English Teacher Identity Crisis after Fruitless Virtual Teaching Practices During Covid-19 Outbreak in Underprivileged Institution

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A B S T R A K

Institusi pendidikan berada di bawah tantangan besar untuk memberikan pembelajaran virtual yang sukses di tengah lingkungan yang semakin digital dan mengglobal, utamanya sekali pada saat wabah Covid-19. Hal ini menjadi lebih sulit dalam situasi akademik yang sulit. Hal ini dapat membahayakan identitas guru sebagai pendidik. Penelitian ini akan mengeksplorasi sikap dan persepsi guru bahasa Inggris setelah praktik pengajaran yang gagal dari lensa identitas profesional. Analisis fenomenologis interpretatif dengan memanfaatkan wawancara dialogis akan digunakan untuk 4 pendidik Bahasa Inggris di universitas yang memiliki keterbatasan dalam pengelolaan Pendidikan. Setelah itu, data mengenai identitas guru akan ditampilkan dan dianalisis secara ekstensif untuk mengungkap beberapa fenomena individu saat mengimplementasikan kelas virtual untuk mengajar Bahasa Inggris. Studi ini menemukan bahwa partisipan kami terbukti tumbuh secara profesional selama jangka waktu epidemi Covid-19. Beberapa guru telah mengembangkan beberapa strategi untuk benar-benar melibatkan siswa di kelas virtual dan mendapatkan lebih banyak kesadaran akan masalah teknologi dalam pembelajaran. Bahkan, pengalaman ini dipandang sebagai meningkatkan identitas mereka. Diharapkan penelitian ini dapat memberikan sekilas gambaran tentang situasi individu guru dan beberapa wawasan tentang upaya menjaga identitas pribadi guru selama proses pembelajaran virtual.

A B S T R A C T

Education institutions are under proliferating challenges to deliver successful virtual learning in an increasingly digitized and globalized environment and especially during Covid-19 outbreak. This even become harder in academically challenging circumstance. This might put their identity as a teacher in hard situation. The aim of this research is to analyses English teacher attitudes and perception after having unsuccessful teaching practices from professional identity lens. An interpretative phenomenological analysis by utilizing dialogic interview will be employed to 4 higher education English teacher in underprivileged and newly established university to capture the intended data. After that, the data regarding teacher identity will be displayed and extensively analysed to unfold some individual phenomenon while implementing virtual classroom to teach English. This study found that our participants have evidently grown professionally during the Covid-19 epidemic time frame. Several teachers have developed some strategies to actually engage students in the virtual classroom and gained more awareness of technological issues in learning. In fact, this experience was viewed as enhancing their teacher identity. This study is expected to offer a glimpse of teacher individual situation and some insight on the effort in maintaining personal teachers' identity during virtual learning process.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the COVID-19 global pandemic began in 2020, educational institutions in numerous nations around the globe were abruptly shuttered. No nation is prepared for the unprecedented outbreak of Covid-19. Ultimately, this results in turmoil, uncertainty, and panic across all sectors, including education. All educational facilities have been closed as a result of Covid-19's social distancing techniques, and

teaching forces have been transferred across the country in remote or online capacities (Onyema et al., 2020; Renes & Strange, 2010; Shahroom & Hussin, 2018). During the Covid-19 epidemic, the largest pedagogical shift in teaching methods happened, placing education at the greatest peril. Teachers who are tasked with teaching in a manner they have never done before find this experience daunting and intimidating. Mobile classrooms or digital classrooms have replaced conventional schools because conventional classrooms no longer provide a safe environment for educators, students, or parents (Daniel, 2020; Shahroom & Hussin, 2018).

