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English Teachers' Identity in Pesantren: A Narrative Inquiry Study

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Abstract: English Teachers' Identity in Pesantren: A Narrative Inquiry Study. Objective: *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School) is recognized as an educational institution in Indonesia. In educational environment, Teachers have an important role for the successful in the teaching-learning process. They should construct their professionalism and identity in facing the development of education. There are numerous research studies on teacher identity. But, there is still a lack of research on teacher identity in *Pesantren*. Therefore, this research study aims to explore how English teachers in *Pesantrnen* construct their identities. **Method:** This research is a narrative study that involves six English teacher in *Pesantren*. The data were elaborated into three themes, the novice teacher, the professional learning journey to be professional teachers, and professional teachers. **Finding:** The examination of their construction identities revealed from the teachers' experiences to know how teachers in *Pesantren* understand themselves through experiences. **Conclusion:** Understanding teachers' experience will give best implications to the English teachers' identity which in turn will contribute to construct their identity.

Keywords: pesantren, english teachers, teachers' identity.

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■ INTRODUCTION

A key factor in schools' quality is a teacher (Fauth et al., 2019). Teacher becomes valuable asset in developing education. In line with the increase of science and information and communication technology, teachers are also demanded to develop their ability so that they can do their roles in the classroom. Research has shown that the quality of the teacher affects the quality of education. To improve the quality of education, governments make national policies and set national standards for education (Shaturaev, 2021). The quality of education is related to the teachers who teach and the environment where students learn (Ismail, Pawero, & Umar, 2021).

To develop teachers' knowledge, teachers should have good activities such as reading, discussion, joining teachers' forum, seminar, and workshop (Suharyadi, Widiati, & Basthomi, 2021). However, frequently teachers are often blamed for students who have low achievement (Prabandari, 2020), and the parents tend to blame the teachers. Numerous researches have looked at the factors that influence students achievements like teachers-students relationships, students' ability, students effort, and self-regulated learning (Peterson et al., 2011). (Alrabai, 2016) highlighted that the low achievement of students is interrelated factors from students variables and sociocultural variable in gender, motivation, anxiety, first language effects, culture and religion. Related to the teachers, a good teacher come from a good identity (Palmer, 1997). Since the identity can be seen in terms of unique characteristic (Pennington & Richards, 2016), the notion of teachers' identity have become the research interest in teacher development as the

pedagogic responsibility in teachers' education. (Moate & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2014).

Teachers' identity can be understood how teachers consider themselves as teachers (Prabandari, 2020). It is "shaped and reshaped in interaction with others in professional context" (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Teacher identity is never static but ongoing process, it is as something that does not persistently exist (Luk-Fong, 2013). The number of studies concerning the teacher identity in the university, secondary, and primary school has also shown significant increased. For example, (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009); (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004) have reviewed about the topic of the teacher identity, and they found that the starting point for instilling the development of teachers' identity are awareness, teachers education programs, and reflection. Some other research has also been done by (Lomi & Mbato, 2020) in investigating the external and internal factors faced by the teacher, in internal factor deal related with the emotions, self-efficacy, the ability in teaching, and personal opinion about teacher's job. The external factor related to the classroom management, the students' competency, school's facility, and teachers' salary. (Zen, Ropo, & Kupila, 2022) put the teachers' education enable teachers to view their previous teacher roles from new perspective through their knowledge and new understanding.

Regarding the English teachers' identity. The studies that focus explicitly on English teachers' identity in *Pesantren* is still limited. Particularly, none of prior studies has focus on English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher in *Pesantren*. Whereas *Pesantren* play significant supports for Indonesians' education. *Pesantren's* educatioan can accommodate and affiliate to Ministry of Religion and Ministry of Education and Culture, by this passion students in *Pesantren* are able to get intellectual, emotional, and spiritual expreinces

(Burga, Arsyad, Damopolii, & Marjuni, 2019). But, this is worsened by the stigma *Pesantren* that is characteristically disadvantage to be observed (Habibi et al., 2018).

To investigate the teacher identity, Rogers and Scott (2008) in (Buchanan, 2015) offers four factors that influenced. The first that is influenced by cultural, political, and historical. The second is swayed by relationship and emotion. The third is that identity is unstable therefore constantly changeable. The last is that identity related with teachers' experiences.

