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Rethinking the Policies for Nurturing Teacher Identity Development in Indonesia

Jarjani Usman

Ar-Raniry State Islamic University, Banda Aceh, jarjani@ar-raniry.ac.id

Teuku Zulfikar

Ar-Raniry State Islamic University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Dorine Lugendo

Maseno University, Kenya

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Abstract

This study explored supports given by in-service teachers to student-teachers for professional identity development in Indonesia. In this qualitative study, sixteen student teachers taking the course of Curriculum Development at an Islamic higher education institution in Aceh were grouped into six and assigned to six schools (primary to senior high) in two districts in Aceh, Indonesia, to communicate with classroom teachers regarding lesson plan and teaching materials. We also expected them to observe classroom practices if possible. In this way, student teachers gain real experiences on how the teachers develop their lesson plans and implement them in actual lessons, as part of their professional identity development. We then interviewed all of them to delve into their experiences and perceptions of lesson preparation and teaching. The results showed that even though most schoolteachers provide spaces for student-teachers to practice designing lesson plans, most in-service teachers did not allow student teachers to observe classroom practices. This leaves a gap in the trajectory of student teacher identity development as there are few opportunities for support from the in-service teachers in this regard. However, some participants admitted that their teacher identity had been shaped by the good images of the school they visited, the courses on pedagogy they learned at university, and the instructional approaches former teachers used at schools. This study is significant because its findings can fill in the gap in the trajectory of teacher identity development by alerting in-service teachers, teacher trainers, and the government about the importance of providing school support to student teachers for developing their identity.

Keywords

Aceh, in-service teachers, student teachers, teacher identity, teacher education, teacher supports, qualitative research

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Jarjani Usman

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Teuku Zulfikar

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Indonesia

Dorine Lugendo

Maseno University, Kenya

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Keywords: Aceh, in-service teachers, student teachers, teacher identity, teacher education, teacher supports, qualitative research

Introduction

The issue of teachers' professional identity development has received growing attention in research in recent decades. Literature indicates that teacher identity influences their professional development. A sense of professional identity is crucial for teachers because it contributes to their self-efficacy, motivation, commitment and job satisfaction (Day, Stobart, Kington, Sammons, & Last, 2003), becomes the basis for them in making meaning and decisions in schools and the classrooms (Bullough, 1997), and the main factor in becoming and

being a good teacher (Flores & Day, 2006; Skott, 2019). In the same vein, Bolívar, Domingo and Pérez-García (2014) state that, “identity is crucial to how teachers construct the nature of their work on a daily basis (motivation, satisfaction and competence)” (p. 106). These views suggest that it is crucial to support student teachers in developing their professional identity for effective service.

Researchers such as Flores and Day (2006) and Morrison (2013) have noted that becoming a teacher is a long and very complex journey, needing rigorous experiences by participation in teaching and learning activities. As such, teacher development requires the support of experienced in-service teachers (Creaby, 2013) to help student teachers develop their professional identity. Teacher identity is part of the process of learning to teach (Britzman, 2003). Literature indicates that one of the ways of supporting the development of teacher identity, is by having university-school partnerships (Hsiao, 2018). Many researchers view the teaching practicum as a kind of university-school partnership through which teacher identity is shaped. It has a significant positive impact on the student teacher’s beliefs and their future career (Myles et al., 2006; Rozelle & Wilson, 2012). Hence, during the practicum, student teachers need to be involved significantly in planning and actual teaching through which they gain real field experiences for their professional identity development.

Furthermore, Geijsel and Meijers (2005) argue that teacher identity involves reciprocal interactions between emotions and experience in teaching contexts. Moreover, Wenger (1998, 2010) argues that professional identity is a trajectory implying that it is a process of development through set activities over time. Studies have revealed that student teachers gained awareness of teacher-student roles and their own identities as teachers through the hands-on teaching experience in the practicum and methods courses (Addiego, 2013; Garza-Reyna, 2011; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Nagamine, 2012).

