
EFL TEACHERS' TRANSFORMATION: BURNOUT AND RESILIENCE EXPERIENCES IN TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION THROUGH CRITICAL INCIDENT TECHNIQUES

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ABSTRACT

Even though previous researchers recognized professional identity change as one of the most vulnerable stages for EFL teachers, only a few researched it in Indonesia's context, applying the critical incident technique. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the EFL teachers' professional identity transformation through teachers' factors and how those factors influence their professional identity. This study used the Critical Incidents Technique (CIT) to employ an open-ended questionnaire for Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Individual in-depth interview to gather the data. Five teachers from different schools in Sintang, West Kalimantan, were purposively chosen as the study participants. The results showed that the teacher faced three personal, interpersonal, and organizational stress factors. The personal factors were related to teachers' emotional control and self-efficacy. Interpersonal factors were related to students' behavior in the classroom and negative relationships with colleagues. Meanwhile, organizational factors were related to the lack of media facilities and salary. Despite the stress, EFL teachers showed their ability to cope. The participants broadened on how they dealt with the situation, how stressors affected their identity as teachers, such as preserving their motivation to become teachers, and how they overcame job dissatisfaction.

Keywords: Teacher burnout, teacher resilience, teacher professional identity, critical incidents techniques.

INTRODUCTION

To become a professional, dedicated, and highly skilled person capable of dealing with the stresses and challenges of educational processes and changes, the teacher must constantly shape, alter, and reform one's professional identity. It is necessary because the process that establishes a teacher's professional identity is a dynamic, complex, fluctuating, and context-dependent one that might change during a teacher's career because of the real and changing interactions between agency, feelings, beliefs, and self-efficacy about the work environment, the social and economic environment, and policy. (Day, 2018). One of the most vulnerable phases in building a professional identity is transitioning from

pre-service teacher to professional teacher with complete professional responsibilities (Wang, 2021). Alsup (2008) also stated that The early years of teaching are more challenging than remaining in the profession as an experienced teacher.

When teachers face challenges in the classroom, they carry their beliefs and assumptions. Essentially, teacher identity refers to how a teacher identifies as an individual and embraces the characteristics that make them unique, as argued that identity relates to the concept of 'self' (Berger & Van, 2019). Therefore, other factors influence teachers' identity: family background, school culture, and teachers' experiences. Furthermore, novice teachers

are developing their professional identities. Teachers face difficulties in navigating the path of developing their professional identity. The difficulties result in tension, worry, or burnout.

Resilience refers to the ability to rebound from arduous circumstances. Resilience is associated with getting more substantial from the trauma of life-threatening physical and psychological situations, behaviors, or incidents (Day, 2018). Teachers must be resilient to avoid worry, tension, or burnout. Teachers must be resilient to reconcile their prior experiences. Indeed, teaching is considered an emotionally charged profession that cultivates relationships with their students. When teachers engage in an activity, they also have emotional labor (Day, 2018). In conclusion, resilience is crucial for teachers, particularly EFL teachers, to assist them in dealing with the situation and be resilient in their professional identity development path (Masten et al., 1999).

Teachers get pushed and pulled by their personal teaching beliefs and expectations and seek to match the current educational environment's norms and policies. The statement is lined with the current research findings that the transformation of teachers' beliefs of professional identity has been shifted from traditional to self-initiated learning, in which the teachers become the primary facilitators of learning. This study also suggested that the transformation of the novice stage became more complex than their prior imagined identity as pre-service teachers (Averina & Kuswandono, 2022); personal, interpersonal, and organizational stress factors affected teachers' identity construction (Diasti, 2021); and struggles to

maintain self-efficacy in teaching (Lomi & Mbato, 2020); and teaching experiences through teaching practicum in the classroom (Krisdianata & Mbato, 2022). One of the strategies that can be implemented is being resilient. Understanding resilience is essential for teachers to bounce back from difficult situations.

