

INDONESIAN PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING PRACTICUM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THEIR TEACHER IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

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Abstract

Pre-service English teachers' identity construction as a teacher is complicated and influenced by several factors. The current study intends to investigate how Indonesian pre-service English teachers construct their teacher identities when performing the teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study employed a narrative inquiry to investigate pre-service teachers' experiences and how they interpreted those experiences. To collect data from the participants, the authors used semi-structured interviews and their narrative frames.. Additionally, this study used documentation, such as lesson plans and teaching practicum reports to enrich and reinforce the data. Finally, the result of the collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that pre-service English teachers encountered several constraints when completing a teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic that could have limited how they constructed their teacher identities. Constrained factors include government rules that enforced teaching-learning activities during the pandemic and unsupportive school mentors. However, some participants also have supportive school mentors who guide them as they learn how to teach. This research demonstrates the crucial role that school mentors play in constructing pre-service teachers' identities. Furthermore, pre-service teachers overcame the difficulties of their teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic by using their creativity and resilience.

Keywords: Pre-Service English Teachers, Teacher Identity, Narrative Inquiry, COVID-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

A teaching practicum is a significant event that impacts pre-service teachers' learning of how to teach since it allows them to practice playing the role of a teacher before they become an in-service teachers. According to Ulum (2020), before commencing their actual teaching careers, pre-service teachers practice and develop themselves as teachers through teaching practicum. Additionally, Gao and Benson (2012) also assert that the teaching practicum is a very important part of a pre-service teacher's preparation to become a teacher. However, since teaching practicum is a real environment they have never faced, some pre-service teachers encounter difficulties in their transition from student to teacher. For instance, they are not prepared to complete the teachers' responsibilities. According to Pillen et al. (2013), pre-service teachers claimed that their problem during the teaching practicum was that they were unprepared to handle the obligations of a teacher. Additionally, they conducted the teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have difficulties since everything has moved from face-to-face to virtually. For pre-service teachers who are still learning how to teach, it is also a novel situation. According to Kadir and Aziz (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted pre-service teachers because they cannot conduct the teaching practicum as normal.

To deal with those challenges, pre-service teachers must come up with solutions that are appropriate for their position as teachers in order to handle the difficulties. It is related to the theory of teacher identity by Beijaard et al. (2000). He said that teacher identity relates to what a teacher should understand and be able to do. Pre-service teachers must also comprehend their role as teachers in the process of becoming qualified teachers. As a result, the core of the teaching profession is teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Through experience and the perception of that experience, teacher identity helps pre-service teachers develop ideas about how they should behave in their community (Sachs, 2005). Thus, the teaching practicum contributes to giving that experience. Additionally, interactions with other people can reveal one's identity (Gee, 2000). Pre-service teachers interact with things and people relevant to their profession during the teaching practicum, which might help them construct their teacher identity. According to Beijaard (2017), the relevant things and people they interact with include mentors in schools, supervisors, colleagues, students, and students' parents, resources, textbooks, and other teaching and learning materials. Thus, pre-service teachers might construct their identities through this process throughout their teaching practicum.

Pre-service teachers must participate in developing their identity by shaping and finding their identity as a teacher. According to Danielewicz (2001), the development of identity is influenced by participating persons. Additionally, this relates to the concept of teacher agency. When participating in innovative teaching approaches, adjusting to changing conditions, satisfying expectations and needs in their work environment, and executing rules, teachers use their agency to make decisions (Aydar et al., 2019). Pre-service teachers should reflect on their experiences to prepare to become actual teachers. It implies that by telling their experiences, they develop an awareness of their teaching knowledge and practice (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008). Using narrative inquiry, pre-service teachers talk about their experiences from their teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a few studies, Teng (2019) and Teng (2017) examined the teacher identity construction of pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum in Mainland China. In Indonesia, Yunika & Mbato's study (2020) looked into the variables affecting teachers' motivation in constructing their identities. Despite the fact that many studies examine the teacher identity, Indonesian pre-service English teachers' experiences of the teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic remain underresearched. This study presents the results of a narrative investigation into the accounts provided by pre-service teachers who completed their teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The teaching practicum that pre-service teachers complete, notably during the COVID-19 phase, provides an opportunity for this research to shed light on how they construct their professional identities. Based on the research background, one research question guides this study: How do Indonesian students who want to become English teachers build their identity as teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Student Teachers Teaching during Pandemic