Many researchers argue that teacher education programs are responsible for building teaching and teachers’ images for future teachers (Lee, 2013) and for supporting their student teachers in supporting students to construct professional identities (Britzman, 1986). In this study we argue that sending student teachers to schools before their teaching practicum course in order to understand school realities is beneficial. This is not very common in our Indonesian context, and thus the department of English Language Education at one of the State Islamic universities in Indonesia takes the initiative to launch this program. During the students’ school visit, in-service teachers are expected to voluntarily share experiences dealing with complex activities in schools with student teachers during the students’ school visit. In this way, student teachers will understand the complex tasks undertaken at schools, which are not as simple as theoretically studying about teacher education at university. Drawing from the experiences shared by serving teachers during school visits, student teachers will be more prepared for the actual teaching practicum.

However, the fact that studies on student-teachers’ consultation with in-service teachers and observation of classroom practices have been less researched, this study is timely and significant. In fact, in many teacher education institutions in Indonesia, school visits by student teachers prior to their teaching practice placement in schools is hardly practiced, as it is not a requirement within the undergraduate teacher education programs. We argue that school visits by student teachers during their learning at teacher education prior to their teaching practice placement in schools will not only help shape and reshape teacher identity but also reduce student teachers’ anxiety before and during their teaching practicum. According to Fives et al. (2015), it is crucial to cultivate the beliefs in student teachers while learning at university to help shape the way they teach in their classrooms. Besides, placing students on teaching at school is like creating a village for them that will give them greater agency, a sense of belonging, and a feeling of being valued members of that professional organization (Ussher, 2010). In this way, they will be more prepared when they take teaching practicum.

It is especially crucial in the context of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of UIN Ar-Raniry, Aceh, Indonesia, where teaching practicum is usually held for a short period of time, two months. Unlike the School of Education at Universidad de Pamplona, Colombia, which provides pre-service teachers with pedagogic competencies and teaching formation before entering the teaching practicum in a four-stage preparation (Florez & Basto, 2017). They are required to do a teaching assistant to support basic teacher tasks under the guidance of experienced teachers. In this way, they become familiar with lesson plan development and implementation in actual classrooms. The school visits allow student teachers to develop good images of being teachers and grow a positive attitude on teaching (Flores & Day, 2006). For these reasons, student teachers need to be welcomed and supported appropriately in their quest for understandings about the school environment and teaching, and learning from in-service teachers.

Professional Identity

As Wenger (1998) argues that as humans are social beings, human learning is socially done. Through learning, people's identities are developed and changed in learning processes, as it involves a process of becoming. Identity has been defined variably by different scholars. Identity refers to our sense of who they are, and of what is most important about them (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000). In this sense, one's identity influences what we do and why we do it in daily activities. Similarly, this definition applies to professional identities, such as teachers, as they need to be aware of who they are and their essential roles.

By teacher's professional identity, Beijaard et al. (2000) mean teacher's expertise in subject matter, pedagogy, and didactics. In a nearly similar way, Teng (2017) defines teacher identity as "a process wherein teachers construct their own ideas or build practical knowledge about ways to be and act like a teacher" (p. 118). Concerning this, Pennington and Richards (2016) state that teacher identity is about "the characteristics of the teacher and how these are integrated with the possibilities and potentials provided in the institutional identity of teacher and the content and methods of a specific field, as these are realized in specific contexts of teaching" (p. 5). The definitions above suggest that teacher identity can be understood and developed through observable and unobservable professional activities and processes.

There is an abundance of research on teacher professional identities. Beijaard et al. (2004), for instance, have reviewed literature on teachers' professional identities. They identified four critical characteristics of professional teacher identities:

- Professional identity is an ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences.
- Professional identity implies both person and context.
- A teacher's professional identity consists of sub-identities that more or less harmonize.
- Agency is an important element of professional identity, meaning that teachers have to be active in the process of professional development. (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 122).

Beijaard et al.'s (2004) findings on professional identity aligns with those of other researchers (see Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Rodgers & Scott, 2008), who posit that teacher professional identity is not static, continuous, and multiple. It is ongoing and continuously reshaped during their long career as the contexts in which teachers' work influence's identity development. School and educational policies are among the factors that significantly influence the change of teacher identity. Hence, a teacher may enact more than one identity to fulfill

multiple professional roles. In the same vein, Rodgers and Scott (2008) proposed four models of identity concept; firstly, identity is shaped with multiple contexts, such as society, culture, politics, and history. Secondly, identity is shaped and reshaped when we interact with others. Thirdly, identity is unstable, shifting, and multiple. Fourthly, identity is continuously shaped and reshaped by making meaning through stories over time.

