CONCEPTUALIZING ENGLISH TEACHER IDENTITY IN *PESANTREN* BASED SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study aims to explore how English teachers at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid conceptualize their professional identity within the unique context of a pesantren-based Islamic school. Employing a survey research method, this investigation gathers data from junior high school English teachers to understand their perceptions and experiences in shaping their teacher identities. The research seeks to delve into the multifaceted nature of teacher identity, considering the interplay of religious values, pedagogical approaches, and the cultural environment of the pesantren. By examining these dimensions, the study aims to uncover how these educators balance their roles as language instructors and moral guides, integrating Islamic teachings with their professional responsibilities. The findings described the interconnectedness of Future Perspective, Teacher Belief, Career Perception, and Self-Efficacy plays a critical role in shaping teacher professional identity. A positive outlook on these aspects encourages teachers to remain committed, resilient, and engaged in their profession. Professional development programs tailored to enhance teacher skills and confidence, along with mentorship opportunities, are essential in reinforcing a strong professional identity. Furthermore, educational policies that prioritize fair compensation, job security, and access to resources create a supportive environment where teachers can thrive. By addressing both internal and external factors that influence professional identity, educational leaders can ensure that teachers feel valued and empowered, ultimately leading to improved job satisfaction, retention, and student outcomes. A focus on these key areas is vital for sustaining a motivated and effective teaching workforce.

Keywords: Conceptualizing; English Teacher Identity; *Pesantren*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of teacher identity is a multifaceted construct influenced by various personal, professional, and contextual factors (Berger, 2019; Gill, 2020; Yazan, 2018). In the context of pesantren-based Islamic schools, this identity formation is further complicated by the integration of religious and educational responsibilities (Altıntaş, 2021; Rissanen, 2014; Scott, 2006). Pesantren, traditional Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, play a crucial role in providing both religious and general education (Jubba et al., 2022; Musaddad, 2023). These institutions emphasize a holistic approach, blending academic subjects with religious teachings, and fostering a unique cultural and educational environment.

In pesantren, teachers, known as *ustadz* or *ustadzah*, are not only responsible for imparting academic knowledge but also for inculcating Islamic values and morals. This dual role significantly shapes their professional identity, requiring a balance between being an educator and a spiritual guide (Alvesson et al., 2008; Obodaru, 2017; Pennington & Richards, 2016). The unique environment of pesantren, with its communal living and close-knit relationships, further influences how teachers perceive and enact their roles.

Understanding how English teachers in Pesantren conceptualize their teacher identity is particularly important, given the global significance of English and its perceived association with Western culture. English teachers in pesantren must navigate potential cultural and

ideological tensions, aligning their language teaching practices with the Islamic values upheld by the institution.

This research focuses on junior high school English teachers at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, aiming to explore their perceptions and experiences of shaping their professional identities. By employing a survey method, the study seeks to gather comprehensive insights into the factors influencing their identity formation, including the integration of religious and pedagogical roles, the impact of the pesantren environment, and the challenges they face in their professional journey.

Teacher identity in Pesantren-based schools is a multifaceted concept influenced by various factors. Pesantren education emphasizes Islamic values, general knowledge, character education, and spiritual guidance (Krisdianata & Mbato, 2022). Teachers in such settings play a crucial role in shaping students' identities by instilling noble manners and religious insights. Additionally, the identity formation of teaching-school students with *pesantren* backgrounds is rooted in social, valuative, practical, institutional, and disciplinary categories, reflecting positive social capital and pedagogical implications (Putra & Arkam, 2022). Furthermore, pre-service teachers undergoing training practicums in schools face challenges but exhibit resilience, which aids in constructing their teacher identity (Sancar et al., 2021). Understanding the components and challenges related to teacher identity in Pesantren-based schools is essential for effective educational practices and the development of competent educators.

The conceptualization of teacher identity in Pesantren-based schools is shaped by various key factors. Firstly, Pesantren education equips students with rich Islamic values, contributing to the formation of teachers' identities with social, valuative, practical, institutional, and disciplinary components (Putra & Arkam, 2022). Additionally, the dynamics within Pesantren environments, including the influence of radical ideologies, play a role in shaping teacher identities (Ardianto & Ansori, 2024). Furthermore, the evolution of teacher identity from a core, fixed construct to a multifaceted, context-dependent phenomenon is crucial in understanding how teachers in Pesantren-based schools perceive their professional identities (Sancar et al., 2021; Suarez & McGrath, 2022a). By considering these factors, it becomes evident that the unique blend of Islamic values, educational dynamics, and evolving conceptual frameworks significantly influences the conceptualization of teacher identity in Pesantren-based schools.