In internal context, (Mockler, 2011) states that there are three domains influence teacher identity. These domains are personal experience, professional context, and external political environment. The first is the domain of personal experience, the teachers' experience as students in school, extra-curricular activities, interest, hobbies, social communities, and family context. The second is the domain of professional context, the former and ongoing education, participating in professional involvement (teachers' forum) in small or large level. The experience in former and school life that the teachers have worked. Also included in this domain are teachers' own 'extra-curricular activities', interests, hobbies, roles held and activities engaged in. The domain of teachers' personal experience relates primarily to those aspects of their personal lives, framed by class, race and gender that exist outside of the professional realm. Teachers' experience at school (as students themselves) is a particularly salient part of this domain.

The domain of teachers' professional context relates to those aspects of their experience which are framed within an education context. Here we find career stories, professional learnings, and development experience, those features of the particular school and system contexts they have worked within that have made a particular impact. This domain is located

experiences and facets external to particular school and system contexts but internal to the professional area of teachers, such as involvement in professional associations, unions and networks on small and large scales. Teacher education, both initial and ongoing, is a significant element within the domain of professional context.

The domain of the external political environment comprises the discourses, attitudes and understandings surrounding education that exist external to the profession, experienced by teachers largely through the media, but also through the development of government policy which relates to their work and the ways in which political ideology impacts upon their work as a result of government policy

There are four assumptions that most approaches to investigating teacher identity. The first one is that identity is influenced by and formed within social, cultural, political, and historical contexts. The second is that identity is formed over relationships and emotions. The third is that identity is constantly fluctuating and unstable. The fourth is that identity involves the reconstruction of stories told over time (Buchanan, 2015 in Rodger and Scott, 2008).

For the purposes of this discussion, the concept teacher identity is used to refer to the way that teachers, both individually or collectively view and understand themselves as teachers. In international literature, the teachers' identity has significant attention (Luk-Fong, 2013). In Indonesian context, some studies have been devoted to investigate the teacher identity. Yumarnamto & Prijambodo (2020) investigated 107 teachers in 10 Christian school to know the effect of beliefs. Usman, Zulfikar, & Lugendo (2021) conducted the research to the student-teachers from primary to the senior high school in Islamic school at municipality of Banda Aceh. Their research wanted to compare the treatments in different school level to shape identity. The

interesting research have conducted by (Gandana & Parr, 2013) that focus on one Indonesian teacher who teaches Intercultural Communication and Cross-Cultural Understanding, language and culture as something inseparable part of teacher identity. Susilowati (2013) focused in designing classroom interaction as the area for exploration of teacher identity. Siswanto & Kuswandono (2020) investigating the eight teachers in two Montessori schools in Yogyakarta, the school's principles influencing the teachers' identity of becoming teacher. In vocational high school context, (Wahyuningsih, 2021) believes that personal experiences can espouse the development of teachers' identity.

The study reports the sides of teacher identity in *Pondok Pesantren* is limited. In addition (Dewi, 2007) investigated the shifts of nonnative English speaker teacher in teacher identity through community and culture. The teacher identity in Indonesian context is such a new topic. It has made a difficulty to find a concept in the perspective of Indonesian experts. The intention of this study is to conduct research about the teacher identity in *Pesantren* especially in educational contexts should be recorded in the research. Whereas, research study about *Pesantren* is worthy conducting since *Pesantren* was built based on grass root community, the independence, togetherness, sincerity, environment, curriculum, and teachers.

Pesantren has been the important place of educational institutions, it also has a great influence in Indonesia. There is no doubt about existence of *Pesantren* as Islamic institutions in Indonesia (Alim, 2021). As an educational institution, English lesson also taught in *Pesantren* to balance the religious and general knowledge (Sinan & Yusuf, 2019). Besides local and Indonesia language, the two foreign languages (English and Arabic) are provided in *Pesanten* (Bin Tahir, Suriaman, &

Rinantanti, 2019). English teaching in *Pesantren* encourage santri (students) to master English, it is important for the teacher to provide good learning model.