Due to a decrease in incidents of COVID-19, the government modified social activities that were formerly entirely online to hybrids in 2021. The government permitted face-to-face activities in schools. The government advises that educational activities be conducted for 4-6 hours each day at a specific level of PPKM with 50% of the students (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). Despite not being entirely online or hybrid, new regulations may cause teachers to encounter challenges while putting their lesson plans into practice (Pressley, 2021). The legislation that cuts class hours will definitely make it harder for student teachers to teach their lessons well.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic is inconvenient, there is a benefit for student teachers regarding their teaching during the practicum. Student teachers can get new teaching skills through online learning that they would not have acquired while taking a university course. In the research of Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison (2021), student teachers said that even though the pandemic made them unprepared to teach, it made them want to pursue other interests with the help of their university supervisors and school mentors.

Language Teacher Identity

Tao & Gao (2018) as cited by Sachs (2005) assert that a language teacher's identity is their perspective on "how to be," "how to act," and "how to understand" the role and their link to place in society. According to Teng (2019), the ways in which pre-service teachers respond to teaching requirements in schools, negotiate the meaning of identity within the boundaries of the social culture, and adapt prior teaching experiences to new teaching during the teaching practicum are all ways in which the understanding of their identities can be explored. This study investigates pre-service teachers' teaching practicum experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pre-service teachers can show how they feel through their own experiences as long as they follow the school's rules and figure out who they are when they don't have many options. Gao (2016) identifies three levels of the identity of a language teacher:

1. Professional identity is a fundamental of teachers' goals and efforts to demonstrate that they value their professional selves.
2. Professional identity is directly linked to their responsibility to uphold the standards of their own professional communities.
3. Professional identity can be mediated or hindered by regulations of government, educational curriculum materials, etc.

From the third level of professional identity previously described, teachers might encounter a number of difficulties or issues, such as government regulations, educational curriculum materials, etc., that could hinder their ability to maintain a positive professional identity. They negotiate their identity and find solutions they believe will meet these challenges. Thus, Teng (2017) asserts that teachers' sense of agency and their professional identities are intertwined. In order to modify, refine, and reshape the teachers' understanding of teaching, it is necessary for them to feel a sense of agency (Roberts & Graham, 2008). Thus, when influenced by social contact, teachers' identities can change in a short term. According to Barkhuizen (2016), language teacher identity changes over time in the short term.

Narrative Inquiry For Understanding Pre-Service Teachers' Identity as a Teacher

Pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to narrate their teaching practicum experiences when using narrative inquiry. Pre-service teachers used their stories as a narrative site for them to shape and reshape their identity as teachers related to their feelings and social interactions (Yuan & Lee, 2016). Additionally, in narrative study, pre-service teachers are also asked to think about their experiences and tell their stories to give them meaning and to learn more about their teaching knowledge and practice (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008). Pre-service teachers learn how their interpretation affects their outcomes connected to teaching by retelling the experiences they had during the teaching practicum. According to Mary (2003), the goal of narrative inquiry is to "understand the effects of interpretation rather than explanation." By putting together the experiences of pre-service teachers, it is possible to see how their life experiences have shaped their personal and professional identities (Teng, 2019; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). This includes who they are, how they see themselves, and how they act.