Even if mobile and digital classrooms have been proposed as a solution for the continuance of education during the Covid-19 pandemic, myriad of studies have proven it will not be an easy scenario. Previous study argued that the usage of virtual classrooms frequently results in a higher attrition rate among the students (Moody, 2004; Thannimalai & Raman, 2018). Additionally, educators exert considerable effort in an online learning environment to engage distance students and foster a feeling of academic community (Chena, P., Lamberth, A. D., & Guidry, 2010). Physical distance and a lack of face-to-face interaction between students and teachers are considered the primary obstacles to effectively engaging students in an online environment. Furthermore, teachers perceive a potential conflict between providing students with expected and necessary guidelines and providing them with the room and flexibility to generate and develop knowledge and skills on their own (Bryan et al., 2018; Savin-Baden et al., 2010). These complexities have increased in recent years as teachers have been pressured to transition from traditional face-to-face classrooms to online classrooms. Previous study claimed that the teaching-learning process may be jeopardized if faculty members are inadequately prepared for the unique needs of online teaching and learning (Hewett, B., & Powers, 2007) . Eventually, other study discovered that many students had severe learning losses when engaging in online learning, with the average learning loss equating to the amount of time the students were not in school (Engzell et al., 2021).

During the pandemic, a teacher's irritation may be fueled by the resulting loss of knowledge and the tough circumstances they must confront. Previous study explained that failing as an educator means that the instructor has periods of incoherence and misunderstanding about the fundamental methods of performance with which he or she must come to grips (Berry, 2020). He even narrated his experience of the feeling of pedagogical failure by explaining the four interconnected components of the disruption he experienced: (a) (dis)connection, (b) the necessity to accept for surface-level education, (c) the conditions of unfamiliarity and uncertainty, and (d) the stoppage of cultural inquiry. Even worse, previous study noted that educators who were already overburdened were presented with intolerable working conditions during remote emergency instruction (Gilad & Alkalay, 2014; Halim & Zulkarnain, 2017). Others had to determine if the risk of getting the COVID-19 virus was worth continuing to teach in the face of a doubling of their workload by concurrently instructing face-to-face and virtual students with no additional support. In other words, this difficult situation could lead to instructional frustration or even an identity crisis among teachers, all of which could lead to educators leaving the profession. However, the 'identity crisis' and threats faced by teachers who were trained to lecture in the classroom but are now expected to lecture online have received insufficient attention

In light of the COVID-19 circumstances, achieving success as an educator is more difficult than ever due to several challenges it offers. In the context of higher education, teacher challenges have enhanced due to restricted access to mentorship, intellectual integrity, professional instructional training, and detachment from students and campus life (Labaree, 2000; Lampert, 1985; Perrotta & Bohan, 2020). The necessity for teachers to create emotional bonds with their students in an effort to boost motivation, engagement, and academic performance, this scenario will not be easy (Korpershoek et al., 2020; Letzel, V., Pozas, M., & Schneider, 2020). In light of this issue, priority should be placed on the teachers' resilience in order to avoid this impediment. It is crucial to understand resilience as an adaptive process that enables teachers to maintain their identities and continue learning, growing, and evolving despite multiple adversities. Teachers can develop and sustain a strong sense of identity if they can actively and effectively respond to the challenges, demands, and negative influences they encounter in their career (Dobbie, W., & Fryer Jr, 2011; Gu & Day, 2007). Previous study list several characteristics possessed by resilient teachers, such as self-confidence, a strong drive to achieve, a sense of moral purpose, an openness to new experiences, a sense of humor, a toolbox of effective coping strategies, and the capacity to collaborate effectively with others (Price et al., 2012). Ultimately, the objectives of becoming a resilient teacher are to increase teachers' capacity to make professional decisions and to protect their own physical and psychological well-being (Escher et al., 2014; Johnson, B., Down, 2013; Novikov, 2020). Teachers who display the qualities of resilient teacher would be capable of withstanding any classroom hurdles that may develop.