This study focuses on teachers' stress, how they coped with the circumstances, and how those stresses influence their professional identity. Stress can be defined as a condition when negative emotions occur. Teachers are stressed when angry, tense, anxious, irritated, or despondent (Kyriacou, 2010). Stress can occur because of some factors, including student misbehavior, inadequate communication with colleagues or parents, time restrictions, poor working environment, dissatisfaction with their salary, and an overwhelming number of students (Clipa & Boghean, 2015). Teachers must provide students with various media of learning and an attractive atmosphere. Schools are responsible for enhancing students' lifelong learning and employability skills (Diasti, 2021). Consequently, every aspect of teaching students involves developing their knowledge and soft skills. Teachers are also in frequent need among parents. Parents usually expect their children to perform well in school. They are more concerned about their children's academic performance. Parents might ask teachers about their children's development or performance (Rizqi, 2017). The challenges mentioned above can be the causes of teachers' stress. It is reasonable to believe that teaching reduces physical and mental energy (Rizqi, 2017).

Previous studies on teachers' professional identity construction and transformation have underlined the necessity of examining pre-service and novice EFL teachers' professional identities. Additionally, some efforts were made to get a more in-depth and detailed understanding of teachers' identity-creation process and to reveal developmental aspects of identity transformation. The study of teachers who decided to resign after five years of teaching experience showed that the main reason for this case was that the teachers were not ready to face classroom obstacles (Wal et al., 2019). Moreover, burnout can be caused by teachers' stress over a long period (Sovitriana et al., 2019). Sovitriana et al. (2019) researched Junior High school teachers in Indonesia. As a result, when the teachers cannot manage the imbalance of having excellent work, meeting demands, and coping with students' stress, those can lead to teachers' stress. Another factor that can affect teachers' stress is environmental factors, including a lack of teaching resources and government or facilities support. Another study conducted by Jiang et al. (2021) in Macau showed that the transformation of the novice teachers' identity from imaginary identity to designated identity was not intuitive, as it involved some processes such as renegotiation, development, establishment, and sustainment. Moreover, a study of constraints influenced the first EFL teachers' identity. Wang (2021) noted that those

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to investigate potential concerns or challenges faced by EFL teachers in their early careers, as well as how they dealt with the challenges and built their professional identities. The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was used since

constraints could come from policies, norms, and institutional structures.

In the Indonesian EFL context, the study of some struggles and strategies in constructing novice teacher identity also showed that some factors influenced teachers' identity, such as external and internal factors (Lomi & Mbato, 2020). According to the study, the internal factors were related to teachers' self-efficacy, jobs, teaching ability, and personal perspectives. Meanwhile, the external factors could be the school management, students' attitudes, lack of facilities and resources at school, relationship with parents, students, and colleagues, and teachers' salaries. Another study conducted by Averina and Kuswandono (2022) revealed that the transformation of pre-service to novice teachers was negotiated by the stresses encountered throughout their early careers in their professional identity construction. However, the results of this study focus on how novice teachers reflect on their professional identity transformation through the critical incidents technique. Thus, there are two research questions as follows:

1. What are the novice teachers' stress factors while constructing their professional identity?
2. How do EFL teachers reflect on the transformation after the critical incidents in constructing their professional identity?

this study examined the transformation of EFL teachers in their early careers. CIT was used to provide detailed instructions for gathering and analyzing data regarding human behaviors and real-life experiences, as well as the importance or influence of the people associated with the turning point in

an accident (Hughes, 2007). The participants were free to tell and reflect on their stories or critical incidents and emotions, pursue their knowledge, and shape their professional identity. They could reflect on their practice by sharing their stories with themselves or others because they show the knowledge, thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and insights that influence their work (Farrell, 2013). It showed that teachers tell the story beyond the general happenings in their teaching world; in other words, re-telling the specific experiences or events that happened inside or outside the classroom.

Five EFL teachers from different schools in Sintang, West Borneo, Indonesia, were the participants of this study. In choosing the participants, the researcher used purposive sampling. The researcher chose the participants based on the consideration of meeting the criteria that have been established (Creswell, 2012). First, the participants are English teachers. Second, the participants are novice teachers with less than three years of knowledge and practical full-time experience in teaching (Jiang et al., 2021). Last, the teachers were from different schools in Sintang, West Kalimantan. This guaranteed the variety of critical incidents the teachers had encountered in different educational contexts and settings. The demographic data of the participants is shown in the table below.

