

## Emotional experiences and identity construction of pre-service English teachers during teaching practicum in Indonesia

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### Article Info

### Abstract

#### Article History:

Received: February 11, 2025

Revised: May 8, 2025

Accepted: May 28, 2025

DOI: 10.20885/jee.v11i1.40130

This study explored pre-service English teachers' emotional experiences and professional identity construction during their teaching practicum in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach, narrative inquiry was employed to gather data from two pre-service teachers through semi-structured interviews and reflective diaries. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes related to their emotional experiences, such as anxiety, self-doubt, and motivation, and how these emotions influenced their teacher identities. Findings revealed that positive emotions like enthusiasm and empathy facilitated professional identity formation, while negative emotions such as anxiety and fear of making mistakes posed challenges. Mentor teachers played a crucial role in both alleviating and exacerbating these emotional responses. The study highlights the importance of emotional management and identity development in teacher preparation programs. However, the study's limitation lies in its small sample size, focusing on two participants from a private university in Indonesia. Future research could expand the sample size and explore the emotional dynamics of pre-service teachers in different contexts or academic fields.

**Keywords:** *Emotional experiences, narrative inquiry, pre-service teachers, professional identity, teaching practicum*

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching practicum is a fundamental component of pre-service teacher education, enabling future educators to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings. It serves as a vital link between academic preparation and professional teaching by providing hands-on experience in classroom management, lesson delivery, and student engagement (Genc, 2019; Mwamakula, 2020). As one of the most crucial phases in teacher preparation, practicum helps pre-service teachers develop pedagogical skills and shape their professional identities while confronting the dynamic and often challenging realities of teaching (Huong et al., 2020; Ulum, 2020).

Despite its significance, the teaching practicum often elicits strong emotional responses from pre-service teachers, which can influence their professional growth and teaching effectiveness. Emotions such as anxiety, self-doubt, and fear of making mistakes frequently arise during practicum experiences (Prabjandee, 2019; Zhu, 2019). These emotional challenges may undermine pre-service teachers' confidence and classroom performance, thereby impacting their developing teacher identity. Understanding how these emotions contribute to identity formation and identifying ways to support pre-service teachers emotionally are critical challenges. This study focuses on how Indonesian pre-service teachers navigate their emotional experiences and identity-building during teaching practicum.

Stark & Cummings, (2023) conceptualized teachers' emotions during teacher-student interactions, proposing three key dimensions (Figure 1).

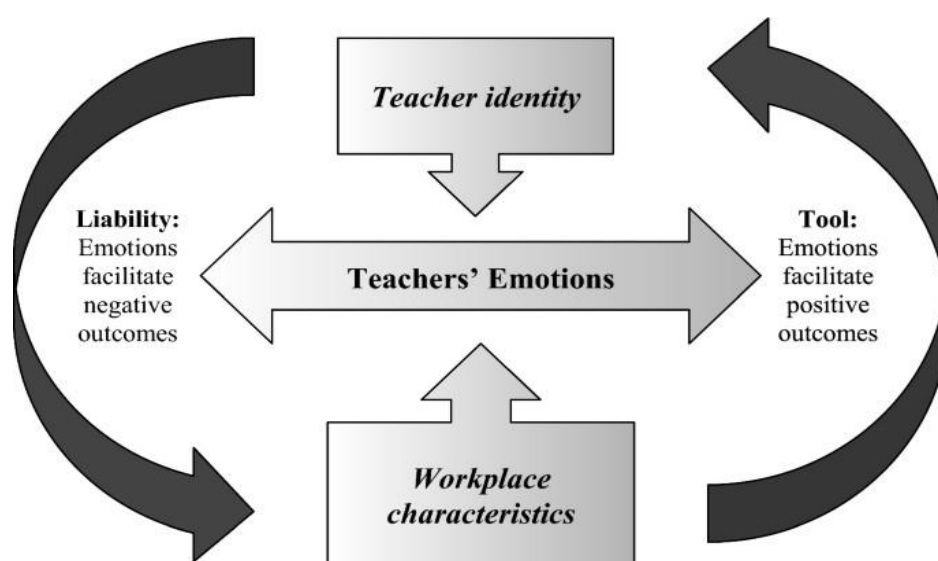


Figure 1. Conceptualizing the Role of teachers' Emotion during Teacher- Student interactions

First, emotions as a professional tool highlight positive emotional traits that motivate both teachers and students during classroom interactions. Second, emotions as a professional responsibility recognize the negative feelings—such as anxiety, embarrassment, and fear of errors—that teachers experience as part of their professional accountability. Third, the contextual impact on teacher identity reflects how teachers' perceptions of their emotional work influence their sense of self within workplace conditions, based on sense-making theory.