METHOD

The narrative inquiry methodology was used in this study because it is well-suited to investigating teachers' identities. Since the purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of student teachers during their teaching practicum, narrative research provides a way to look into some of their realities as well as place them in the larger context of the world by compiling their narratives (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008; Barkhuizen, 2016). In addition, to give the significance of their experiences in narrative study, the student teachers must reflect on them. They relate their experiences to better grasp their theoretical knowledge and practical teaching techniques (Barkhuizen, 2008). Thus, when they want to enter their future career as a teacher, they know what to develop and improve in terms of their teaching. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher collected the data through the Zoom application and WhatsApp. 4 pre-service English teachers voluntarily became participants in this study. Firstly, the researcher contacted the participants to have them be research participants. After they agree to become participants, the researcher gives them a consent form. Then the researcher puts them in a WhatsApp group to facilitate communication and give instructions. The researcher explains the work on narrative frames. The researcher gives the WhatsApp group a narrative frame file in the form of Microsoft Word. Narrative frames are typed in Indonesian. If they do not understand the content of the narrative frames, participants are allowed to ask the researcher. The processing time for narrative frames is seven days. After the participants collected the narrative frames file, the researcher translated it into English. Participants were allowed to revise the transcript translation narrative frame. After that, the researcher used the Zoom app to talk to the participants and find out more about their stories in narrative frame. The researcher uses the participants' teaching practicum reports and lesson plans to enrich the data. This study uses thematic analysis to interpret the teaching practicum experiences of student teachers. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis does not require the same level of detailed verbal and nonverbal transcription to analyze conversation or discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The teaching-learning regulations during pandemic hinders pre-service teachers' teaching

The government's implementation of regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic in schools had an impact on pre-service teachers' ability to implement their teaching and hindered their perspectives on "how to act" as teachers. They all encountered challenges when they had to follow the regulations. They all wanted to be like the teachers they wanted to be, implementing strategies they were passionate about and explaining the material in detail. For instance, Cinta feels disappointed when she has to teach online or hybrid. She prefers to teach face-to-face because she feels it will be more convenient to teach. Meanwhile, Mily and Maura wanted to conduct the small group discussion in the classroom. However, due to the regulations about social distancing and avoiding crowds during pandemic outbreaks, the school forbade that activity. Meanwhile, the small group discussion will bring students close together and encourage them to not keep their distance. On the other hand, due to government regulations regarding restrictions on activities in schools, making teaching time less than before, Alya found it challenging to deliver the material. She can only teach for 20 minutes. In her opinion, it did not seem like enough time had been given to explain the material clearly and in detail. In

conclusion, their limitations in executing the COVID-19 pandemic provision are their lack of teaching time and inability to implement the teaching they want. This finding is traced from interview transcription as follows:

- Cinta** : Maybe the online learning system regulation. I was a little disappointed after I knew that the online learning system still applies in schools. Because before carrying out the teaching practicum, I had expected that I would teach in class, meet with students, and approach them. I like it when I teach in front of the class because I want to improve my teaching, and teaching face-to-face is more convenient. But, it turned out that the reality was the opposite of my expectations.
- Mily** : Term or condition was when the teaching system at the school did not allow group discussion activities because, at that time, it was still in a state of PTMT (pembelajaran tatap muka terbatas). I wanted to make a group, a small group discussion. So, one group consists of three students. Then the students discussed the topic in class. After that, they shared what they discussed with another group. However, when I gave my lesson plan to my school mentor, she said I couldn't incorporate small group discussions into teaching and learning activities. The problem is that schools do not allow small group discussion activities when offline or hybrid learning because COVID-19 is still spreading, and we must keep our distance. Even when teaching, teachers must always be in front of the class. They should not approach or be close to their students. I want to hold a small group discussion to enhance students' critical thinking. However, it should not be. Eventually, I kept the discussions but individually.
- Maura** : The obstacle I experienced was when I wanted students to create a discussion group to discuss the topic that I taught but the teaching system at the school did not allow it. Even the seats of students must also be spaced out. The other obstacle is when students are passive during class.
- Alya** : Yea, I had trouble managing the time. Because the school imposes a regulation from the government that recommends reducing the teaching-learning activities time, the school cut much time for teaching and learning activities, initially 40 minutes per lesson, to 20 minutes. It certainly does not make me deliver the material well. Of course, I want to explain the material clearly and in detail and implement varied teaching. But with that short of time, it is not enough to implement various instructions.