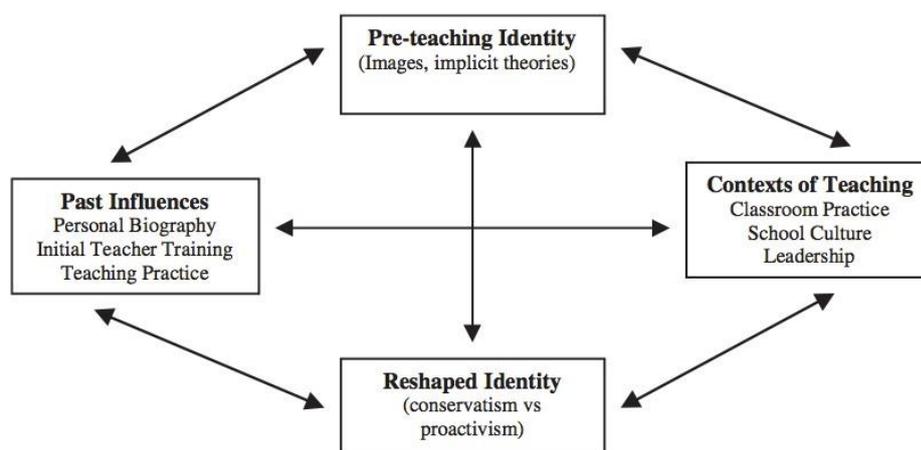
Drawing upon the models, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) state that identity is both unitary and multiple as one may have more than one identity at the same time. A teacher may be a manager of classroom practice and a member of a teacher union. Besides, teacher identity may be continuous and discontinuous, depending on the decisions one makes and the complexity of his world at one time. Furthermore, an identity may be a social and individual process, as learning as a process to shape an identity can be done individually and socially. Identity development through social processes lends credence to the importance of student teacher and in-service teacher interactions about classroom events and other school activities for student teacher professional growth and identity development.

Identity Development

It has been argued and found in literature, one's identity, including teacher professional identity, can change over time. Teachers need to reshape their identities in dealing with the change of curriculum and educational policy (Xiaoan, 2014). In recent years, curricula in many countries have been changed from traditional knowledge transmission models to 21st century constructivist models to prepare creative and innovative citizens. Similar changes happened in Indonesia, requiring teachers to adopt learner-centered active learning (Pusat Kurikulum, 2010) and in Kenya, to adopt a learner-centered competency-based curriculum to facilitate acquisition of practical skills among learners rather than an accumulation of factual knowledge (Kaviti, 2018). In short, a teacher identity can be shaped during their studying at teacher education or when working at schools. In this light, Flores and Day (2006) have developed a model of teacher identity development as depicted in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1

Key Mediating Influences on the Formation of Teacher Identity



Source: Flores & Day, 2006, p. 230.

(adopted with permission from the authors)

It can be seen in Figure 1 above that teacher identity has been shaped during the pre-teaching phase. This may be influenced by theories learned and what student teachers observe

during their learning at university, especially in teacher education. The teachers' identity is then strengthened during their teaching in the classroom, influenced by classroom practice, school culture, and leadership. For instance, even though teachers have learned learner-centered active learning approaches, they are unlikely to use them as majority embrace teacher-centered learning approaches due to the pre-existing culture of teaching and learning in schools. Similarly, active learning cannot be implemented if the school principal does not support it by providing enough facilities and time needed. Active learning is unlikely to be implemented in exam-oriented learning contexts. Consequently, the teachers who believe that active learning is effective have to reshape their identity to align with the context.

Teacher identity is also shaped by their past experiences, such as teachers' experiences when they were studying at university and school. How they were taught influences how they teach their students because their beliefs have been shaped that way (Carini & Kuh, 2003). If the curriculum of their educator preparation program was focused on teacher-centered learning, they would understand that the approach works effectively. Therefore, teacher education should play an important role in helping student teachers reshape their teacher identity.