The teaching practicum is widely acknowledged for its role in shaping teacher identity. [Volchenkova & Bryan, \(2019\)](#) described teacher identity as a personal construct heavily influenced by practical teaching experiences. [Chen, \(2019\)](#) pointed out that pre-service teachers underwent significant emotional changes during practicum, which affected their teaching practices, learning outcomes, and professional commitment. Emotions – both positive and negative – play a pivotal role in shaping teacher identity by influencing teacher-student interactions and classroom management abilities. Managing classrooms, a common source of anxiety for novice teachers, is essential for fostering productive learning environments ([Abdullah & Basthomi, 2020](#)). [Stark & Cummings \(2023\)](#) further argued that teacher emotions might serve as both professional tools and liabilities, depending on contextual factors and teachers' emotional regulation skills.

Research on teaching practicum in EFL countries has revealed various emotional challenges. In China, pre-service teachers reported anxiety and embarrassment during practicum ([Zhu, 2019](#)) while in Thailand, anxiety and self-doubt were shaped by school culture ([Prabjandee, 2019](#)). In Turkey, practicum experience shifted pre-service teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward teaching, highlighting its transformative nature ([Genç, 2019](#)). [Mwamakula \(2020\)](#) noted that mentor teachers could both ease and intensify these emotional challenges, depending on mentorship quality.

This study investigated Indonesian pre-service English teachers' emotional experiences and professional identity construction during teaching practicum. By examining two pre-service teachers at a private school, this research explored emotional dynamics and identity formation processes in this context. The study hypothesized that emotions such as anxiety and self-doubt critically shaped teaching identities and approaches to classroom challenges. It also hypothesized that emotional support from mentors and peers influenced pre-service teachers' emotional responses and identity development.

While extensive research exists on teaching practicum and teacher identity, much focuses on non-EFL contexts or isolated emotional responses ([Chen, 2019](#); [Huong et al., 2020](#)). There is a notable gap regarding Indonesian pre-service teachers, especially concerning how emotions during practicum influence identity development. This study attempted to address this gap by offering a localized perspective on how Indonesian pre-service teachers experienced and managed emotions during practicum and how these experiences contributed to their professional identity. Additionally, it examined mentor support's moderating role – a factor underexplored in Indonesia.

The study is limited to two pre-service teachers from a private university in Indonesia who, at the time of this study, were undergoing their teaching practicum. It focused on their emotional experiences, such as anxiety, embarrassment, and self-doubt, and how these emotions shaped their professional identity. The study also examined how the presence of a mentor teacher influenced their emotional journey and identity formation during the practicum. Although the findings may offer insights into the experiences of pre-service teachers in similar educational settings, the focus remains on Indonesian contexts, limiting the generalizability of the results to other regions or countries.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative study was conducted at a private university in Indonesia, employing a narrative inquiry design to explore how pre-service English teachers emotionally construct their professional identity during teaching practicum. Narrative inquiry in pre-service teacher education involves systematically examining pre-service



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

This section presents the narratives of the participating pre-service teachers’ experiences during their teaching practicum, focusing on the development of their emotions and professional identities. The data are drawn from the interviews with and the diaries of the participants.