Pesantren education significantly contributes to the formation of teachers' identities, encompassing social, valuative, practical, institutional, and disciplinary components (Putra & Arkam, 2022). Pesantren, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, play a crucial role in shaping individuals with rich Islamic values, providing a strong foundation for identity formation (Cibro et al., 2023). Despite challenges in reconciling the national curriculum with traditional religious education, pesantren students maintain a distinct identity rooted in Islamic teachings and values, reflecting positive social capital and influencing pedagogical approaches (Hanif et al., 2024). Additionally, pesantren serve as pillars in the development of Islamic civilization by offering holistic education that includes academic, social, and moral dimensions, fostering deep understanding and personal growth in students (Azizah et al., 2023). While pesantren are known for shaping Islamic character, they also face challenges related to radicalism, emphasizing the importance of promoting moderate Islamic teachings

and inclusive education to prevent radical ideologies from spreading within these communities.

Conceptualizing teacher identity in Pesantren-based schools, such as Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, involves addressing unique challenges. These schools integrate traditional Islamic education with modern curricula, creating a dual role for teachers. They must navigate the expectations of religious instruction and contemporary academic demands. Teachers often struggle with balancing their identities as religious guides and modern educators, leading to potential conflicts in pedagogical approaches and self-perception. This dual identity can result in stress, identity confusion, and difficulty in meeting the diverse needs of students. Understanding and supporting teacher identity in this context is crucial for effective teaching and the holistic development of students. The research question is how do teachers in Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid conceptualize and understanding of teacher identity?

The study of conceptualizing teacher identity in Pesantren-based schools, particularly at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, holds significant importance for several reasons. Firstly, it addresses the unique educational landscape of Pesantren schools, which blend traditional Islamic education with modern academic subjects (Zaini, 2022). This dual curriculum presents distinctive challenges and opportunities for teachers, whose roles extend beyond conventional classroom instruction to include religious mentorship and community leadership. Understanding teacher identity within this context is crucial for developing effective educational strategies that respect and integrate both aspects of their roles.

Secondly, this study contributes to the broader discourse on teacher identity by highlighting the specific experiences and perspectives of educators in Islamic boarding schools. Much of the existing literature on teacher identity focuses on secular educational settings, leaving a gap in understanding the complexities faced by teachers in religious schools (Soules & Jafralie, 2021). By examining the identity of teachers at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, this research provides valuable insights into how religious beliefs and practices intersect with professional responsibilities and self-conception.

Furthermore, the study has practical implications for teacher training and professional development. By identifying the challenges and supports needed for teachers to navigate their dual roles, educational authorities and policy-makers can design targeted programs that enhance teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction. This is particularly important in Pesantren schools, where teachers often play a pivotal role in shaping students' moral and academic development.

Additionally, understanding teacher identity in this context can inform broader educational reforms and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education in Indonesia. Insights from this study can help policymakers create environments that foster positive teacher identities, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes for students.

Finally, the study's findings can serve as a model for other Pesantren-based schools facing similar challenges, offering them strategies to support their teachers effectively. This can lead to a more cohesive and holistic educational experience for students, ensuring that they receive both strong academic instruction and meaningful religious education. In summary, the significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance educational practices, support teacher development, and contribute to the broader understanding of teacher identity in diverse educational contexts.

METHOD

This research employs a survey method to investigate how English teachers at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid conceptualize their teacher identity. This method involves systematically collecting data through structured questionnaires distributed to junior high school English teachers within the pesantren. The survey aims to capture a comprehensive snapshot of the teachers' perspectives, experiences, and the various factors influencing their professional identity. The respondents, who are English teachers at the junior high level in *Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid*, provide valuable insights into the intersection of their roles as language educators and bearers of Islamic values. The survey is designed to explore multiple dimensions of teacher identity, including their pedagogical beliefs, teaching practices, and the ways in which they integrate religious principles into their instruction. This survey based on English teacher identity measure (Yan et al., 2024). it consists of 19 items. The 19-item is divided into four parts; Future perspective (3 items), Teacher Belief (4 items), Career Perception (3 items) and Self-Efficacy (9 items).