Growing concern over teacher identity in Covid-19 should be addressed as one of the most serious pedagogical issues during the pandemic situation. Consequently, it is vital to have a deeper

comprehension of how the identity of a teacher is constructed (Reeves, 2018; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Previous study believe that teacher identity work is affected by teachers' perceptions of the future (Hamman et al., 2010). At the same time, teachers actively research, review, and adjust to both the classroom setting and the greater school environment by utilizing the pre-existing professional identities they have already created in the past (Buchanan, 2015; Widin et al., 2012). Several aspects should be considered while attempting to solve the puzzle of how teachers develop their identities. Previous study have categorized it into, the first process is nature-identity. It is just the natural state of individuals that is dictated by something beyond their control (DNA in this instance). Second, institutional identity relates to the status of the persons who are vested with certain authority, rights, and obligations. Thirdly, discourse identity is a personality trait (e.g., charismatic, helpful) that is recognized by other rational people. This identity is not the result of compelled ritual, tradition, rules, laws, or institutional authority; rather, it is the result of how other individuals treat, discuss, and engage with one another (Gee, 2000). In this difficult circumstance, we need to consider that teaching identity is a continuous cycle of shaping and reshaping depends on the teacher circumstances. Therefore, due to the decreased number of personnel on-site in pandemic situation, this could be an issue as extended role ambiguity has been shown to be a predictor of teacher burnout (Lisa et al., 2021; Papastylianou, A. & Polychronopoulos, 2009). With this in mind, identifying the growth of teachers' identity in the agonizing pandemic situation is essential.

Framed by the challenges of the teacher faced during covid-19 pandemic, this paper examines higher education teacher identity crisis after dealing with negative situation or even failures while teaching in virtual learning environment. It is crucial to study the real experiences of English teachers who are facing this unprecedented situation as it might offer light on the context of teacher virtual pedagogical experience and if their professional identity will be accelerated or annihilated by this fiasco.

2. METHOD

In this study, a qualitative interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was employed since this method is methodologically appropriate for eliciting the participants' voices and real experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). A phenomenography approach acknowledges that experiences can be viewed and understood in a variety of ways, and is ideally suited to the project's modest scope and limited number of participants. Phenomenological case studies possess a number of characteristics pertinent to the purpose of this study. These include (a) the researcher's interest in the topic, (b) the data documenting the participants' voices that illuminate their experience, and (c) the case's limited transferability. To derive meaning from phenomenological data, interpretation is required. To do this, the researcher's part is critical, since they must form an interpretive engagement with the obtained data.

This study was situated in a relatively under-privileged higher education in a quite small city in Indonesia. As a result, the university has a little bit of struggle in establishing and organizing virtual learning. As a newly established school, the teachers were relatively new with minimal experience. Additionally, more than half of students were not from financially stable families, which add another layer of complexity during the Covid-19 virtual learning process. In this study, participants were "selected purposively" to ensure that the research attempt accurately represented the experiences and phenomena of interest (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008). Four individuals with at least three years of teaching experience and two years of virtual teaching experience were selected. To preserve their confidentiality, all four individuals are identified by pseudonyms. The demography of four participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Demography of Participants

Pseudonyms	Age	Gender	Length of Teaching Career
Willow	33 years	Male	10 years
Nora	34 years	Female	12 years
Daisy	30 years	Female	5 years
Danielle	38 years	Female	3 years

In order to gather the data, we first explain the goal of the study and have each participant sign a consent form stating that they would supply the requested information without revealing the time or location of the research. In order to obtain the information are attempted to establish a discussion atmosphere that was as comfortable and natural as possible. Therefore, the conversation took place in the most casual setting (in a coffee shop, during a school break, etc.). It makes the data will be more accurate since the participants will not feel insecure, agitated, or fearful during the process of data collection. All of these conversations were recorded and transcribed into written data. In this study, the researcher reads, rereads, and reviews the individual dialogue transcript collaboratively. Then, researcher attempted to

continually compare all transcripts to find patterns that emerged from the teaching experiences of participants during the covid-19 epidemic. From these processes, researcher have identified several themes that may shed light on the condition of teacher professional identities who were experiencing challenges in the classroom.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Three overarching themes emerge from our research, painting a complete picture of whether or not educators' identities are at risk during virtual learning. The three themes are as follows: (1) teacher sentiments during the learning process; (2) how they deal with these difficulties; and (3) what potential outcomes their virtual educational process will have on their sense of identity as a teacher. At the outset of our conversation, it was quite evident that our participants had encountered numerous obstacles during covid-19. Participants believed that imparting directions to students was challenging. The largest difficulty with online education is that teachers have no means of knowing whether or not their students are genuinely paying attention during class due to students' reluctance to turn on their webcams (Donitsa-Schmidt, S. Ramot, 2020; Noori et al., 2020). Lack of good pedagogical training to increase student participation and engagement in online education exacerbates the situation. There was a significant barrier while communicating with his students.