Van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset, and Beishuizen (2017) reviewed 59 studies on teacher identity development at the higher education level and found that identity development at university does not happen smoothly. They summarized the following five psychological processes as necessary for developing teacher identity: a sense of appreciation, a sense of connectedness, a sense of competence, a sense of commitment, and imagining a future career trajectory. In contrast, Flores and Day's (2006) study found that most of the interviewed students did not have enough preparation from their university to deal with the complexity of jobs at schools. This suggests that student teachers need adequate supports from and opportunities to interact with experienced in-service teachers and participate in teaching activities to develop their teacher identity.

Wenger's Theory on Identity

According to Wenger (1998, 2010), a person's identity is characterized by a trajectory, a nexus of multiple memberships, and multiscality. Wenger explains that trajectory means the involvement of "the past and the future into the experience of the present," "accumulates memories, competencies, key formative events, stories, and relationships to people and places," and "provides directions, aspirations, and images of oneself that guide the shaping of the trajectory going forward" (p. 185). Moreover, one's identity also has a nexus of multi-memberships, as a person has experienced in a variety of communities of practice. Additionally, one's identity is formed at multiple levels all at once. This is because a teacher, for instance, can identify as a teacher at various levels: school, district and world levels.

In Wenger's (2010) perspective, one's identity is influenced by learning. When a teacher, for instance, is learning, he or she not only acquires skills and information through learning but becomes a certain person as well. Learning is not an individual but a social process, because when a person participates in the practices of social communities, his/her identity is also constructed (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Wenger (2010) also argues that one's involvement in a community of practice may be accepted or rejected, impacting one's identity development. It was found that a member will develop an identity of marginality if his/her practices and experiences are considered not relevant in a community (Wenger, 2010). Differently, Wenger found that a central identity will be developed by those whose practices receive acceptance in a community and whose experiences are valued.

Furthermore, Wenger (1998, 2010) states that identity development involves identification and negotiation. Three modes are involved in identification: engagement,

imagination and alignment. Engagement is crucial in learning process because it gains “a lived sense of who we are” (Wenger, 1998, p. 192). Imagination refers to images of the world created by a person as part of the community. Having such images of the world, we can “locate and orient ourselves, to see ourselves from a different perspective, to reflect on our situation, and to explore new possibilities” (p. 192). Besides, it is also important to align what is practiced in the larger community of practice.

Teacher Support

Teacher educators and in-service school teachers play a vital role in supporting student teachers to develop their professional identity. In this regard, Beauchamp and Thomas (2006) state that school plays a crucial role in helping to shape a new teacher identity, besides the courses and theories the student teachers learn at university. Therefore, it is crucial to support them while emotionally and intellectually struggling to connect with their professional identity. This can be done, for example, by providing opportunities to learn from experienced teachers.

Providing students access to complex classroom activities besides the teaching practicum is one way of supporting student teachers to build their identity. This is so because it provides empirical experiences into actual school activities and processes. Concerning this, Dome, Prado-Olmos, Ulanoff, and Ramos (2005) researched student teachers' conceptions of the profession, and it was revealed that they could only conceive of teaching as related to their own experiences as students. Therefore, professional treatment during their school visit can also be a chance to create good images of teaching as a job. In this way, they will form a professional and emotional attachment to school. However, this is not a common practice in Indonesia and receives less research attention, which reduces the chance for the student teachers, schools, and teacher education program to help students develop their teacher identity.

The discussion above suggests that it is necessary to send students to schools to engage in the school process and research the professional treatment they receive during their school visit. In this way, teacher education would have compelling clues to decide what needs to do with schools and what the government should do to support teacher identity development.

The Researchers

All the authors in this study are teacher educators teaching in teacher education programs. The first author is a teacher educator with a PhD in education from Deakin University, Australia, responsible for teaching students Curriculum Development course and other related courses. The second author is a teacher educator with a PhD in education from Monash University, Australia. He is also a teacher educator in charge of managing the English language department at the teacher education faculty responsible for preparing future teachers. The third author is a teacher educator with a PhD in education from Newcastle University, the United Kingdom.