Pre-service teachers use creativity and resilience under challenging condition

Teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreaks is a challenge for pre-service teachers. They must survive and think about managing classes effectively during the pandemic. Additionally, since the school system is hybrid (online-offline), when pre-service teachers notice that student engagement in online learning activities is poor, they try to get students more involved in online learning activities. To deal with this challenging condition, they use their creativity and resilience. Mily and Maura, for instance, used PowerPoint with eye-catching visuals. Meanwhile, Cinta used YouTube to deliver the materials and to be used as a learning medium because she assigned students to make practical videos to become reporters using English and post their videos via YouTube. This finding can be seen from the interview transcription below.

Cinta : Since the pandemic regulations requires schools to continue to carry out online learning, I inevitably have to accept this situation. But this condition doesn't even make me lazy to teach. I'm still looking for the positives and doing my best. Keep looking for appropriate teaching activities I can implement with these conditions. It turned out to be a lot I could learn. In addition to learning about online teaching, I also learned how to reach students because their participation is low when online learning. Finally, I made learning using YouTube. I gave material about "News Report" in the 12th grade through a video in a casual style and posted it to my YouTube channel. I also gave students a "News Report" assignment in the form of being a reporter, and then they videotaped it and posted it on YouTube. Before they made the video, I gave an example of a news report video that used English. After that, they are asked to fill in the vocabulary they get in the vocabulary log template while they watch the news report video. The aim is to enrich their vocabulary and improve their English skills.

Maura : When learning online, I strive to create exciting material. It means interesting in terms of visuals. For example, I made learning material using PowerPoint, which has the impression of not being monotonous. Meanwhile, during offline learning, when students have begun to be passive, I divide students into groups or teams based on the rows of tables vertically because the school did not allow students to sit close together at that time. Thus, I gave questions about the topics discussed, and each group had to answer the questions scambly. I do this to make students active in the classroom and feel challenged. I feel normal dealing with it, but maybe it's because I also teach in one of the tutoring places, so I'm a little overwhelmed. But the important thing is that I

don't forget my responsibility as a teacher, so I must survive..

Mily : Learning time offline was reduced because of the pandemic, so I should be more able to manage time. In online learning, I make PowerPoint as attractive as possible and clearly so that students don't get tired of seeing it and want to read and learn. In addition, to increase students' engagement and motivation during online learning, I made rules for those inspired by my teachers in senior high school. The rule is that I give stars to students who actively answer questions. Each student must collect seven stars for their grades to be complete. For students who have earned seven stars, they should not answer the questions again. So that students' grades are evenly distributed and they can get the opportunity to answer. I have to accept this condition, which is also a challenge for me in looking for creative learning activities during the pandemic.

Alya : Because the aim I am in the teaching practicum is to learn to teach, and indeed this is a teacher's risk, so I must be able to accept and survive. Thus, I need to be more able to manage my teaching time.

School mentors influence in pre-service teachers' identity construction as a teacher: mediating and restricting

Pre-service teachers' consideration of how to be, act, and understand as a teacher is influenced by the role of school mentors. In the narrative frame data, four participants expressed varied experiences with their school mentors. The relationship between pre-service teachers and school mentors is discussed in this section, as well as how school mentors assist pre-service teachers in developing their ideas about "how to be," "how to act," and "how to understand" as teachers. Cinta and Mily, for instance, have school mentors who support them in teaching, discipline, and telling how good quality teachers are. In contrast, Alya and Maura feel that their relationship with their school mentor is not close enough, and there is even conflict between Maura and her school mentor. Maura and her school mentor have different opinions. To establish her identity as an English teacher and familiarize the students with English, she intended to actively use English while teaching in class. In contrast, her school mentor rarely speaks in English in class because she thinks the students will not understand what she is talking about. In another instance, Alya anticipated that the school and her school mentor would assist her in creating a lesson plan. However, the reality was that Alya's school mentor refused to give her the lesson plan when she requested it. According to the narrative frame data, the pre-service teachers' feelings were as follows:

Cinta : My relationship with my school mentor was close. He is someone who has a very high dedication. He gave me tips

on how to teach. For example, a teacher should insert a casual chat into teaching-learning activities, such as talking about students' future, and a teacher should motivate them. He is also constantly giving detailed feedback on my teaching. For example, when I teach pronunciation, the pronunciation I taught is wrong. After I finished my teaching, he reminded me and told me what the correct pronunciation was. In addition, he also taught me discipline. When I was almost late coming to school, he rushed up to me and touched his watch. I also had to submit a lesson plan to him before I taught. I'm happy to live it because such rules train me to be a professional teacher. Therefore, I am grateful to have an excellent, passionate, dedicated school mentor. I learned a lot from him because he likes to share. Whatever he knows, he shares.

Mily : My relationship with my school mentor was close because my school mentor turns out to be an alumnus of the same study program and university so we can share many stories about teaching and college. My school mentor is also not an ignorant person. On the contrary, she is very friendly and open to intern teachers. In addition, my school mentor gives tips on how to deal with students' misbehavior. I also often consult with my school mentors regarding the grades of students.

Maura : My relationship with my school mentor was not close because I think my school mentor is not an approachable person. Unlike the other teachers who are more friendly and open. I am not comfortable with my school mentor. I cannot do that when I see my friends close and often interact with their school mentors. She did not even ask for my lesson plan to be checked. However, despite being often introverted, I tried to get close to her. I am at a loss as to how to deal with it. In the end, I just talked as necessary with her. Most importantly, I did not neglect my obligations as an intern teacher. I feel emotionally uncomfortable. In addition, I want to teach actively using English even though it is not full English. I want students to get used to listening to English and understanding the point. I also want to show my identity as an English teacher. I don't want people to think, 'can they speak English? Why do they always teach using the native language? But, when when I saw my school mentor teaching, she mostly used the native language. There is a difference of opinion between my school mentor and me. In between she taught, she said, "Sorry, students here don't understand English and are very passive. It may be

the effect of COVID-19." I don't agree when she says it in front of her students. In the end, I still speak English but mix with more Indonesian, and I often write down what I say on the whiteboard to enrich students' vocabulary.

- Alya** : My relationship with my school mentor was not close because we didn't see each other often, and we often communicated through WhatsApp. I feel shocked when I want to see an example of a lesson plan commonly used by schools to the school mentors. She didn't want to show it, and I had to make my creation in making the lesson plan. Maybe it's because she wants to see how far I can make a lesson plan.

Pre-service teachers lack of knowledge in designing lesson

A teacher who is developing a curriculum must be familiar with all of its elements, including the teaching strategies, methods, and approaches. The results demonstrate that pre-service teachers' inexperience with lesson plan design is their biggest barrier to developing a curriculum. Cinta, for instance, believed that the lesson plan course wasn't all that significant and at the time she hadn't made up her mind to become a teacher, so she wasn't very involved in the lesson planning course. Maura had a reason to believe that online learning was ineffective for her when she enrolled in the lesson plan course. Because no student ever explained the content of the lesson clearly when they conveyed the material through presentations. As a result, she still doesn't understand how to make a lesson plan. Alya believes that there isn't enough practice in creating lesson plans, which makes her feel unaccustomed to it. The following findings are displayed in the interview transcript:

- Cinta** : So, when I learned about the lesson plan in university class, at that time, I was already studying online because of the pandemic. I'm less involved in the classroom. I lack mastery of the material, being less active, and lack the motivation to learn. At that time, I didn't have the desire to be a teacher. As a teacher during the teaching practicum, I didn't know how to design lesson plans. So it's hampered. Though it is the basic knowledge that an English teacher should have. In addition, when studying courses that discuss approaches, methods, etc., I am still confused.