Table 1. Sample Deductive Coding Based on [Stark & Cummings \(2023\)](#)

Aspect	Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Script	
				Interview	Diaries
Teachers’ Identity	Teachers’ Identity Within Workplace Condition	1. Teachers’ Educational Experiences	TIWWC-TEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>I started my educational journey from public elementary, junior &amp; senior highschools.</u> (Interview Cindy,14/08/ 24)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>I attended a public school then an Islamic Boarding school because of my interest in language especially English....</u> (PST 2 Diary #1) TEE</li></ul>
		2. Teachers’ Own Identity	TIWWC-TOI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>I apply a teaching style that is firm but does not restrain students in class.</u> (Interview Natasya, 14/08/ 24)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Because my interest and ability is to be a teacher...( PST 1 Diary #2) TOI</u></li></ul>
		3. Workplace Culture Adjustment	TIWWC-WCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>I mastered this school location, ..., socializing with the teachers and mentor.</u> (Interview Cindy,14/08/ 24)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>I must continue to gain knowledge from my tutor teacher</u> (PST 2 Diary #2) WCA</li></ul>

Teachers' Emotion	Emotional as a Professional Tools	1. Encourage Students	EPT-ES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I give more attention to those who violate...</u>(Interview Cindy,14/08/ 24) ES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I asked them what they were looking for...and discussed the text in the book</u> (PST 1 Diary #3) ES</li> </ul>
		2. Excited in Teaching	EPT-ET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>...I had to choose the right techniques learning...</u>(Interview Natasya, 14/08/ 24) ET</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I start the learning with ice breaking first</u> (PST 2 Diary #2) ET</li> </ul>
		3. Motivate d Students	EPT-MS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I approach students to get to know me first at the beginning of my first teaching</u> (Interview Cindy,14/08/ 24) MS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I felt that the students looked more active...</u>(PST 2 Diary #3) MS</li> </ul>
		4. Empathy in Students Condition	EPT-ESC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>...I try to be calm and not rush to understand students characters</u> (PST 2 Diary #1) ESC</li> </ul>
		5. Motivate d Themselves	EPT-MT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I usually approach them and feel the chemistry...</u>(Interview Natasya, 14/08/ 24) ESC</li> <li>• <u>...I had to make them focus on learning...</u>(Interview Natasya, 14/08/ 24) MT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I felt I had to do my best performance in this meeting</u> (PST 1 Diary #2) MT</li> </ul>

Emotional as a Liability	1. Anxiety of Making Mistakes	EL- AMM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I felt anxious, embarrassed, and afraid of making mistakes in delivering the material of English words.</u> (Interview Natasya, 14/08/24) <b>AMM</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>In this meeting, I felt anxious, worried and a little out of touch with the learning that I delivered</u> (PST 1 Diary #3) <b>AMM</b></li> </ul>
	2. Difficult in Managing Class	EL-DMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I felt discouraged when in the classroom at vulnerable hours...</u> (Interview Cindy, 14/08/24) <b>DMC</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>...I felt during this teaching practicum was managing the class...sometimes students</u> <b>DMC</b></li> </ul>
	3. Discoura ged When Teaching	EL-DWT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I was worried that in the next meeting they would return to this condition</u> (Interview Cindy, 14/08/24) <b>DWT</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>I felt a little upset because students not bring the tools...</u> (PST 1 Diary #4) <b>DWT</b></li> </ul>

The data were categorized into three main areas: (1) pre-service teacher identity within the workplace context, (2) teacher emotions as a professional tool, and (3) teacher emotions as a liability. Teacher identity encompassed personal and educational backgrounds. Positive emotional skills were related to enthusiasm, motivation, and empathy, while negative emotions included anxiety, embarrassment, and fear. The following sections detail each area.

### Pre-Service Teacher Identity (within workplace condition)

#### Cindy's Perspective

Cindy, an eighth-semester student, completed her practicum at an Islamic boarding school. She attended public schools throughout her early education. Cindy shared:

*I started my educational journey from SDN 2 BR, SMPN 1 C and then continued to SMAN 1 C (Interview with Cindy, 14/08/24) (TIWWC/TEE)*

She chose a nearby university during the COVID pandemic due to her strong desire to become a teacher, particularly in English education. Cindy noted in her diary:

*Because my interest and ability is to be a teacher, I can share my knowledge, I like to meet many people even though I am introverted, and teaching does not take much time..... (PST 1 Diaries #1) (TIWWC/TOI)*

This practicum was Cindy's first real teaching experience. She explained:  
*....I have never taught before and have no previous teaching experience. This teaching practicum is the first experience I've had" (Interview with Cindy, 14th August 2024). (TIWWC/TEE)*

Cindy adapted by socializing with school staff and mentor teachers, stating:  
*I mastered this school location and atmosphere by socializing with the teachers who were there and*