(Al-Baekani & Pahlevi, 2018) investigate that English language is considered to expand, acquire new knowledge, and basic skills of knowledge. The purpose of learning English in *Pesantren* as medium of communication, English and Arabic are though in *Pesantren*. These two language are called formal language (Sinan & Yusuf, 2019).

■ METHOD

Research Participants

The study conducted at Pondok Pesantren Annuqayah which is located at Guluk-Guluk village, Sumenep regency, East Java. This study involved English teachers in Pondok Pesantren Annuqayah Guluk-Guluk Sumenep East Java, who teach English in this Pesantren. The research subjects of this study involved fifteen English teachers who had thought in Pesanten. There are fifteen English teachers as the target in this study. However, only six teachers met the subject selection criteria to be the research subject of this study, the detailed information about six teachers is shown in table 1.

To prevent selection bias. There are some criteria that should be set in processing of research subject selection: 1) English teacher in Pesantren who had academic qualification in Master or Bachelor Degree in English Language Teaching or English Literature; 2) having more than four years as English teacher in Pesantren, 3) actively engaged in some activities in developing and constructing their identity; and 4) having the willingness to be a volunteer to be a part of participants to fill the questionnaire, write a narrative story, and entangle in a depth-interview.

The first criterion is aimed to make sure that all participants are qualified, starting from private

schools, there are Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (junior high school), and Madrasah Aliyah (senior high school), and Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (Vocational School).

The second criterion is the length of teaching to make difference both novice and experienced English teachers. The novice teacher is someone who has teacher experience less than three years (Widiati, Suryati, & Hayati, 2018) and the experienced teacher is someone who has many years teaching experience at least four to five year teaching (Gatbonton, 2008).

The third is teachers' certification, it is important to ensure that the teachers have adequate competency to teach (Kusuma wardhani, 2017). The certificate can be a proof that the teachers have competencies in teaching. The teachers' certification is an implementation of Indonesian law No 14 in 2005 about Teachers and Lecturers. It mandates that Teachers and Lectures must have pedagogical competency, personal competency, social competency, and professional competency.

The fourth criterion is to aimed to make sure that all the teachers have adequate time to develop and construct their identity through participating in any type of professional activities. By participating in this activity, the teachers have many chances to response some difficulties or challenges that they have in their teaching experiences.

The last criterion is to make sure that teachers as research subject agree to get involved in the procedures of the data collection. Therefore, the willingness to be a research subject in this research is the priority to get real stories form English teachers in Pesantren because not all the teachers have comfortable time to share their experience both in the form of spoken and written text.

Table 1: Background information of research subject

Research Subjects	Length of Teaching Experience	Gender	Academic Qualification	Teaching Context
RS 1	19	Male	Master in Applied Linguistic	Senior High
RS 2	18	Male	Master in Education	Senior High
RS 3	12	Female	B.A. in English Literature	Senior High
RS 4	16	Male	B.A. in ELT	Vocational
RS 5	13	Male	B.A. in English Literature	Junior High
RS 6	13	Female	B.A. in English Literature	Junior High

Research Design and Procedure

This research study employs a narrative inquiry research design to know the English teachers' experiences in Pesantren. Creswell, (2015) suggest that narrative research involves on studying stories of the person, individual experiences, and discussing the experiences. Conduction research study by using narrative inquiry has significant implication since narrative as pedagogical medium that might make teachers understand their teaching and learning experiences (Latta & Kim, 2009).

This present research study explores some various experiences from English teachers' identity in Pesantren arranged them chronologically from past, present, and future experiences. The experience started from the beginning of becoming an English teacher in Pesantren. In present experiences, the teachers is asked to tell their activities in developing professionalism and constructing their identity. For the future experience, the teachers will do some future action to construct their identity in teaching and learning process for the better future.

The purpose in this study is to portray how English teachers in *Pesantren* construct their identity. The study employs a narrative inquiry research framework. Narrative research involves individuals' experiences or group individuals past, present, and future experiences (Creswell, 2015). Narrative inquiry as the research study that aims to know an experience through story (Clandinin, 2007). Narrative inquiry can give contribution to the development of self-study in teaching-learning study and teacher's education (Craig, 2011) and provide detailed information of teacher's perception (Suryana, Hidantikarnillah, & Murwantono, 2021).