In preparing future teachers, we frequently deal with the curriculum development course's dissonance taught in higher education to what teachers practiced in the school classroom. Moreover, not all students studying in teacher education in our university are motivated to learn the curriculum course nor prepared to do teaching practicum because of the anxious feelings when dealing with real students and classroom complexities. To deal with these issues, we believe that it is necessary to familiarize students with schools' realities.

Methodology

This qualitative research involved in-depth interviews in collecting data on student teachers' experiences during their school visit. Sixteen students undertaking English Curriculum Development course at the teacher education program of Universitas Islam Negeri Banda Aceh visited the schools in six groups. The sampled schools located in Banda Aceh municipality included one Islamic primary school, one public primary school, one Islamic secondary school, one public secondary school, one Islamic senior high school, and one public senior high school. This selection of these schools was intended to represent all levels of schools, ranging from primary to senior high schools. In this way, the students would be able to compare and contrast the treatment they received pertaining to their teacher identity development in different levels of school. However, before sending the students visited the schools, the students were equipped with a consent form letter to bring to schools wanting to accept their visit.

We interviewed separately all student-teachers who visited the schools to understand their attitudes towards being teachers and teaching and what the school visit meant for their professional identity development. Since they are qualitative data, we considered it relevant to use Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach through reading data closely, reducing data, coding, and concluding. The process of data analysis involves two stages, including a vertical analysis and horizontal analysis. In vertical analysis, each of the respondents' interview results were analyzed separately, whereas in horizontal analysis by comparing the common patterns and differences of the data. To confirm the findings, triangulation was made by all members of each group visiting the same school. Data sources can be one type of the triangulation (Denzin, 2001; Miles et al., 2014).

Findings

Having analyzed our findings, we found several themes answering our inquiries. Most of the participants suggested that they gained positive outcomes out of visiting schools. Their reasons can be categorized into the following themes: mentor-teacher's supports, school images, courses on pedagogical content knowledge, and teachers' instructional approaches.

Mentors-Teachers' supports

All student teachers' participating in this study said that the teachers they met during school visit helped them with lesson plans. Some of them asserted that

Excerpt 1:

The teacher I met during school visit was very helpful, he showed me the example of lesson plan, which allowed me to have some insights on what a good lesson plan looks like. (Student 2)

However, many of these participants argued that due to teachers' busy teaching schedule, they did not receive in-depth explanation about procedures and strategies in implementing lesson plans in classroom instruction. One of the students said that:

Excerpt 2:

The teachers were busy with their daily tasks, such as preparing for the coming students' exams. Besides, some were busy with social activities, such as going to locally held ceremonies. (Student 2)

This suggests that these participants were exposed to a good lesson plan, but they lacked understanding in the implementation strategies of the lesson plan in actual teaching. In addition, because the student-teachers received lack of explanation on the implementation of lesson plan and on philosophical basis underpinning the development of certain lesson plan, they have no knowledge whatsoever why a particular lesson plan was developed as such. This is evident from our discussion during lecture, in which students were not well exposed to philosophical basis of a certain lesson plan. Another excerpt stated that:

Excerpt 3:

My school visit gives me some insights on what lesson plan looks like, but I did not receive much explanation from teachers on how to develop the lesson plan and how to implement it in my teaching, and that what makes my understanding on the lesson plan is not very details. (Student 4).

Regardless of the limited support the student teachers received from in-service teachers at the school they visited, their school visit indeed beneficial for them as prospective teachers as they obtained vivid atmosphere of the school condition and, also teaching administrative stuffs, such as the lesson plan, and this also suggests that school visits can be seen as constituting part of the trajectory for teacher identity development for them. At least, they become aware of the importance of learning the pedagogical knowledge. Other trajectories in the process of their identity development include teaching practicum, early career as teachers, and other teacher professional development activities.

Nevertheless, some of the students were lucky enough to get more detailed explanation on the lesson plan because they visited a good school where teachers were very supportive. They received good supports from teachers, ranging from providing lesson plans and explanation on the lesson plan to giving access to classroom teaching and learning process.

In fact, some students argued that they became more interested in being a teacher after visiting a favorite school where enjoyable teaching and learning process was practiced.