Furthermore, the researchers employed an open-ended questionnaire in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to analyze the participants' imaginary identities. At the same time, pre-service teachers and the stress factors they found in their early careers. The theories from Xu (2013) and Prilleltensky et al. (2016) were used as the framework to analyze participants' imaginary identities and stress factors. The results of the open-ended questionnaire were triangulated with the results of the in-depth interviews. The researcher employed a coding method to describe the data to identify, label, and evaluate the critical emergent themes (Cresswell, 2012). Then, the researchers conducted individual semi-structured interviews to enable participants to reflect on their resilience experiences and identity after the critical incidents in constructing their professional identity. An individual semi-structured interview was also employed since it allowed for exploring participants' viewpoints, perspectives, and clarifications of pertinent subjects (Louise & Alison, 1994). Since the location of the participants was challenging to reach, the interview was done online via WhatsApp call for about 45-60 minutes. Furthermore, the researcher used five-step guidelines of critical incidents techniques from Flanagan (1954). The diagram of the steps is shown below.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Data

Name	Gender	School	Working time
Amee	Female	Junior high	1 year
John	Male	Vocational	1 year
Elvi	Female	Elementary	8 months
Ricky	Male	Elementary	9 months
Queen	Female	Elementary	6 months

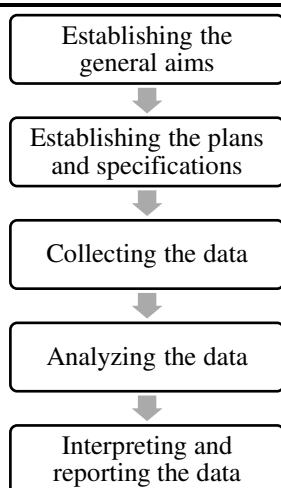


Figure 1. The diagram of CIT adopted from Flanagan (1954)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the two themes derived from the research questions: (1) the stress factors experienced by participants during the teaching-learning process and (2) how the stress factors influence their resilience in shaping their professional identity.

Stress Factors Experienced by the teachers during their teaching-learning Process

According to (Prilleltensky et al., 2016), three significant themes formed from the data. Personal, interpersonal, and organizational factors were all part of the stress factor framework.

Personal factors

This study discovered certain personal factors that influenced EFL teachers' teaching-learning process. These are emotional regulation, self-efficacy, and resolving work dissatisfaction in teachers.

Teachers' emotional control

The EFL teachers were allowed to discuss how they felt and dealt with challenges in their early careers. When personal problems arose, the EFL teachers assumed it was difficult to maintain emotional control. Ameer and Elvi appeared to be trying hard to keep their emotions under control in front of the learners. They did not want their emotions to influence how they taught the students. Ameer, for example, realized that warming up before the class could help her mood by allowing her to focus on the students' happiness, such as playing a game, dancing, or singing with her students.

"During my teaching, my mood and feelings sometimes influenced me. I would not begin. If I felt terrible about starting the class that day or was still burdened by the demands of duties outside the classroom, I should start the teaching-learning process immediately. First, I would encourage students to have a warming up such as singing, dancing, or even playing a game to normalize their unpleasant mood."
(Ameer)

“During the teaching-learning process, my moods and feelings affected my performance in front of my students. It was like when I had problems outside the classroom, such as with family, friends, or even myself, I was hesitant to start the class because of my moods and feelings, but to handle those feelings, I tried to invite my students to dance or sing together before starting the class, such kinds of activities could help me to regulate my feelings and moods”. (Elvi)

Based on the statements above, it was clear that the problems outside the classroom could affect their feelings and moods in the teaching process, but they tried to hide their feelings and moods when they had to teach the students. This finding was by the study by Lomi & Mbato (2020) that controlling their emotions during the teaching process was not easy, especially when they had personal matters. They intended to show the kids a professional image of the teacher.