*then communicating with the mentor teacher to build my social identity and also understand how to adjust to this environment (Interview with Cindy, 14th Agt 2024) (TIWWC/WCA)*

Initially, Cindy felt anxious and embarrassed about teaching:  
*I felt anxious, embarrassed, and afraid of making mistakes in delivering the material of English words.....(interview with Cindy, 14th 2024) (EL/AMM)*

Over time, she reflected on her shortcomings through journaling and sought to remain calm while improving her teaching:  
*The strategy I used was to stay calm and continue to evaluate myself about my shortcomings in teaching and in the classroom (PST 1 Diary #2). (EPT/MT)*

She recognized that teaching extends beyond delivering content to understanding classroom and school dynamics, which enhanced her confidence.

### ***Natasya's Perspective***

Natasya's educational path is similar to Cindy's, except she attended boarding school for high school. She began at public schools and transitioned to an Islamic boarding school to improve her English and Arabic skills. She majored in English literature due to long-standing interest.

She noted:

*My journey through education began at SDN 2 S then at SMPN 1 G and continued high school to SMAS AH (Interview with Natasya, 14/08/24) (TIWWC/TEE)*

After high school, she entered boarding school in the same year. Natasya's interest in English led her to attend an Islamic boarding school, where she could learn English and Arabic in the course of her daily life. That's why Natasya chose boarding school to develop her language skills. Natasya then continued her education by majoring in English at a private school in Indonesia. As is well known, she majored in English literature because of her interest in the subject since high school.

*It was taken (English major) because I have long been interested in learning and teaching English (PST Diaries #1) (TIWWC/TOI)*

After having completed the English courses, she was provided with a large amount of knowledge, particularly on the teaching of English, TESOL methodology, language assessment and teacher training to prepare for her teaching practicum.

*The theory about teaching that has been delivered by the lecturer as a teaching provision is always my reference in this teaching practicum (PST 2 Diaries #1, 14/08/24). (TIWWC/TEE)*

By mastering the school environment, she had acquired sufficient understanding of the classroom dynamics, students and teaching atmosphere to be able to match the teaching flow of a real English teacher, as Natasya said in the following interview.

*I have a lot of communication with cooperating teachers and other teachers ..... (Interview with Natasya, 14/08/24) (TIWWC/WCA)*

Natasya has expressed her success in adapting to and understanding the character of students during the teaching period. She stated that during her teaching practicum she received a lot of feedback from her supervisor and her teacher mentor about the quality of the teaching material. From her experience, Natasya concluded that, in addition to teaching, teachers must have strategies to adapt to the learning environment and the nature of the students before providing them with the learning material. It was designed to understand students as emotional learners and not to bore them senselessly in the classroom and in the school environment.



### **Pre-service Teacher Emotions (as a professional tool)**

#### ***Encouraging and Motivating Students***

##### ***Cindy's Perspective***

On her first day teaching grade 10, Cindy was introduced to the students and felt pleased despite the initial nerves:

*....I felt glad to meet X class students for the first time and get to know them (PST 1 Diary #1). (EPT/ET)*

She intentionally built rapport before starting the lesson:

*I approach students to get to know me first at the beginning of my first teaching (Interview with Cindy, 14/08/24). (EPT/MS)*

She invited the students to share about their school life to foster positive relationships. When teachers actively demonstrate care and invest in their students' emotional and intellectual growth, their effectiveness as educators increases significantly as well as students' learning motivation ([Sun & Shi, 2022](#)) Cindy encouraged active participation, finding teaching thrilling.

##### ***Natasya's Perspective***

Natasya stressed the importance of motivation. She approached the students warmly before lessons and engaged them through storytelling:

*....I approach the students first before starting the lesson (Interview with Natasya, 14/08/24). (EPT/MS)*

*.....inviting them to tell stories and engaging them to find out their characters and what they like and dislike (Interview with Natasya, 14/08/24). (EPT/ES)*

As ([Purwanto et al., 2024](#)) reported, active engagement and enthusiasm during the lesson made teachers hopeful and excited to do the best in preparing and conducting the class. Using a notebook as a teaching aid, Natasya introduced a translator device to encourage student confidence despite device restrictions in the boarding school: *I asked them what they were looking for in the translator and discussed the text in the book (PST 2 Diary #3). (EPT/ES)*

She was satisfied with student engagement:

*I really felt full of power because the students seemed active in the classroom.....(PST Diary #4). (EPT/ET)*

During the lesson, the class worked very well together until the bell rang for break time. The long hours of teaching seemed to be short in this meeting. As a pre-service teacher, Natasya consistently assessed her students' activities and gave her students encouragement, motivating them to continue their studies.