The present study explores some EFL teachers' experience in *Pesantren* by past, present, and future experience. For the past experience, it starts from the beginning to be an EFL teacher in *Pesantren*, in the past experiences the teachers express their problems or difficulties. For the present experiences, the teachers are allowed to convey their achievement in constructing their identity from the prior to the current teaching and learning practices. For the future experience, the teachers are asked to plan and evaluate future expectation in teaching and learning practices.

The teachers' experiences of EFL teachers at *Pesantren* by chronologically arranged from the past, the present, and the future experiences. It is started from the most difficult time in the beginning of become a language teacher at *Pesantren*. In this part, teachers are welcomed to share their problems during their first experience of becoming language teachers followed by their effort to overcome those obstacles. For the present experiences, EFL teachers are asked to narrate their achievement

in developing professionalism from the prior to the current teaching practices. The future experiences explore teachers' reflection and evaluation for future direction. The systematic procedure of narrative inquiry proposes by (Creswell, 2015) as the following;
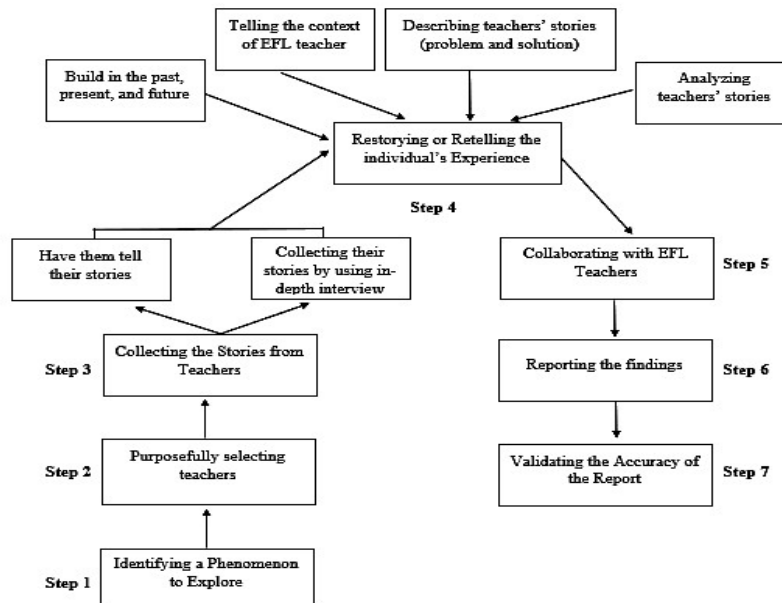

Figure 1. Steps in conducting narrative inquiry

Research Instruments

This research study used several instruments to obtain the data. Digital questionnaires were distributed as preliminary study to get the reliable participants. It consists of personal information about EFL teachers such as teachers' name, email address, phone number, teaching experience, and choice of language used in narrative frame.

In the data collection process, the study is in-depth interview. The study adapted the template of narrative frame from (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008) that provided useful guidance for EFL teachers in describing their story. The narrative frame became the salience instruments in the present study that should reflect the experience chronologically. (Rohmah, 2017) states that narrative frame as a written story consisting of a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces that make the researcher knew the expected experiences to be written. Narrative frame was like a summary that consists of some information about the participants. There are three frame should use namely interaction, continuity, and situation (Creswell, 2015). Therefore, the frame in the study explores EFL teachers' experiences from the beginning of teaching as the hardest time of being language teachers, the current situation, and the evaluation or reflection for possible better future.

In the narrative frame, the teachers in *Pesantren* narrate about their personal identity, situation and condition, and some action for their future action. There are some questions that want to know from teachers. The first section consists of background information, such as teachers' personal data and teaching experiences, and their philosophy of teaching English as foreign language. It also describes the problems that teachers have in English classroom setting, such as current school situation or culture or the perception on

the policy related to the changing curriculum, followed by their effort to overcome those problem. The next section mentions the attainment of EFL teacher in developing their professionalism and identity construction. The last section explains teachers' future action for all they have done and what should be improved to be better future teachers.