This study is conducted through questionnaire. 7 English teachers of junior high school participate in this study. 6 teachers come from rivate school and 1 teacher come from public school. They are filling the questionnaire. The questionnaire is distributed through G-Form.

The research procedure for conceptualizing teacher professional identity in pesantren-based schools involves several systematic steps to ensure comprehensive data collection and analysis. Initially, a survey is designed and developed, tailors to capture the multifaceted aspects of teacher identity among junior high school English teachers at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid. The survey includes both quantitative and qualitative questions, addressing various dimensions such as Future perspective (FP), Teacher Belief (TB), Career Perception (CP) and Self-Efficacy (SE).

Data collection involves G-Form to accommodate the preferences of the respondents. The collected data is then coded and analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative responses. The analysis focuses on identifying patterns and themes that illustrate how teachers conceptualize their professional identity within the unique context of a pesantren.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings
Participant Profile

Seven English teachers role as participant. They consist of two males and five females as described in table 1.

Tabel 1. Partificipants Profile

NO	NAME (PSEUDO)	GENDER*	SCHOOL STATUS
1	KA	M	PRIVATE
2	HA	M	PRIVATE
3	FA	F	PRIVATE
4	NA	F	PRIVATE
5	IW	F	PRIVATE
6	DM	F	PRIVATE
7	AY	F	PUBLIC

*M: Male, F: Female

Tabel 2. Descriptive Statistics

Aspect	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
FP1	7	5	5	5.00	.000
FP2	7	4	5	4.86	.378
FP3	7	3	5	3.71	.951
CP1	7	4	5	4.57	.535
CP2	7	4	5	4.86	.378
CP3	7	4	5	4.57	.535
TB1	7	4	5	4.86	.378
TB2	7	4	5	4.86	.378
TB3	7	3	5	4.43	.787
TB4	7	4	5	4.57	.535
SE1	7	3	5	3.86	.900
SE2	7	3	5	3.57	.787
SE3	7	3	5	4.43	.787
SE4	7	3	5	4.00	.816
SE5	7	3	5	4.14	.690
SE6	7	3	5	4.57	.787
SE7	7	4	5	4.14	.378
SE8	7	3	5	3.86	.690
SE9	7	3	5	4.29	.756
Valid N (listwise)	7				

Based on the table 2, the average ofminimun score is 3,5. It indicates all participants have defined teacher professional identiy in their daily teaching. Percentage of English Teacher Identity Measurement was described in the table 3.

Table 3 Percentage of English Teacher Identity Measurement

ITEM	ASPECT	Percentage
1	FUTURE PERSPECTIVE	90

2		
3		
4		
5	TEACHER BELIEF	94
6		
7		
8		
9	CAREER PERCEPTION	92
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15	SELF EFFICACY	82
16		
17		
18		
19		

The table 3 provides percentage values for various aspects, reflecting the data on certain perspectives or beliefs. Specifically, the table includes the following categories: Future Perspective at 90%, Teacher Belief at 94%, Career Perception at 92%, and Self-Efficacy at 82%. These percentages likely represent survey results or measurements assessing confidence, belief systems, and perceptions related to education or career aspects. The table highlights key dimensions of individuals' viewpoints on their future, beliefs, and abilities, offering insights into their overall mindset and potential for growth.

Discussion

Teacher professional identity is a complex and dynamic construct that encompasses how teachers perceive themselves, their roles, their values, and their place within the educational system. It is shaped by both internal factors, such as beliefs and self-efficacy, and external factors, including societal expectations, institutional culture, and student interactions (Narayanan et al., 2023). The table provides percentages that reflect key aspects of teachers' experiences and perceptions, which are crucial for understanding and developing professional identity.

Future Perspective and Teacher Professional Identity

A 90% rating in Future Perspective suggests that most individuals, including teachers, have a positive outlook on their future. For teachers, this optimism could be tied to their professional development opportunities, career progression, and the impact they can make on students.

A positive Future Perspective is essential for teachers' professional identity as it influences their long-term commitment to the profession. Teachers who view their future optimistically are more likely to invest in their ongoing professional development, stay motivated, and adapt to changing educational landscapes (Boeskens et al., 2020; Couture et al., 2020). Teachers who see opportunities for growth, such as leadership roles, advanced certifications, or specializations, are more likely to remain committed to their profession (Low et al., 2022). This sense of career advancement contributes to a strong professional identity (Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021). Besides, teachers who believe they can positively impact their students' futures are more likely to feel fulfilled in their roles. This belief strengthens their professional identity, as they see themselves as agents of change and contributors to society.

