved academic achievement, engagement, and classroom participation (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Hattie & Yates, 2014).

2. Past Experience, Content area of Knowledge, and Relationship with students influenced EFL PSTs' Identity

The process of developing a pre-service teacher's professional identity is not straightforward and is affected by multiple factors, as noted by Olsen (2011), Varghese et al. (2005), and Wenger (1998). The research findings suggest that experience, subject matter knowledge, and student relationships are significant influencing factors.

The participants' experiences are one of the factors that influence Ani and Fifi in shaping their teacher identity. It includes their teaching experiences and the teachers who have taught them in the past. This finding was supported by Wright et al. (2018) who noted that past teaching experiences may positively and negatively impact pre-service teachers' identities. The recent finding aligns with Uzun's (2017) study that suggested reflective practice could help pre-service teachers become more aware of their teaching practices, beliefs, and attitudes and develop a professional identity grounded in their personal experiences and contexts. This finding is supported by Kuo and Chen (2019), who discovered that how pre-service teachers perceive their ideal and actual teacher images can affect their identity development. They mentioned that positive teacher images contribute to forming a positive teacher identity, while negative teacher images can hinder it.

The common aspect shared by both participants was their awareness of the material they would teach their students. Participants' belief aligns with several studies (Coe et al., 2014; Lerseth, 2013) that emphasized the essential nature of a strong command of the subject matter for effective teaching. According to Park and Kim (2019), having strong content knowledge is crucial for pre-service teachers to establish a robust professional identity that could result in improved teaching practices and better student learning outcomes. Finally, Shao & Gao (2019) and Özdemir & Güneş (2020) found that a teacher's subject matter knowledge positively impacts their professional identity and attitude towards teaching.

Ani and Fifi share a similar perspective on building positive relationships with students. Participants' belief in developing a teacher - students relationship reflects numerous studies, including those by Hamre & Pianta (2005), Park (2003), Kiefer et al. (2014), and others that found positive teacher-student relationships are linked to improved academic outcomes and social-emotional development. Similarly, Aliakbari & Ghonsooly (2019) found that spiritual intelligence positively correlates with professional identity among EFL teachers in Iran. Mulyana & Eridani (2018) also suggested that spirituality significantly shapes pre-service teachers' perspectives and values towards English language teaching. Kurniasih & Khoiriyyah (2020), also showed that spirituality is essential to teacher identity and can shape values and attitudes toward teaching.

CONCLUSION

The study is aimed to explore the pre-service teacher's identity development. The study's results revealed that EFL pre-service teachers develop their identity during their teaching practicum by prioritizing thorough lesson planning, ensuring students are ready before introducing new material, and emphasizing the importance of correct pronunciation. They value professionalism and believe they are responsible for providing accurate and comprehensive information to their students. They incorporate various assessment practices, creating an engaging and supportive classroom

environment, integrating diverse learning media, and seeking and utilizing student feedback. Additionally, they prioritize building positive relationships with their students to promote academic success and positive student outcomes. Furthermore, based on the recent findings, it can be concluded that past experiences, the content area of knowledge, and positive relationships with students are significant factors that can influence pre-service teacher identity development.

There are certain limitations to the study that should be considered. For example, the study only looked at identity formation in EFL pre-service teachers, which may limit the findings' applicability to other teaching environments. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which might be influenced by social desirability bias and affected the validity of the results. Finally, the research did not investigate the long-term impacts of pre-service teacher identity formation on teaching practices and student outcomes.

Pre-service teachers need to plan, act, reflect, and evaluate their experiences to conceptualize their professional identity, particularly during the teaching practicum program. It is hoped that they can synthesize and create critical tension between their knowledge and experiences, which is essential for their future professional development. Teacher education programs are expected to offer an enhanced teaching practicum program that is regarded as a critical phase to enhance the development of pre-service teachers' experiences. It is hoped that after completing the theoretical courses, the EFL PSTs will be well-prepared to enter the teaching practicum, where they can practice teaching in an actual classroom situation right from the start of their initial teaching practice. Additionally, for future research, it is essential to continue exploring the factors that influence pre-service teacher identity development, such as past experiences, subject matter command, and spirituality. Further studies can investigate the impact of different teaching strategies, assessment practices, and learning environments on pre-service teacher identity development and student outcomes. Moreover, researchers can explore the relationship between positive teacher-student relationships and academic and social-emotional outcomes in different educational contexts.

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