Managing self-efficacy

Three of the interviewed teachers said they believed in their abilities and skills in teaching students. They were confident enough to face the workplace situation as a teacher. It could be seen from their answers related to their preparations and expectations before entering the actual workplace. However, as they began attending classes, problems began to develop, causing them to lose confidence. If they had poor instruction, they conducted post-class reflections and evaluations as described by John:

“I did believe that when I had abilities and skills in teaching, I could teach and convey the materials well and give

better understanding to my students. Those were my expectations before entering the actual workplace. However, during the teaching process, some problems appeared, and I started to doubt my teaching abilities and skills”. (John)

The statement above was also mentioned by Ricky and Ameer as follows:

“Becoming a teacher has been my biggest dream since childhood. Becoming a teacher could increase the quality of education in Indonesia, especially for an English teacher. I could prepare and run the plans well during my teaching-learning process because I knew I was ready for teaching. I was also confident I could teach my students well because I believed in my teaching skills. Nevertheless, all those expectations and preparation were gone when I came to the actual world of teaching. Preparing the materials was not as easy as I thought because when I had already prepared the plans for teaching, not all of the plans could be done on the day. Some problems could occur during the teaching-learning process”. (Ricky)

“I did not think of another job that interests me other than becoming a teacher. I knew that becoming a teacher was not as easy as I thought; it needed more patience and to be ready to face the sudden problems that might occur inside or even outside the classroom, such as the plans that did not run well as I planned, my moods and feelings related to my problems, lack of connectedness with the students, did

not know students' needs, and so on. However, I believed I could face and handle those problems since I took education as my major. I was confident enough with my choice." (Amee)

As mentioned before, three interviewed teachers were confident with their abilities and skills in teaching. There were also opposite opinions related to teachers' self-efficacy, as noted by Elvi and Queen below.

"Becoming a teacher and teaching at school after graduating college was my choice. The reason was that I wanted to get more experience and look for my passion. Nevertheless, when it came to the actual class, I faced some problems and struggles; I felt hesitant to become a teacher and felt like I did not have enough skills to teach my students". (Elvi)

"I did not have a job the first time I graduated from university. So, I decided to apply for a job as a teacher in my hometown. Since my hometown was still in a rural area, there were some problems. One of them was students' lack of motivation to learn. It was a big problem for me because it was my first experience as a teacher, and it was hard for me to handle the situation. I did not feel confident to face that situation."

Interpersonal factors

Teachers must communicate positively and effectively with their students, parents, colleagues, and supervisors. However, relationships with others can be dangerous. Classroom discipline, student behavior, parent-teacher communication, and

colleague relationships are examples of interpersonal issues (Prilleltensky et al., 2016). Furthermore, teachers generally develop self-perceptions and internalize all external variables associated with their professions. It implies that their social environment influences the process of determining the success they have at work (Lomi & Mbato, 2020). Some teachers mentioned some struggles related to interpersonal factors as follows:

Student's behavior in the classroom

The five teachers agreed that their first issue was figuring out how to handle the class. Before entering the profession, John remarked that he expected to meet kids who respected and followed every single rule he set in type.

"Teachers are responsible because we teach, educate, and motivate students. Students engage in a wide variety of actions, both positive and negative. This is related to students' ongoing search for their identity. Emotional instability can impact their cognition and conduct, and different family histories can also play a role in developing children's personalities." (John)

John described that he had experienced one unforgettable moment when his students complained about the divided group in class.

"I have experienced the students who did not want to follow my decision concerning the division of study groups. They complained and told me to change the group members because they wanted to be in the same group with their close friends." (John)

“I knew it was difficult for them to work with their new friends. They might feel a lack of social interactions because of the pandemic. So that was why I still kept on my decision. However, the decision made the students not talk to me for a few days, and I felt they did not respect me as their teacher.” (John)

“I did not feel anything when I made the decision. Then, I felt guilty after school. I kept asking myself, ‘Was it fair for them to follow my decision?’ ‘Was I too strict with my students?’, something as I questioned my own decision. Then, I told the school’s senior teacher, and she said it was okay because they usually complained about the same thing with other teachers. Moreover, as time passes, the students enjoy the class and finally talk to me.” (John)

Based on the statements above, John kept his decision with some consideration, such as increasing students’ social interactions and responsibilities and respecting the teacher’s decision. Initially, he thought it was not easy, but recognized that students develop over time. He also noted that students’ desire to be in the same study group as close friends could be regarded as an attempt to protect and maintain their social identity. They may have felt a sense of connection and comfort from being among familiar people, mainly because social interactions were limited due to the pandemic. The teacher’s opposition to the choice can be interpreted as a sign of their desire to maintain their social identity (Miller, 2016).