In the interview, the teachers as participants in this research study give the opportunity to expand their ideas and experiences. There is an interview guideline which consists of some questions to conduct the interview though the process tends to be more open-ended questions. The result of interview is transcribed verbatim for further analysis and restoring process.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis in this research based on the teachers' experienced. The study uses restory and retell technique proposed by (Creswell, 2015). This procedure is similar to the data analysis in which the result of stories collection from EFL teachers in *Pesantren* become the start point for the researcher to retell. Since narrative inquiry belongs to qualitative research, it uses qualitative data analysis.

Restorying is important to examine the previous stories thoroughly, to flow what is hidden, and to construct and reconstruct understanding as a teacher (Golombek & Johnson, 2021). The process of restorying is started by examining the raw data from all instruments and identifying the key elements and the themes of the story (Creswell, 2012). In this step, the codes are used to identify the setting, characters, actions, problem, and resolution. Then, the researcher organizes the key codes and the themes in chronological order from the past, present, and future experiences. The story should be narrated in such a way to represent the feelings of the teachers' voice. The use of proper restorying technique makes the readers feel engaged in the study since they can simply understand the story.

■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research study elaborates teachers' experience to know how English teachers in *Pesantren* construct their identity through their stories. The teachers' stories are outlined by several themes that represent the teachers' experiences. The first theme is *the novice teacher* which reflects *Pesantren* past teachers' experiences in their first English teaching. It expresses the situation on their journey as EFL teachers in *Pesantren*. The second theme is "the journey to be professional teachers" which is the exploration of teachers' experiences in present time. It will talk about teachers' reflection on what the teachers have done to overcome the difficulties from previous experiences and how the teachers conduct their identity. The third theme is "professional teachers" which reflect teacher's evaluation in the present and past experiences for the future action. It aims to know what the teachers plan to construct their identity as EFL teachers in *Pesantren*.

Theme 1: **The Novice Teacher**

Teaching English in *Pesantren* is something challenging where the teacher should manage the class properly. The novice in the first year of teaching can be characterized as survive and thrive (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Relating to the time allocation, the schools in *Pesantren* have to integrate the English lesson into Islamic context, it needs a longer time.

The table above shows that EFL teachers in *Pesantren* have different challenges in some elements. The most significant challenge in the year of teaching is administrative task, five of six teachers express that they have to prepare some administrative tasks. Most of teachers do not

Table 2. The teachers' challenges

No.	Challenges (Ch)	Percentage
1	Lack of facilities	67%
2	Administrative tasks	83%
3	Limited time allocation	33%
4	Lack of professional development programs	50%

focus on their classroom if the governments ask to submit some teachers' worksheets. They must adapt and update some lesson plans.

"My first time in teaching, I was very busy with the demand of administrative tasks, the changing curriculum makes me try to update and upgrade the knowledge about it". (Ch-RS3). "The administrative tasks waste the time, I did not focus to teach my students in the class. Sometimes, it needs one week more to finish the administrative tasks". (Ch-RS1). "Actually, the demand of administrative task is very good, it's one of the teachers' responsibilities. But, it needs energy to do it. For the certified teachers must complete the administrative task in order to get the allowance". (Ch-RS4)

The lack of facilities is another challenge for EFL teachers in *Pesantren*. A school should be equipped with the enough infrastructure (Krishnaiah, Begum, Madhuri, & Kamraju, 2024). Some teacher mention that in their past teaching find difficulty when they need some supporting facility, such as television, LCD projector, Personal Computer, etc. since the distribution of school operational fund or BOS (Bantuan Operasional Sekolah) the situation is different. School in *Pesantren* step by step have good facilities.

"One of the lack facility that is very important is LCD projector, computer, and the absence of a English laboratory in the school". (Ch-RS1) "The other challenges in my first teaching is the classroom setting, our school

use the classical style of the chairs, it's because of the old chairs that my school have. But, when our school get the school operational fund, the setting of the class and infrastructure is very different, it's better than before." (Ch-RS6) "The reasons for the difficulties were the access to the internet connections. I could not update the information related with the school information as soon as possible. The connection of the internet is very useful for us to increase our ability about the teaching and learning English." (Ch-RS5)

Refereeing to the previous challenge in the table above that is related to the time allocation for the English lesson in *Pesantren*. The existence of English club and English room in *Pesantren* is the other consideration to reduce the time allocation in teaching and learning activities in the class.