#### ***Empathy in Students Condition***

##### ***Cindy's Perspective***

Cindy recognized the importance of understanding the students' conditions before teaching:

*I tend to understand their condition first before giving learning materials (Interview with Cindy, 14/08/24). (EPT/ESC)*

She sought to create a comfortable learning atmosphere, mindful of the students' stress and motivation (Kis, 2021) Cindy believed that confidence and calmness were the key: *I tend to enjoy delivering learning materials to students so that they are comfortable during learning*

*(Interview with Cindy, 14/08/24). (EPT/MT)*

Despite addressing many goals during the training, she lacked focus and forced the students to endure rigorous learning. She was concerned that the students were under stress from the demands of their studies. [Kız \(2021\)](#) asserts that the students are satisfied and motivated by positive emotions such as happiness, success and enjoyment with the course of study. Cindy tried to present the materials in a calm and relaxed manner so that the students felt comfortable with the English language according to Cindy's interview and teacher's diaries as follows.

*I tend to enjoy delivering learning materials to the students so that they are comfortable during learning (Interview with Cindy, 14/08/24) (EPT/MT)*

*I feel I have to be confident with everything that will happen in class (PST 1 Diary #3) (EPT/MT)*

In other words, Cindy also anticipated the condition of her students before the lesson began, so that they would be relaxed and receptive to the material, which she had presented well.

### ***Natasya's Perspective***

Positive emotions from teachers could motivate students. Natasya began her teaching practice by approaching the students and trying to understand what the students felt. As Natasya said in the interview:

*I usually approach them and put myself in their shoes so that I can feel the chemistry between the teacher and the students (Interview with Natasya, 14/08/24). (EPT/ESC)*

It was important for Natasya to put herself in the perspective of the students to understand what it was like to be them. This is in line with the findings of the Ulum study (2020) which found that pre-service teachers who were well engaged in their teaching practice put themselves in the students' perspective so most students were engaged in the lessons. Teachers feel what students feel. This way Natasya could learn about the needs of students at school, as Natasya wrote in her teacher diary:

*....I thought that in the next meeting I should be better prepared to deal with the conditions of their situation in the classroom (PST 2 Diary #1). (EPT/MT)*

Natasya said she could analyze the students' learning needs through direct communication with them during lessons by identifying their learning aspirations and barriers. Natasya was better able to understand what she had done and what she had not done in dealing with certain situations or student conditions in her teaching practice, as she has explained in the following interview.

*.....I also had to choose the right techniques and learn when their conditions were like that (Interview with Natasya, 14/08/24). (EPT/ET)*

This teaching practicum had given Natasya a lot of experiences, particularly in understanding the characteristics and the emotions of the students. Empathy was the key to effective learning.

### ***Excitement in Teaching and Self-Motivation***

#### ***Cindy's Perspective***

Motivation as a teacher and a passion for teaching was very important, according to Cindy, as it could have a significant impact on the quality of teaching and the students' learning outcomes. [Purwanto et al. \(2024\)](#) investigated that pre-service teachers experienced

positive emotions like amusement, pride, contentment, satisfaction, excitement, and relief when they could overcome a difficulty in teaching. During her teaching practice, Cindy tried to project positive energy to her students. As a teacher, she believed she needed to be able to cope with obstacles in the classroom. For example, when she wanted to use a projector for a lesson, the projector was not available in the classroom or the media room. Such a condition discouraged her. After about ten minutes, Cindy decided not to use the projector. She was disappointed, but she had to demonstrate her professionalism as a teacher. Cindy's courage to make this decision was based on her empathy with the students who had waited. Cindy was afraid that the students would lose motivation to learn at the beginning of the lesson because she was too busy getting ready for what was supposed to be expected in the first place. Cindy tried to put herself back in the students' perspective. Cindy wrote in her teacher diary:

*My strategies to solve the difficulties are writing and explaining the material using the whiteboard and disguising my confusion by continuing to explain it smoothly when the learning tool was not available (PST 1 Diary #1) (EPT/ET)*

*This experience makes me better prepared for the possibilities that occur in the classroom (PST 1 Diary #1) (EPT/MT)*

Cindy finally used the whiteboard to interact more with the students. To attract the students, she has made other gestures to promote a positive learning environment, motivate the students, facilitate comprehension and establish a sense of authority in the classroom, as Cindy stated in her interview and teacher diary as follows.

*I give more attention to the students such as asking them to ask questions, read the book being discussed or explain the material I have explained (Interview with Cindy, 14/08/24). (EPT/ES)*

Cindy was well controlled with her emotions and excited about the learning process. Obstacles that occurred in class were her responsibility as a teacher.

### **Natasya's Perspective**

Teachers' passion for teaching can inspire students to learn passionately. In building her motivation, Natasya said that she had never been interested in negative feelings she experienced in class, although she often felt them. Natasya often used games to engage the students in her lessons. In addition to checking the students' knowledge through games, she could also predict when they will get bored during a lesson, as Natasya wrote in her teacher diary.

*I can still dilute it with some games to make them excited in between lessons (PST 2 Diary #2) (EPT/ET)*

Natasya often encouraged herself to remain enthusiastic about her teaching. According to Natasya, enthusiasm could be demonstrated to her students through the use of game-based learning methods. The students would be influenced by the positive atmosphere she created in the classroom. Liu et al. (2020) have argued that game-based learning makes it easier to learn the content both inside and outside the classroom, thus increasing student motivation and giving more freedom to the learning process. In addition, Natasya often gave credit or awards to the students who were active or did well on their homework and participated actively in the learning process. Natasya, stated in the interview:

*....I also often give appreciation to students who can do their tasks well (Interview with Natasya, 14/08/24). (EPT/MS)*

The awards were a way for Natasya to encourage the creative, innovative, and disciplined spirit of the students and to give them a sense of accomplishment in the learning process. However, she also punished any students who misbehaved in class. It was done to

discourage plagiarism and to hold students accountable for their actions. What Natasya did was in line with [Kusumawati et al. \(2023\)](#) that rewards and punishment were very important in motivating students to take ownership of their tasks.

*This (her excitement in teaching) increased my confidence in my success in teaching this class (PST 2 Diary #2). (EPT/MT)*

According to Natasya, her enthusiasm for teaching enabled her to understand the feelings of her students and to create positive energy in the classroom. The students were able to enjoy learning and to be involved in the learning process, creating a stimulating learning atmosphere.

### **Pre-service Teacher Emotion (as a liability)**

#### ***Anxiety of Making Mistakes***

##### ***Cindy's Perspective***

In the teaching practicum, Cindy prepared herself mentally and started to apply the knowledge and theories of teaching that she had gained at the university. The first meeting of her teaching practicum began by introductions to students and observations accompanied by her mentor teacher. In this meeting, Cindy was anxious about making mistakes. She felt uneasy to speak in front of the students and started to open the topic when her mentor teacher left the class.

*I felt uneasy and worried about making mistakes in speaking and delivering English materials (interview with Cindy, 14/08/24) (EL/AMM)*

Cindy's feelings were in line with [\(Zaki & Salsabila, 2024\)](#) who reported that the anxiety could be seen not only "before" and "after", but also "during" the teaching process with the learners during the teaching practicum. According to Cindy, these feelings arose because it was her first time speaking in front of a large audience, as described in her teacher diary.

*In this meeting, I felt anxious, worried and a little out of concentration with the learning that I delivered because I was monitored by the mentor teacher in the lesson (PST 1 Diary #2). (EL/AMM)*

According to Cindy, it was natural for pre-service teachers who have just started teaching practicum. This condition was consistent with [\(Dzulfikri & Azami, 2024\)](#) who pointed out that the presence of a mentor teacher in the teaching practice sometimes caused pre-service teachers to be anxious about making mistakes, losing focus, and losing trust because they felt being observed. Attendance of the mentor teacher at the second meeting of Cindy's teaching practicum made her feel embarrassed and anxious about making mistakes. She was worried that her appearance at the meeting that day would not go well. The mentor teacher observed how Cindy taught and paid attention to all the material that was presented to the students.