A negative relationship with colleagues

The EFL teachers had to describe their interactions with their colleagues. Through the interview, the researcher found that John had the most problematic story related to his relationship with his colleagues. John was a new teacher at the vocational school. Since he was a multi-talent person, he was trusted to be the homeroom teacher, taught various subjects, and coordinated various school events with his new title. Moreover, he became a busy teacher with academic and non-academic events at school. He was more active than his senior teachers at school. The senior teachers complained because they thought he was a new teacher with limited teaching experience. Finally, he asked the curriculum deputy head to rearrange the schedule so there would be no sense of a gap between teachers, especially new and seniors, with their skills or abilities.

“Well, it was my first time teaching higher level students at school since I only had experience teaching in a private course, especially young learners. I recognized that I could teach, although I lacked experience. I also believed that some of my skills would be useful when I engaged in the real world of learning. Then, it happened when the principal asked me to coordinate some school events, and the curriculum deputy head gave me many classes. This, however, differed from what senior teachers at the school where I currently teach believe. They and I were tense since the schedule’s division was unfair. They showed they did not like me slowly and created a teachers’ group without me. I finally

decided to ask the curriculum deputy head to rearrange the teaching schedule with the hope that there would be no gap between me and the senior teachers and our relationship as colleagues would be better.”

Things that have happened in the past reoccur as the school accreditation assessment approaches. When John sought to assist the deputy head of curriculum in preparing the paperwork required for the school's accreditation assessment, the senior instructor did not accept it because John was a new teacher.

“This happened again when the deputy head of curriculum asked me to assist in preparing the documentation required for school accreditation. I used my knowledge from teaching private courses and my teaching practice here to develop essential documents such as lesson plans, syllabi, semester programs, annual programs, and so on. With my experience, I utilized diverse formats for various documents to avoid monotony.” (John)

John stated that it was difficult for him based on the statements above. He needed to cope with all of the unpleasant feelings and conflicts that arose throughout that period. He absorbed much energy. He wished to be recognized as a teacher at the school. He desired to be acknowledged by his colleagues and to develop positive relationships with them. The novice teacher required assistance from fellow teachers because he was new to the school, and they wanted help from their colleagues. It indicated that negative relationships among

teachers could appear because of envy (Lomi & Mbato, 2020).

Organizational factors

Organizational pressures are another cause of stress for teachers. The administration's actions, the principal's management style, and the school's corporate atmosphere can all impact a teacher's well-being. When organizational demands appear out of sync with a sense of personal control, the accompanying tension can be highly stressful (Prilleltensky et al., 2016). Furthermore, Canrinus et al. (2012) argued that external influences, such as the school's damaging social climate, influence that commitment to stay in the profession.

Lack of teaching media and facilities

Based on the interview, one of the teachers, Ricky, experienced a severe lack of resources since he taught in a rural area. He stated that there was no technology used at school. They are entirely reliant on the government's textbook. They still need to find some resources to help them with their teaching.

“I teach an elementary school in a rural area. This is my first time teaching in a rural area, and I am shocked because there is no technology there. All of the teachers use the government's textbook to teach the students. Sometimes, they have to use the things around them as teaching media. The school building is made of wood and has no window or door. They only have two classes for all grades. Then, because they only have two classes, some teachers usually use the canteen as a classroom. I can say that I am a creative teacher. I can create an

interesting way of learning, although the school still lacks facilities. However, it cannot be denied that facilities to support the teaching and learning process are still required.”
(Ricky)

Eventually, Ricky believes that he can do his best even in this situation because he has learned from prior studies that being innovative is essential for teachers. He did his best and is now proud to say he is grateful because the students have improved significantly.