"For me, the time allocation became the challenge. I should be able to manage the time properly in teaching and learning process in the class. The time allocation is not enough because it is not appropriate with the government's instruction." (Ch-RS 5)

Talking about the lack of facilities, some other teachers in *Pesantren* were not familiar with the utilizing of technology. RS1 stated that she was not familiar with the technology. Technology became something new and very expensive tools.

"Teaching and learning process by using technology can motivate students to learn English. In my past experience, technology device was something difficult to operate it,

unlike present time where the technology can be accessed and operated anytime." (Ch-RS3)

RS3 stated that in this era, the teachers must have technological competencies. As stated by Ocak & Karanfil (2021) that technology cannot be separated from teachers' competency. Teachers in *Pesantren* should be familiar with the usage of technology so that they can update the teachers' ability like searching additional references, creating teaching materials. By mastering the usage of technology, teachers can learn many things everywhere and anywhere, such as accessing any information about the teaching strategies and methods or joining online seminar to increase teachers' competencies.

The others challenges faced by teachers who were just graduated from the university because they tended to think about their lacking experience in implementing several teaching strategies, techniques, and methods. Besides, new teachers felt shy to the *Kiai/Nyai* and senior teacher when they gather in teachers' room. They had lack of self-confidence as novice teachers. They sketch out as the following:

"I find some difficulties in making lesson plan and adapt learning media to make students motivate in learning English. As a new teacher, I do not have a partner with the same age, most of the teachers in my school are my ex-teachers. (Ch-RS2) "In the beginning of my teaching, I faced some difficulty and felt nervous with school's environment because I *taught one of the favorite Pesantren in Sumenep." (Ch-RS5)*

The narratives expound that the novice teachers have problems not only with pedagogical competencies, but also with the school environment become something challenging for the EFL teachers' in *Pesantren*.

From the teachers' narratives express that all EFL teachers in *Pesantren* had numerous challenging condition and situation dealing with the teachers' individual. They admitted that in their first teaching had some difficulties. When they overcame the vulnerability, they tried to find some solutions related to their constraints and limitation. Finally, their teaching and learning process in *Pesantren* have beneficial.

Theme 2: The Professional Learning Journey to be Professional Teachers

The research subject in this research have got certification. Teachers' certification is aimed by the government to improve the teachers' qualities in teaching and learning process (Rusman, -, & -, 2020). A professional teachers' is measured by having certification (Tjabolo & Herwin, 2020). Involving in MGMP (teachers' forum), sharing with peers, joining the conferences, seminars, and workshop, reading articles and books, and adapting teaching media are some activities to empower their ability to be a professional teacher. The table below show the teachers' activities that are taken by EFL teachers' in *Pesantren* to develop their personal identities.

Table 3. English teachers' activities

No	Teachers' Activities (TA)	Percentage
1	Attending teachers' forum (MGMP)	100%
2	Sharing with peers	100%
3	Joining conferences, seminars, and workshops	100%
4	Reading articles and books	83%
5	Adapting teaching media	67%

Attending teachers' forum (MGMP), sharing with peers, joining conferences, seminars and workshops are the way update with the current issues and trend in English language teaching. Derakhshan, Coombe, Zhaleh, & Tabatabaeian (2020) suggest that the teachers should take more active play either in their classroom or at large scales to develop theoretical and practical knowledge to meet the need of their classroom.

"I join some activities and programs to know more about the latest issues and trends in education especially in English lesson, reading the latest news in education and attending teachers' forum or MGMP (Musyawarah Mata Guru Pelajaran). Besides, I also join some online workshops and seminars. I believe that these activities will have benefit to me and my school, and my teaching and learning process." (TA-RS3) "Sharing with peers is useful for me. Sometimes, I share about my teaching experience with my friends, asking some solution when I have difficulty to make my students interested in studying English" (TS-RS5)

Other teachers had similar perception about joining conferences, seminars, and workshops. As we have known that in this era, we can attend these activities easily through the online. There some online activities that can be joined freely. Teachers' forum (MGMP). Atmoko & Kuswandono (2021) believe that MGMP have beneficial contribution to gain teacher professional development (TPD). Regarding to the teachers' forum, RS2 stated that this activity has positive effect to develop teaching performance, teachers' forum is conducted once a month which is placed in the same district in turn from one school to the other schools. In this forum, every month discus the other topic and issue related with the education and the committees invite the expert.