The mentor teacher seemed to focus on what Cindy was delivering and it made her worry about making mistakes. But finally, after about 30 minutes, the mentor teacher left Cindy's class. Cindy was relieved and no longer felt worried. She continued with the learning material. Cindy confessed that after the second meeting ended, there were no more things that she needed to be anxious about anymore. Although sometimes nervousness occurred, it did not make Cindy feel excessively anxious. She began to be able to regulate her emotions in class.

##### ***Natasya's Perspective***

Like Cindy, Natasya also felt the same at the first meeting of the teaching practicum. She felt anxious, embarrassed, and afraid of making mistakes in front of her students.

Natasya revealed that although she had had some teaching experiences, it did not make her always confident and accustomed to teaching. According to Natasya, the sensation of this teaching practicum was different from her previous experiences so that it felt like her first teaching experience. Natasya stated in her teacher diary:

*I felt anxious, embarrassed, and afraid of making mistakes in the first meeting of the teaching practicum..... (PST 2 Diaries #1). (EL/AMM)*

Fortunately, Natasya's negative emotions only lasted for a few minutes. Natasya had been nervous and awkward when she introduced herself at the first meeting, but, according to Natasya, the meeting had gone well enough. She then had a brainstorming session with the students before discussing the learning material. Natasya considered that she was able to regulate the negative emotions at that time. Besides, in another meeting, Natasya was anxious about making mistakes when her mentor teacher came to observe her teaching. Although it was not long, she sensed that she was afraid of making mistakes when she delivered the material. Natasya was very careful to deliver every word and detail in English, because she felt being noticed in the class.

The same thing was also retrieved by [Ulum \(2020\)](#) in his research, which investigated that the pre-service teachers in Turkey were really nervous and anxious of making mistakes when their mentor teacher and lecturer attended their class in the teaching practicum. This was because pre-service teachers felt cared when they taught. As Natasya stated in her teachers' diary as follows.

*I felt anxious, embarrassed, not confident and worried about making mistakes in delivering English material or words. This was felt when my mentor teacher presented in the teaching practicum (PST 2 Diary #2) (EL/AMM)*

After the teacher left, Natasya was relieved and continued the lesson. From this, Natasya always expected to review her material repeatedly, starting with the text, questions, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in order to minimize errors in the delivery. The emotional anxiety she felt was not too much. Natasya said she felt better at the next meeting before she completed her teaching practicum. This practicum had certainly given Natasya plenty of experiences especially in dealing with situations and emotions that could change in any meeting.

### ***Difficulties in Managing The Class and Discouragement when Teaching Cindy's Perspective***

Another emotion Cindy experienced during the teaching practicum was a sense of discouragement and difficulty in managing the class. As a pre-service teacher, she did not know much about the students' classroom behavior. According to Cindy, she still needed to learn the classroom situation and cope with the different characteristics of the students. In one meeting, Cindy opened the class as usual with an ice-breaking before the lesson began. She took the initiative of breaking the atmosphere before the lesson began. Not long after, Cindy noticed that some of the students were sleeping in class and some of them were not paying attention to the lesson. Cindy stated in her interview as follows.

*.....I felt discouraged when in the classroom at vulnerable hours such as after the first break between 10 – 11 am. They were sleepy, not paying attention, and were chatting and passive (Interview with Cindy, 14/08/24). (EL/DWT)*

Cindy felt discouraged because she saw that the students were not paying attention when she was teaching. She had lost the motivation to teach, and she wanted to finish her lesson quickly. This is consistent with [Ji et al. \(2022\)](#) who reported that pre-service teachers' emotional trajectories were complex and dynamic; positive emotions decreased while and



negative emotions increased as time went by. This situation caused Cindy to withdraw at first, while occasionally managing her emotions to stay calm and respectable in the classroom before continuing with the lesson. Cindy thought it was important to let her feelings go away for a while so she wouldn't feel so discouraged. Cindy woke up the students and invited them to share thoughts before the lesson continued. Cindy changed her teaching technique to actively involve students in the lesson. The students were divided into four groups. They were asked to discuss and create a recount text, which would be presented by one of the group representatives. But another thing happened when students were having group discussions. Cindy had difficulty managing the classroom condition. Students were more active, and their voices filled the classroom. She was afraid that the students' voices would disrupt the class next door, as Cindy wrote in her teacher diary.