Despite the high percentage, some teachers may struggle with maintaining a positive Future Perspective due to factors such as job insecurity, policy changes, or a lack of support. Addressing these challenges through supportive policies and professional development opportunities can help sustain teachers' optimism and strengthen their professional identity.

Teacher Belief and Professional Identity

The high percentage (94%) in Teacher Belief reflects strong confidence in teachers' abilities and their essential role in the educational process. Teacher Belief is directly tied to professional identity, as it encompasses how teachers view themselves and their effectiveness in the classroom.

A strong belief in one's teaching abilities is fundamental to a robust professional identity. When teachers trust in their expertise and skills, they are more likely to feel competent, respected, and valued (Osterman, 2023). This confidence translates into better teaching practices, stronger relationships with students, and a more positive classroom environment (X. Li et al., 2022). This self-perception is a core component of professional identity, as it influences how teachers interact with students, colleagues, and the broader educational community. This success reinforces their professional identity, as they see tangible evidence of their impact on student outcomes.

Career Perception and Professional Identity

Career Perception, rated at 92%, indicates that most teachers have a favorable view of their career opportunities and the potential for professional growth. This perception is a key component of teacher professional identity, as it reflects how teachers view their place within the profession and their long-term career trajectory.

A positive Career Perception contributes to a strong professional identity by reinforcing the idea that teaching is a viable and rewarding career path. When teachers perceive their careers positively, they are more likely to feel a sense of purpose and belonging within the profession (Pesonen et al., 2021). Teachers who see opportunities for advancement, whether through leadership roles, specialized teaching areas, or continued education, are more likely to remain engaged and committed to the profession (Smith & Gillespie, 2023). This growth mindset is crucial for maintaining a dynamic and evolving professional identity.

A favorable Career Perception is closely linked to job satisfaction. Teachers who feel satisfied with their career choices are more likely to develop a strong, positive professional identity, as they associate their work with personal fulfillment and societal contribution (Ortan et al., 2021). But, some teacher face challenges in their career perception due to external factors such as limited promotion opportunities, low salaries, or policy changes (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). Addressing these issues is vital to ensuring that all teachers maintain a positive view of their careers, which in turn strengthens their professional identity.

Self-Efficacy and Professional Identity

Self-Efficacy, at 82%, reflects teachers' belief in their ability to succeed in their roles. While this percentage is slightly lower than the others, it still indicates a strong level of confidence among teachers. Self-Efficacy is a critical aspect of professional identity, as it influences how teachers approach their work and how they cope with challenges.

Self-Efficacy is deeply intertwined with professional identity. Teachers' confidential in their ability to manage classrooms, design effective lessons, and support student learning are more likely to develop a strong sense of professional identity (Skinner, 2021). They view themselves as capable professionals who can navigate the complexities of teaching. High Self-Efficacy enables teachers to remain resilient in the face of challenges (S. Li, 2023; Xue, 2022). Teachers who believe in their abilities are more likely to persevere through difficult situations, adapt to changes, and continue to grow professionally. This resilience is a key component of a strong professional identity.

Teachers with high Self-Efficacy are often more committed to continuous improvement. They are more likely to seek out professional development opportunities, reflect on their teaching practices, and strive for excellence. This commitment to growth is central to a dynamic professional identity. While the percentage for Self-Efficacy is high, it is crucial to address the needs of teachers who may struggle with confidence in their abilities. Providing targeted support, mentorship, and professional development can help enhance Self-Efficacy, thereby strengthening teachers' professional identity.

Interconnections Between the Categories and Their Impact on Professional Identity

The interconnections between Future Perspective, Teacher Belief, Career Perception, and Self-Efficacy significantly influence a teacher's professional identity. Future Perspective relates to how teachers envision their career trajectory and their optimism about professional growth. This positive outlook can drive teachers to invest in their careers and stay committed to the profession (Santoro, 2021). When teachers have a strong vision for their future, they are more likely to maintain a resilient and evolving professional identity.