Our responders were rather unconvinced that delivering the content over a longer period of time during virtual learning would eventually result in better student comprehension due to ineffective communication. Danielle shared Willow's disappointment that the assigned task was not performed to her satisfaction. She felt that students should have the initiative to ask questions if they are clueless, therefore she was rather frustrated. This negative emotion intensifies when students remain mute and passive during the learning process, even though they may not have comprehended the instructions very well. Several participants shared a mutual belief that this disengagement led to a substantial drop in student motivation. This deterioration is a consequence of teachers' limited authority over student learning processes throughout COVID-19's virtual learning process. Educators who are used to direct interaction in face-to-face learning may find it tough to adopt the same strategies in virtual classrooms. In fact, a correlation exists between virtual teaching presence and student performance. Due to the anonymity of online learning, students are often demotivated and disengaged, resulting in low engagement and withdrawal (Gedera et al., 2015; Stevens & Kincaid, 2015). This might result in students requiring more time to complete assignments, delivering assignments late, or providing generally mediocre work.

In addition to students' failures in meeting teacher expectations, our participants also express their concerns with how they present their information in the classroom. They often draw parallels between their online courses and traditional face-to-face lecturing. Some of them are regretful because of the difficulties they had while teaching online, which resulted in an unengaging classroom. Simultaneously, they believe they would have performed better if the course had been delivered in a real classroom. Base on the result students who had both direct interaction in the traditional classroom and virtual learning tended to cheat at a higher rate in online courses, indicating that this abrupt shift to online virtual classrooms poses a significant risk of academic dishonesty. Additionally, new online students are usually sceptical about their capacity to overcome the technological, organizational, and social challenges of remote learning. In the absence of or failure to acquire self-regulated learning skills, the propensity of a student to cheat in class grows considerably (Miller & Young-Jones, 2012). In accordance with this, participants in this survey concur that preserving academic integrity in an online classroom is more difficult owing to limited monitoring capability. Students' disengagement from online learning in general has a detrimental impact on the pedagogical process. In addition, the teacher was distressed due to the circumstances. Our participants have identified a few challenges that, if not addressed promptly, will have significant and lasting effects on the learning process. In order to maintain a high level of pedagogical effectiveness, it is necessary to prioritize certain attempts to resolve the issues presented by virtual learning.

As has been discussed in the preceding discussion, our subjects exhibit mutual feelings of frustration. Teaching as a career is brimming with tension and emotional exertion. It is therefore not unexpected that teachers experience a range of distinct emotions, including rage and frustration, over the course of their work (Hargreaves, 1998; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). In this case, although our participants shared a mutual feeling of frustration, the ways in which these four individuals exhibited this feeling differed substantially. There are one participant typically expresses dissatisfaction to the students in order to explain the root of irritation. In contrast to there are also other participant who is an open and honest communicator, she prefers to focus on taking action if verbally expressing emotions is no longer

insufficient. She determines students' grades based on their attitudes toward the virtual classroom. In contrast to the other two participants, there are students chose to reflect on his teaching strategy. Throughout the teaching process, he suffered numerous instructional setbacks, prompting him to regularly question the efficacy of his methods. He feels that the presentation of material in online classrooms must be carefully addressed to guarantee that the objectives of the learning process are satisfied. However, due to the abrupt transition to an online class and his lack of experience teaching online classes, he frequently questioned the appropriateness of his teaching method.

Despite the fact that our participants communicated their frustration in a variety of ways, they all eventually improved their adaptability to the unusual learning environment. Effectively managing negative emotions helps educators to address student needs and implement proactive classroom management techniques. During the course of Covid-19 epidemic, our participants are exposed to a range of strategies to overcome the barriers that they encountered during the virtual learning process (Valente et al., 2020). The participant for example, made the option to accommodate the students' learning capacity. They are always seeking to compromise the educational objectives they have set in order to make the learning process more manageable for the students. Everything is done with the idea that the students would be able to achieve the set of educational objectives. Furthermore, students would feel less stressed throughout class.