- Mily** : About developing a curriculum, it is still lacking. So when in the teaching practicum, the school still uses the old lesson plan format, which contains many components, such as materials, tools, learning designs, methods, and techniques. So I've not maxed out on that part. I am still confused about distinguishing designs, methods, and techniques.

Finally, I determined it with the limitations of my knowledge. But if for the teaching procedure I make it to the maximum, for example, I search the internet about discovery learning what it is, what the process is, then I apply it to my teaching.

Maura : I have not been too optimal in designing the lesson plan. When I enter the course about the lesson plan, I still don't get the explanation because we learn synchronously at that time. And also, during the course, the peers deliver the material or presentation, and I think that's not explained clearly. So I understand it from the internet.

Alya : I am not able to make a lesson plan, it is precisely because I am not used to it or rarely make lesson plans.

Narrative as an understanding of pre-service teachers' teaching knowledge and view themselves

After pre-service teachers have recounted and reflected on their experiences during the teaching practicum, they said that they comprehend better by recognizing what they have done as a teacher. In order to prepare themselves to become teachers, specifically in teaching, they also considered their interpretation a self-evaluation. For Cinta, for instance, she was previously of anything new about her teaching during the teaching practicum. However, she discovered something new about her teaching after talking about her experiences during the teaching practicum. Therefore, she regarded her interpretation of the story as an evaluation and reflection. Mily also had a sense of awareness of what had been accomplished throughout the teaching practicum. She recounted her experience and then realized that she was a teacher who always wanted her students to think critically. Hence, to get better at teaching, she will look for activities that get students involved in giving answers or opinions. In addition, preparation before teaching is an important thing that teachers need to pay attention to. That's what Maura realized after recounting her teaching practicum experience. Lastly, Alya felt reminded again that a teacher should not stop learning, not generalize all students, and teach by giving positive energy to students. Therefore, after sharing her experience, she wanted to improve her teaching by mastering the material before teaching and making memorable teaching for students. Participants' opinions are expressed in the interview transcript as follows:

Cinta : After telling the story of my teaching practicum experience, I discovered a new thing that I hadn't noticed before. So this story is also a reflection and evaluation for me. I have a lesson from this experience and can grow from the incident I passed. Whereas, for my teaching development, I want to overcome the obstacles of my

teaching. For example, I want to have more mastery in designing a lesson plan.

- Mily** : I realized that I was a teacher who demanded too much for students to think more critically. Because when I teach in a teaching practicum, I don't want to give the correct answer directly, I want students to share their opinions, and I constantly questioning students' answers. So I want to develop my teaching in terms of creating activities that can get almost all students actively involved and be able to express their opinions or answers.
- Maura** : I became more aware of what to do as a teacher. I took it as a self-evaluation. And also, when I become a teacher, I want to be more prepared because good preparation is essential, mature emotionally and intellectually. Moreover, I want to overcome my obstacles with more flexible public speaking.
- Alya** : From what I told you about my experience during the teaching practicum, I realized again that a teacher should not stop learning and generalize all students. Some students may become fast learners, and some may be slow learners. And also, the image of a teacher is essential because when the teacher enters the class cheerful, surely students will also be spirited so that they can participate in learning activities well. I also want to develop and teach myself in terms of mastering the material well before teaching and further develop my creativeness to create memorable learning for them.