Teacher Belief is closely linked to self-efficacy, as confidence in one's teaching abilities reinforces a sense of competence and professionalism. Teachers who believe in their skills are more likely to feel confident in their roles, leading to a more robust professional identity. For example, teachers with high belief in their teaching abilities tend to perform

better and engage more effectively with students (Eslamdoost, 2020). Therefore, enhancing teacher belief can directly strengthen professional identity, as it fosters a sense of capability and success.

Career Perception influences how teachers view their roles within the educational system and their opportunities for advancement. A positive Career Perception means that teachers see value in their work and believe in their potential for growth. This perception is vital for maintaining job satisfaction and a strong professional identity, as it encourages teachers to stay engaged and committed to their careers (Granjo et al., 2021). Teachers with a positive career perception are more likely to remain in the profession, seeing it as a viable and fulfilling career path.

Self-Efficacy, the belief in one's ability to succeed, is essential for teachers to feel empowered in their roles. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to take on challenges, innovate in their teaching practices, and maintain a positive attitude toward their profession. Research shows that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of job performance and satisfaction (Bernales-Turpo et al., 2022; Shu, 2022). Thus, building self-efficacy can greatly enhance professional identity by promoting confidence, resilience, and a proactive approach to teaching.

Implications for Professional Development and Educational Policy

Professional development and educational policy have significant implications for shaping and supporting teacher professional identity. Focusing on targeted professional development helps address the needs of teachers in building their skills and confidence. Research shows that continuous professional development programs enhance teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction, leading to stronger professional identities (Derakhshan et al., 2020; Sarraf-Yazdi et al., 2021; Suarez & McGrath, 2022b). Therefore, investing in such programs is essential for cultivating a resilient and committed teaching workforce.

Educational policy plays a crucial role in providing the necessary support structures for teachers to thrive. Policies that ensure fair compensation, job security, and access to resources are vital for maintaining a positive teacher professional identity (Granjo et al., 2021). For instance, studies indicate that teachers who feel supported by their institutions are more likely to remain in the profession and develop a strong sense of professional belonging (Kirby & Thomas, 2022; Osterman, 2023). As a result, educational policies must prioritize teacher welfare to promote sustained engagement and growth within the profession.

Mentorship and collaboration opportunities are essential components of professional development that have long-term benefits for teacher identity. These opportunities allow teachers to learn from experienced colleagues, share best practices, and build a sense of community. Evidence suggests that mentorship programs lead to improved teacher performance and higher retention rates (Giacumo et al., 2020; Jacobson et al., 2020). Therefore, fostering environments that encourage collaboration and mentorship is crucial for reinforcing teachers' professional identity and career satisfaction.

Finally, addressing external challenges through supportive educational policies can help alleviate the stress and uncertainty that teachers may face. These challenges, such as policy changes, workload demands, and societal expectations, can negatively impact teachers' perceptions of their profession (Stacey et al., 2023; Tarraya, 2023). By implementing policies that mitigate these pressures, educational leaders can create a more stable and positive

environment for teachers. Ultimately, supportive policies are key to sustaining a strong professional identity

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
Conclusion
In conclusion, the interconnectedness of Future Perspective, Teacher Belief, Career Perception, and Self-Efficacy plays a critical role in shaping teacher professional identity. A positive outlook on these aspects encourages teachers to remain committed, resilient, and engaged in their profession. Professional development programs tailored to enhance teacher skills and confidence, along with mentorship opportunities, are essential in reinforcing a strong professional identity. Furthermore, educational policies that prioritize fair compensation, job security, and access to resources create a supportive environment where teachers can thrive. By addressing both internal and external factors that influence professional identity, educational leaders can ensure that teachers feel valued and empowered, ultimately leading to improved job satisfaction, retention, and student outcomes. A focus on these key areas is vital for sustaining a motivated and effective teaching workforce.

Suggestion
Based on the discussion above, it is recommended that schools and educational policymakers prioritize targeted professional development programs that address the specific needs of teachers. These programs should focus on enhancing skills, building confidence, and promoting continuous growth, which are essential for maintaining a strong professional identity. Additionally, creating mentorship and collaboration opportunities can provide teachers with valuable support, helping them to navigate challenges and improve their practice. Policymakers should also ensure that teachers are adequately compensated, have job security, and access necessary resources. By addressing these factors, educational leaders can foster a more positive and resilient professional identity among teachers, leading to higher retention rates and better educational outcomes for students. Implementing these suggestions will not only benefit teachers but also contribute to the overall success and stability of the education system.

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