Due to the prevalence of highly driven and excellent students, she felt regretful if she had to lower the standards and learning objectives to accommodate the students with a low level of engagement. Instead, she makes an attempt to personally approach individuals with learning difficulties. Thus, she gains a better understanding of the students' psychological states during the virtual learning process and develops learning strategies that are believed to be able to assist these individuals. Instead of personal approach, Willow attempts to be more mindful of his students' existence in virtual media. During online learning, Willow will examine the students' disposition and engagement. Thus, he has an initial understanding of which students are already engaged in the content being taught and which are not. In the meantime, he would attempt to persuade less active students by giving him a larger role or by repeatedly asking him to do something. Thus, whether they like it or not, less active students will be more engaged in class. Moreover all in all, our participants were generally frustrated while lecturing students in virtual classrooms. Teachers must ponder carefully in order to find a solution to the issues because of all the difficulties it presents and the obstacles they must face. From the interview, it is evident that each participant has made some attempts to address the issue, demonstrating their continued efforts to overcome the barrier. In other words, this epidemic circumstance has been evidently proven will not preclude them from retaining their identity as a teacher.

Despite the fact that virtual learning has made teachers more frustrated, all participants felt they grew professionally, notably in the pedagogical domains. This is the result of both their professional learning process using various resources and their experience while practicing to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, Willow describes the progressive learning he underwent as he recognized the various conditions and objectives he encountered at the beginning and throughout the learning process. The preceding excerpt depicts participant different orientations during the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak and throughout the Covid-19 period. As a result of the rapid changes in the learning process, participant experienced confusion at the start of Covid-19. Virtual learning is a new learning method that even the vast majority of educators are unfamiliar with, therefore it is only reasonable to be puzzled. Consequently, the participant places a stronger emphasis on learning about applications that aid the continuation of the educational process. Nevertheless, during the Virtual Covid-19 learning process, Willow found that his comprehension of the application was inadequate. Some efforts are required to make virtual learning enjoyable. As a result, Willow's approach to self-improvement was altered to incorporate additional learning applications that might interest students with the subject matter.

In addition to attending seminars and workshops, educators reported that they had begun exchanging ideas with their peers regarding the operation of virtual learning environments. Due to the fact that educators share similar circumstances, the sharing of knowledge between them naturally evolves into an instructive forum that assists educators in enhancing their skills in the area of virtual learning. From the result of participants engaged in a process of collaborative sharing to increase their knowledge of teaching methods and strategies. They discuss applications that are appropriate for their courses in order to develop an engaging, creative, and intriguing educational process. The objective is to maintain a quality education despite the difficulty of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, both participants are aware of their identity as a teacher with their own teaching style and methodology. Therefore, despite the fact that his friends frequently discuss effective virtual teaching strategies, they will attempt to filter these strategies and adopt those that are deemed suitable for their teaching style. Instead of learning about their other friends' teaching strategies or techniques, two participants inquired about the psychological

condition of students so that they might select a teaching method that was more suited to both the students' psychological condition and their style of teaching.

Throughout the course of the learning process, our participants demonstrated a range of newly learned insights into their pedagogical process. This completely new experience has enhanced their identity as educators. One of participant remarked that she had gained a new perspective on her teaching obligations and roles. She believes she must not only address the cognitive status of students, but also become a counselor who comprehends their emotional, psychological, and environmental circumstances. Previous study propose that social and emotional maturity of students is necessary for the continuation of learning, hence emphasizing the importance of well-being to academic achievement (Panayiotou et al., 2019). In effort to maintain students' well-being, the participant began to utilize her profound knowledge of students to select appropriate methods and procedures to boost student comprehension. According to participant this will benefit students regardless of their learning environment.