Salary

When asked about their salaries, the new teachers indicated they received payments from their schools based on the total hours they worked in a week or month. Furthermore, with limited funding, they were paid every three months rather than monthly. Eventually, they needed to give up on delaying their pay because many students had not paid their school fees. Their income was derived from school fees.

“Sometimes, I have to wait for the payment until the end of the month or even the semester because many students still have not paid the school fees. I will say that teaching with all of the demands and low salary is not fair for the teachers in rural areas.”

Another teacher also stated that the amount of teachers' salaries was unfair to their hard work in increasing the quality of education and students' basic needs. For some teachers, income is the most critical factor in determining whether they will stay in the teaching profession or leave to pursue more financially rewarding opportunities.

“As a teacher, I am frustrated by the lack of progress in addressing the issue of teacher pay. We are expected to deliver high-quality education, but we are frequently pushed to stretch our limited resources to satisfy our fundamental necessities. This not only makes it difficult for us to focus on our pupils completely, but it also makes it difficult to retain great educators in the profession. We deserve adequate remuneration for our crucial role in molding the future, and it is past time for our voices to be heard.”

The statement presented a teacher's dissatisfaction regarding the lack of progress toward resolving teachers' salaries and the challenges that educators confront. The teacher emphasized the expectation to provide high-quality education while restricted resources limit how well they could adequately focus on their students. The statement also underlined the significance of equitable remuneration for teachers, cited their vital role in molding the future, and urged their voices to be heard to effect critical changes. The two statements were in line with the “Equity Theory.” According to this theory, individuals compared their efforts (work, time, dedication) and results (rewards, money) to those of others to decide if they were being paid fairly. When teachers perceive a disparity between their efforts and the payment they receive, this could lead to sentiments of inequity and job dissatisfaction (Adams, 2015).

The professional identity construction of EFL teachers

Teachers' motivation in teaching

Becoming a teacher could not be separated from the struggles and problems in the classroom. Teachers must construct their professional identity by facing and solving problems (Day, 2018). Many aspects influenced professional identity because it was multidimensional. Self-efficacy, motivation, feeling of responsibility, passion for teaching, and belief in expertise were all aspects that influenced it (Berger & Van, 2019). The participants answered differently when asked about their motivation to become a teacher.

"My English teacher inspired me in junior high school. I still remember the ways he taught the students. He taught me about literature and grammar and inspired me to think critically, express myself articulately, and see the world from different viewpoints. I want to pay it forward by becoming an English teacher myself, developing young minds and assisting them in discovering the transformational potential of education." (Amee)

Amee's experience with her inspiring English instructor highlights the concept of 'teacher role models and the power of educators to have a profound effect on their students. Positive role models in the classroom may influence students' aspirations and career choices. As Amee's teacher did, teachers who encourage critical thinking and strong communication skills contribute to students' overall growth (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

"I have had a deep love of language and literature since childhood. I have always been interested in the power of

words to inspire, connect, and transmit feelings. As an English teacher, I can share my enthusiasm for reading with my students, assisting them in exploring the vast world of literature, improving their communication skills, and developing a lifelong appreciation for the written and spoken word." (Ricky)

Individuals are motivated by internal elements such as personal interests and passions, leading to higher engagement and happiness. Ricky's intrinsic motivation correlates to his goal to become an English teacher, as he aspires to translate his enthusiasm into a meaningful and fulfilling career. Additionally, Ricky's statement demonstrates a deep connection to language and literature and his desire to share this enthusiasm with his future students (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Some participants expressed similar answers related to their motivation for becoming a teacher. They answered that their reason for becoming an English teacher was because of lifelong learning.