Excerpt 4:

I visited the school. Wow, the classroom process was very interesting! When we came to the classroom, students were watching movies with subtitle in English. Actually I had a teacher in senior high school as my teaching idol. His teaching was interesting and inspires me to teach the same ways. My interest to be a teacher grows higher when I took Micro Teaching. (Student 2)

At the same token, another student also mentioned that.

Excerpt 5:

I was so lucky to have been able to visit a high-achieving school, in which I obtained a very valuable information on not only how to develop a lesson plan but also on how to implement it effectively in the teaching. The teachers also allowed me to visit classroom and observed instruction took place there. This was indeed a good experience for me. (Student 5)

Excerpt 4 suggests that in-service teachers also serve another important task other than teaching, that is to create interesting school images for pre-service teachers. In this way, they take responsibility to help the student teachers shape and revise their identities when visiting the school. In addition, Student 5 argued that being able to visit classrooms to observe real teaching was indeed helpful in enriching his understanding on how real teaching looks like.

Good School Image

Our fieldwork also revealed a very interesting finding. Some student-teachers visited high achieving schools. These high achieving schools have a good school image. This was because of abundant academic achievement schools have received. In addition, these school achievements employed effective teachers. This boosted their interest in becoming prospective teachers. During the interview, one of the student teachers revealed that before the school visit, she was at first not interested in being a teacher even though she is studying in faculty of Teacher Training program, as shown in Excerpt 5 below.

Excerpt 6:

Actually, I did not have the ambition to be a teacher. I wanted to be an accountant. However, when I visited the favorite school and observed the classroom process, I became interested in teaching. But not so much. (Student 8)

The excerpt shows that school image created in the mind of the student teachers during the school visits is potential to positively influence their attitudes by unfreezing their negative attitudes towards teaching and moving to new attitudes and identities.

Other student-teachers also mentioned that:

Excerpt 7:

The school I visited was a good one, I also found that the teachers are so good in their teaching. This I found during my visit to classroom during instruction. I observed the way teacher manage her teaching; it was so good. This boosted my motivation in becoming a teacher as I saw the teacher was very good at teaching. (Student 9)

Excerpt 8:

I was so lucky to have visited a good school. I observed good classroom practices. Classroom atmosphere was also so enjoyable, I like the school, I like the fact that the school has received so much academic achievement. This school visit was indeed helpful in boosting my motivation to become a teacher in the future. (Student 10)

These two quotes showed us that good school image helped these students to gain a positive image on the teaching profession. They argued that having observed good classroom practices, it boosted their positive images on becoming teachers.

Courses on Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Other students suggest that their school visit did not necessarily shape their identity. Those students believe that their enrolment in pedagogical content knowledge courses play a significant role in shaping their teacher identity.

Excerpt 9:

In a group, we visited a good school and observed classroom teaching and learning process. It was impressive. However, my interest in teaching has already grown beforehand since I took the course of Teaching Methodology. I

learnt a lot about various methods of teaching which are important for me and attract me to practice in my teaching. (Student 4)

The excerpt clearly shows that the courses they took during studying at the university not only equips them with knowledge and skills of teaching, but also shapes their pedagogical beliefs and identity. The other student also stated:

Excerpt 10:

Although my visit to school enriched my understanding on teaching, most of knowledge on pedagogical strategies come from my enrolment in pedagogical content knowledge course. I do not ignore the fact that the school visit gives me some knowledge on pedagogical content knowledge, but my enrolment in teaching methodology courses indeed help me understand more on teaching skill. (Student 11)

This quote suggests that although school visits were significant in developing student-teachers' teaching skill, the student-teacher believed that the teaching skill was obtained from teaching methodology courses.

Former Teachers' Instructional Approaches

Meanwhile, three of student teachers indicated that their teacher identity did not arise from visiting the school. Rather, their interest has started when they were studying at senior high school as indicated in excerpts 11 and 12 below.