In addition to the psychological element, our participants shed light on educational technology awareness. Unquestionably, the epidemic has contributed in bringing teachers up-to-date on ICT usage (Kwaah et al., 2022; Pozo et al., 2021). To date, the usage of ICT in the classroom has been reinforced through the learning processes of educators around the globe (Buabeng-Andoh, 2012). However, in reality, ICT is not fully integrated into the classroom in practice. This epidemic has compelled all teachers to become proficient with ICT, not only as a supplement to the learning process, but as the primary application in the learning process itself. Numerous educators are pushed to modify their pedagogical paradigms as a result of Covid-19. However, it looks like COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of instructors as learning mediators. Participants have noted that they are becoming more mindful of the individual circumstances of students. In addition, they become keen on identifying more learning applications that can be used to develop students' academic achievement. In general, educators become more adaptable and better equipped to face future challenges. These are essential to maintain teacher motivation, emotional state confidence and efficacy in teaching regardless of the circumstances. Finally, by maintaining all aspects, above, teacher identities could be honed (Anspal, T., Leijen, Ä., & Löfström, 2019; Wolff & De Costa, 2017).

Discussion

The frustration felt by teachers during the virtual learning process was further illuminated by our research. When classes were closed, students were less engaged than usual. Additionally, teachers felt distant from their students because they lacked control over them. Teachers found that online education is not as simple as they had anticipated. They have noticed that some students lack motivation to complete the course due to personal or external factors. This resulted in a second problem in which students are unable to achieve teacher expectations. Ultimately, teachers have identified a small number of academically dishonest students due to the disparity in pedagogical features. They have minimal influence over students, which makes the virtual learning process more difficult. Certainly, a teacher's frustration with this lack of participation in the learning process develops substantially.

Although there is sense of frustration regarding this disengagement, our participants have evidently grown professionally during the Covid-19 epidemic time frame. Several teachers have developed some strategies to actually engage students in the virtual classroom. Some participants tried to look deeper and cope with students' circumstances during the learning process. Previous study views that factors outside of the control of the individual student or the school itself influence the extent to which students engage in the pedagogical process (Kahu, 2013). When examining the engagement of online students who are learning outside of a traditional classroom, it is essential to consider time commitment, geography, and other pressing obligations such as family and employment. Therefore, in this context, our participants' efforts to be more aware of the circumstances of their students who are impacted by Covid-19 and of strategies to rapidly reintegrate them into the classroom could be a significant step toward engaging kids in the learning process.

Teacher also gains more awareness of technological issues due to this enforced virtual classroom. As a direct result of COVID-19, instructors were compelled to tolerate, if not proactively embrace, the incorporation of technology into their classrooms (Leacock & Warrican, 2020; Müller & Wulf, 2020). Teachers struggled to identify the most appropriate technological application for further education. Our participants engaged in a great deal of peer-to-peer communication and attended a variety of workshops and seminars designed to expand their understanding of learning applications. Consequently, despite the fact that some of our participants continue to believe they could do a better job in the actual classroom, they have accepted this paradigm change in teaching quite effectively. Related to teacher identity, this experience was viewed as enhancing their teacher identity. In fact, experiences are continually interpreted and reinterpreted in the process of constructing one's identity (Albelbisi & Yusop, 2019; Beijaard et al.,

2004). Identity will continue to be modified, augmented, dissolved, recreated, incorporated, disintegrated, and extended. This unequivocally shows that teachers with a high level of resilience will repeatedly reconstruct their identity after experiencing certain event. Therefore, teachers should again receive adequate support during any crisis they encounter. This finding further highlight the significance of a teacher's professional community. The majority of our participants engage in peer-to-peer conversations with their fellow educators to discuss the challenges and solutions of the virtual classroom. Therefore, developing the academic community inside institutions that actively hold discussions or academic meetings will be essential in preserving the teacher's identity.

4. CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes the significance of retaining teacher support during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. Covid-19 arrived so abruptly, resulting in tremendous changes in a short period of time. Educators are progressively using digital technologies, learning tools and platforms to support virtual, remote, and asynchronous instruction and assessment. However, while instructing students online, teachers must adapt to unfamiliar pedagogical concepts and instructional strategies for which they have never been prepared. With all of these unique circumstances, educators carry the possible risk of failing to communicate their lessons to students.

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