"Becoming an English teacher is my way of pursuing a life-long learning journey and spreading that passion for learning to my students. English is a dynamic topic that keeps me interested and excited. I would like to foster a sense of intellectual curiosity in my students and encourage them to perceive learning as a continuous process" (John)

John's statement shows his view that becoming a teacher of English indicates his commitment to lifelong learning. He understands that English is a topic that evolves through time and that its dynamic

aspect keeps him interested and excited. This viewpoint aligns with 'professional development' in education, which requires instructors to regularly update their knowledge and skills to adapt to changing educational environments (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

"As an English teacher, I can engage in meaningful intellectual dialogue with my students." Their diverse points of view, ideas, and beliefs encourage me to think critically and broaden my understanding. This continuous interchange of ideas motivates my longing for knowledge, creating every moment in the classroom a chance for personal development." (Queen)

Queen's remark highlights the need to engage in intellectual conversations with students. This experience broadens her perspective and inspires her longing for knowledge and personal growth. This is consistent with 'teacher-student interaction' as a catalyst for teacher professional development (Hattie, 2008).

"Becoming an English teacher allows me to stay connected to the dynamic landscape of language and literature." As I lead my students through several literary works and language activities, I am reminded that there is always something new to learn. This position motivates me to remain curious, versatile, and open to learning from classic literature and current ways of communication." (Elvi)

Elvi's statement emphasizes the importance of being an English teacher in remaining linked to the ever-changing world of

language and literature. Her approach is consistent with subject-matter expertise and the value of expanding one's comprehension of the material being taught (Hammond, 1998). Overall, the perspectives expressed by John, Queen, and Elvi are supported by well-established studies in the field of education. Their reasons are consistent with the ideas of lifelong learning, intellectual progress, and the critical role of instructors in instilling in their students a sense of curiosity and constant learning.

Overcoming Job Dissatisfaction

Teachers dissatisfied with their jobs can harm their well-being, the quality of education they give, and the overall performance of schools. It is critical to overcome job unhappiness to retain skilled instructors and establish a healthy learning environment. Recent research on teacher well-being and engagement supports one effective method via the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) perspective. The Self-Determination Theory highlights the relevance of intrinsic motivation and satisfaction of psychological needs in promoting well-being and engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

"I actively seek opportunities for professional development to overcome job dissatisfaction." Investing in my personal growth, whether through workshops, conferences, or collaboration with colleagues, not only strengthens my teaching approaches but also keeps me motivated and passionate about my vocation as an educator." (John)

"I have found that connecting with other teachers and sharing our experiences helps reduce job

dissatisfaction. We talk about issues, share ideas, and provide each other with a support system, which reminds me that I am not alone on this road. Creating a sense of community among educators has been important.” (Amee)

Based on the statements above, Amee's emphasis on community building mirrors

the favorable influence of collegial relationships on teacher well-being (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007), while John's focus on professional growth aligns with the benefits of lifelong learning (Hammond, 1998). Their approaches reflect a more significant knowledge that personal development and a supportive professional environment enhance teacher satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The findings highlighted the stress factors experienced by the five EFL teachers while teaching in rural areas and how these factors shape their resilience as they construct their professional identity. The stress factors were classified as personal, interpersonal, and organizational. Individual factors revealed certain aspects that influenced EFL teachers' teaching-learning process. These were emotional control and self-efficacy. The interpersonal factors were related to students' classroom behavior and antagonistic relationships with colleagues. Organizational factors were another source of stress for teachers. These were lack of media and facilities for teaching. The findings indicated that almost all teachers faced the same stress factors during their teaching-learning process, especially in rural areas. Recognizing and managing these stresses allowed teachers to more effectively manage their positions, create resilience, and construct a solid professional identity that benefits both themselves and their students.

Furthermore, this study also revealed how teachers shape their professional identity. Studying EFL teachers' reasons for teaching and ways of dealing with job dissatisfaction provided significant insights into the complicated process of developing their professional identities. The wide range of motivations stated by participants, from the influence of inspiring role models to an inner desire for lifelong learning, demonstrates the multidimensional nature of teacher sources of inspiration. These motivations represented a complicated interplay of personal interests, a desire for continual intellectual improvement, and a dedication to facilitating excellent student learning experiences. Moreover, the findings emphasized the importance of teachers' participation in professional development, as shown by their involvement in workshops, conferences, and collaborative relationships with peers. Such initiatives improve teaching skills and foster a sense of autonomy, motivation, and resilience regardless of job dissatisfaction.

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