Excerpt 5:

I, along with my group members visited the school and was given lesson plan by the teacher. However, my interest in teaching has grown since I was in senior high school and when I took Micro Teaching course. When I was in senior high, I had a good teacher who taught creatively and impressively. What she taught was easily caught. My interest in teaching grew more when I took Micro Teaching course. During the course, I came to know the challenges of teaching. (Student 12)

Excerpt 6:

Our group visited a school, but we did not learn much. The teacher we met was very busy at that time. So, he just gave us lesson plan without explanations. However, I have a high interest in teaching. I was impressed by my teacher at senior high school. At that time, I had a teacher who taught us joyfully. He did not press us during teaching and learning process. Very inspiring. (Student 13)

From the excerpts above, it can be understood that the student teachers were really impressed by the strategies their English teachers employed for teaching and learning the subject during their study at school. This finding resonates with Rodger and Scott's (2008) view that teacher identity is shaped by the pre-existing culture of teaching and past experiences which shape beliefs on teaching and learning. This finding underscores the important role played by teacher education in re-shaping teacher beliefs for professional growth and identity development.

Discussion

Our fieldwork has enabled us to answer our research inquiries. The “school visit,” one of the programs at the department of English Language Education, was designed to give students opportunity to gain in-depth understanding on the nature of classroom teaching, and in turns it helps them develop professional identity.

We found that student-teachers’ learning experience, courses taken, support they received and school images they observed intersect with each other that help shape these student-teachers’ identity development. This finding is so much relevant to how Wenger theorized identity development suggesting that identity is shaped and developed through multiple agencies. Student-teachers for example argued that in-service teachers’ willingness to support their needs during the visit has helped them develop positive feelings about teaching, but also allow them to understand that teaching is a complex profession. This is the instance, in which they realized that not all good “lesson-plans” can be well implemented in real teaching. This experience gives them insights that “lesson-plans” should be well planned and tested to assure its effective implementation. In addition, good school image they observed boosted their motivation to become a teacher. This also suggests that contexts shaped one’s identity development. In this case, a certain school context positively shapes ones’ professional identity. These student-teachers argued that the fact that they observed effective school culture: good school building; sufficient learning facilities; and effective teachers, has impacted to their positive image of teaching profession.

Furthermore, our findings suggest that courses on teaching methodologies these student-teachers enrolled also play significant roles in their identity development. Some of our participants, for example, suggested that they have learnt a lot about becoming prospective teachers from courses they have taken. During coursework on teaching methodologies, student-teachers were exposed to their lecturers’ classroom practices, to the course materials, and they were also exposed to their peers’ teaching practices. These agencies in a way shape their professional identity. Finally, their experiences as in the excerpts suggests can make the student-teachers understand that being a good teacher or recognized as a good teacher as some of them call their senior high school teachers, is not an isolation process. The same school does not mean having all good teachers. The same school may have one or two good teachers, depending on their efforts to build their identity. Additionally, that they learned from or were inspired by their senior high school teachers confirms previous research findings that their learning experience at school influence their professional identity (Flores & Day, 2006).

Our research has enriched understanding on professional identity development. However, this study has some limitations, such as the data collected for this study was limited to a class which consisted of 1 male and 15 female students. In other words, the findings mostly represent female students’ opinions. There is therefore a need to develop policies on school visits as part of teacher education in order to expand and strengthen the roles and partnership between universities and schools in teacher education for identity development. Such a move will open and ease access for student teachers to learn as much as possible from visits and placements in schools for professional development. Experienced teachers need to be trained and sensitized on the scope and of their professional support to student teachers and how it positively impacts teacher identity development among student teachers. Schools should be the sites for learning, not only for students, but also for student teachers and in-service teachers, through which they build their beliefs and commitment to be good teachers that will enhance the quality of education.

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Author Note

Jarjani Usman, PhD is a lecturer at the faculty of education and teacher training of Ar-Raniry State Islamic University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. He holds PhD in education from Deakin University, Australia; MSc in education from University of Twente, The Netherlands and MS in education from Texas A&M University, USA. Please direct correspondence to jarjani@ar-raniry.ac.id.

Teuku Zulfikar, PhD is a lecturer at the faculty of education and teacher training of Ar-Raniry State Islamic University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. He holds PhD in education from Monash University, Australia; MEd from Monash University, Australia; MA from Ohio State University, USA.

Dorine Lugendo, Ph.D. is a senior lecturer at Maseno University, Kisumu, Kenya. She holds PhD in education from Newcastle University, UK, MSc from University of Twente, The Netherlands.

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