Sharing the idea with the colleagues from the other schools is the other activity, since the male and female schools in this *Pesantren* is separated so that the situation and condition is different. Teachers who teach in male schools have different difficulty and face different problems.

"I usually share my difficulties and problems to my colleagues through the WAG (WhatsApp Group). I get inspiration and solution to overcome." (TA-RS 4)

The teachers' activity in developing is by reading articles and books. The teachers can find new information about English language teaching, articles and books can be accessed freely from the electronic devices and internet connection such as YouTube, Podcast, television, etc. RS 4 and 6 stated that they enhance their personal competences through reading articles, books, and watch YouTube channel that's related with the teaching and learning English.

The increasing of technology is very useful to the teachers to support and alter education system in many ways. RS2 and RS5 have different ways in utilizing the technology. RS2 use the technology as the way to make teaching and learning more attractive while RS5 try to adapt and modifying teaching media.

"Integrating technology into my teaching activity by learning to make teaching media and adapt suitable source into media and video animation. Sometimes I provide students worksheets and video animation. I get this knowledge from the teachers' forum and watch YouTube. Technology helps me in my teaching and learning process." (TA-RS6)

This narrative show that the English teachers in *Pesantren* have created various innovation by utilizing technology. The power of the increasing technology has changed our education system.

The teachers are demanding that the teachers should learn more about the technology in their teaching and learning. But there are some teachers do not always have great understanding to operate the technology especially computers.

In term of social competency of the teachers is by sharing with peers. Teachers are demanded not only in improving their skill, but also in having good relationship with their colleagues. Sharing with peers as an effective way to build and develop relationship (Nguyen & Ng, 2020).

These narratives conclude that English teachers in *Pesantren* have strong trust about teachers' activities will contribute to the professionalism. They have successfully constructed their identity through various ways.

Theme 3: Professional Teachers

Referring to teachers' challenges and activities in the theme 1 and 2, they felt that they should have a commitment to be a good teacher. The emphasis of commitment is as quality to construct the professionalism and identity (Hakim & Dalli, 2018). The underpinning of desirability to do something best for the students as part of professionalism as well.

"Being sincere for a teacher in Pesantren is to teach and work with our heart and soul. Teaching in Pesantren is good opportunity to teach in Pesantren especially as alumni should do and give the best to our institution. Back to our institution is something to be proud of" (RS-5 and 6) *"I always remember to my Kiai in monthly teachers' meeting, a teacher should stop teaching when a teacher does not want to study. it means that the teachers must study. this time, we can study everywhere and anywhere with the assistance of technology. It is the one of the ways to be professional teachers"* (RS-3)

One of the important points of the teachers is that they should never stop learning. RS3 and RS4 stated that teachers should recharge their pedagogical skill and improve their commitment to construct their identity. RS2 and RS6 focus to discuss with their colleague about their situation and condition in teaching and learning process for the future improvement.

All participants in this research take part in any development programs to increase their ability and construct their identities, such as joining conferences, seminars, workshop, reading some books and articles. In addition to this, they commit with their commitment in making changes and constructing their identities for their professional tasks as English teachers.

■ CONCLUSION

This research study focus on English teachers in *Pesantren* in constructing their identity with the past teaching or first time teaching experience by reflecting with the present situation and having commitment for the better future so that teachers can determine what kinds of activities they should do to construct their identity. Therefore, the school environment, the ways teachers teach, teachers' commitment, and professionalism are important side in constructing teachers' identity (Buchanan, 2015).

Teachers in the future action show their ability as English teachers in *Pesantren* in determining good activities for their future teaching and professionalism to join some activities by different ways in order to develop their competencies. Sense of belonging for their institution or *Pesantren* make them work sincerely and work wholeheartedly. The ability to get out from vulnerability in their previous teaching and learning experiences make they have a better vision and mission to the advanced level of constructive identity.

These findings have important to the English teachers in *Pesantren* or *Pondok Pesantren*

(Islamic Boarding School). In addition, this study has limitations that have to be conducted. This study only focus in one *Pesantren*, it could not be generalized to other teachers, schools, and institutions. For the future research is hoped to participants and samples from various schools and institutions.

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