Discussion

The results reveal some significant points about how pre-service teachers are constructing their identities as teachers. First, the government policy that imposes rules on schools for teaching-learning activities during the pandemic, i.e. to socially distance and shorten the length of teaching-learning activities in schools, restricts the construction of the teacher identity of pre-service teachers. As a result, they are unable to use the learning strategies they prefer. For instance, Maura and Mily want students to join small groups to discuss a particular topic and advance their critical thinking. However, because it can induce students to crowd, schools forbid teachers from asking students to participate in small group discussions. On the other hand, Alya found it challenging when teaching only 20 minutes due to government policy that reduced teaching-learning time in schools. Alya wishes to integrate a variety of classroom activities while explaining the material in detail and effectively. However, she cannot actually put her desired teaching into practice. Their choice of teaching reflects their ideas on how to behave as a teacher. This finding supports the concept of language teacher identity, which describes the teacher's perspective on "how to be," "how to act," and "how to understand" the position and their link to place in society (Tao & Gao, 2018), cited by Sachs (2005). Meanwhile, their constraint limit their ability to negotiate the gap between reality and their goals (Teng, 2019).

Gao (2016) claims that elements like government policies, educational curriculum materials, etc. might support or even hinder the development of professional identity, which is a factor that constraint the building of language teacher identities for pre-service teachers.

Second, the results showed how crucial the role of the school mentor is in helping future teachers develop their teaching skills. In a previous study, Lerseth (2013) found that school mentors were the most knowledgeable people and closest to the student teachers when it came to influencing how they constructed their teacher identities. This study discovered that the participants' interactions with their school mentor varied. For instance, Maura and Alya feel that their relationship with the school mentor is not close, and even Maura has a different opinion on teaching than the school mentor. Teng (2017) agreed with a previous study that the lack of support from school mentors made it harder for pre-service teachers to figure out who they were as teachers.

Third, the student teachers revised their views on teaching in response to some of the challenges they encountered. For instance, Cinta, , realized that the teaching conditions she didn't want like during the pandemic made her learn about how to reach students for online learning and about teaching that was appropriate to be used during the pandemic. Alya and Mily also work to produce media, such as PowerPoint presentations, that transmit information in a visually appealing manner. It implies that their feeling of agency allowed them to modify, refine and reshape the teachers' conception of teaching (Roberts & Graham, 2008). Additionally, Teng (2017) also says that teachers' sense of agency and their sense of who they are as professionals are linked.

Finally, based on the findings, a narrative study can demonstrate how pre-service teachers see themselves as teachers. For instance, after sharing her story, Mily came to the conclusion that she was a teacher who always wanted students to exercise critical thinking. On the other hand, Alya and Maura understood their roles as teachers and how they were to behave in that capacity. It is consistent with the earlier research by Teng (2019), which found that gathering pre-service teachers' narrative experiences could reveal how their experiences shape their personal and professional identities through the stories of their life experiences, which include who they are, how they see themselves, and how they behave. Cinta, on the other hand, recognizes that she actually learned something new about teaching that she hadn't previously realized after doing something she had already done. Barkhuizen and Wette (2008) say that in the narrative study, the pre-service teachers have to think about their experiences to figure out what they mean and to learn more about their teaching knowledge and practice by telling their stories.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore how Indonesian pre-service English teachers constructed their teacher identities during COVID-19 pandemic while doing their teaching practicum. The first finding discusses factors that hindered pre-service teachers' identity construction. For instance, small group discussions and cutting down on teaching-learning time in class are prohibited by government policies that were established in schools under the COVID-19. The second finding speaks to the creative and resilient ways that pre-service teachers have of dealing with difficulties. In the third finding, it is discussed how important it is for school mentors to aid pre-service teachers in developing their professional identities. According to the results, some pre-service teachers believed that their school mentors helped them learn how to teach, while others said that there was a lack of support from school mentors. The fourth study reveals that pre-service teachers' own lack of expertise in lesson planning was a contributing factor in the

difficulty of constructing a teacher identity. The conclusion also highlights how the narrative inquiry encourages pre-service teachers to evaluate their teaching knowledge and skills.

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