*My difficulty in this meeting was managing the classroom conditions to be conducive (PST 1 Diary #2). (EL/DMC)*

Cindy was exhausted dealing with some of the more active students in the class. Eventually, she was able to overcome this class condition after a few warnings. Cindy's approach to class management was in line with [Ji et al. \(2022\)](#) who stated that the competence of pre-service teachers to manage classes was to be able to control the student behavior. Cindy could maintain this condition until the end of the lesson because she thought it did not interfere too much with this learning activity as long as she could still handle the students in the class. She felt that she had to be prepared to deal with any kind of student behavior and classroom situation as a teacher who could manage the classroom and focus on the learning goal. When the bell rang, signaling the end of the lesson, it was the most beautiful sound she had ever heard in the course of her entire life. It was a relief to testify at the hearing. Before closing the class, she remembered to evaluate the learning material.

### *Natasya's Perspective*

Another emerging emotion that Natasya shared was her difficulty in managing the class and being discouraged from participating in the teaching. Sometimes the students seemed unprepared for learning and did not pay attention to the lesson. This was not the first time she had experienced this emotion. It started when she was doing a previous internship. She had not realized that high school students could also be distracted and sleepy during class as Natasya had written in her teacher diary.

*The challenge I felt during this teaching practicum was discouragement when teaching, sometimes the students seemed unprepared to receive the lesson.....(PST 2 Diaries #2). (EL/DMC)*

At that time Natasya, as usual, delivered the teaching materials, which she had opened earlier with an English question about the material that would be used to guide students before they entered the new material. But in the middle of the lesson Natasya noticed that some of them had lost their enthusiasm for the lessons, some had fallen asleep, and some were oblivious. According to what Natasya wrote in her teacher's journal:

*Some of them have started to actively communicate, ask questions and also answer my questions but some still do not follow the learning effectively and tend to be sleepy.(PST 2 Diary #3). (EL/DWT)*

Natasya felt discouraged when her students did not participate in the lessons, and some of them were sleepy. This barrier could have interfered with the learning process, and she might have not delivered the teaching material well during the lesson. However, Natasya decided to face it head-on and continue to be enthusiastic about the lesson. She tried to cover her dispirited feelings by continuing to teach actively, by paying more attention to the students and encouraging them to participate in the lesson, and by better managing the class. Occasionally she greeted and questioned students who were not paying attention or who were sleepy. She was more accustomed to this kind of situation. According to Natasya, a teacher had to always do everything to give her students a good education.

## Discussion

Pre-service teacher identity is closely intertwined with emotions, as these two aspects significantly influence each other during teacher training. [Ji et al. \(2022\)](#) noted that pre-service teachers typically experienced a mix of positive and negative emotions that shaped their developing professional identities. Based on Cindy's and Natasya's experiences during their three-month practicum, this study revealed how their identities and emotions evolved throughout the training.

Cindy's and Natasya's teaching journeys marked the initial stage of their teacher identity development, underscoring the importance of personal and educational backgrounds. This aligns with [\(Muyunda et al., 2023\)](#) and [\(Tran & Dee, 2023\)](#), who emphasized that teacher identity involved a blend of personal and professional dimensions shaped by one's background and experiences. Teacher quality and competence are often influenced by educational history, teaching experience, and communication skills [\(Siagian & Artha, 2023\)](#). For example, Cindy pursued English education motivated by her passion for teaching, while Natasya's progression from high school to boarding school and university reflected a deepening commitment to English language teaching. Both demonstrated a firm resolve to become professional educators.

During their practicum, Cindy and Natasya actively built relationships with students, mentors, and colleagues to better understand the school environment. Peer evaluation and shared teaching experiences played a crucial role in this process. [Double et al. \(2020\)](#) suggested that peer review offered valuable feedback loops for pre-service teachers to assess and improve their performance. [Li et al., \(2021\)](#) and [Mwamakula \(2020\)](#) further highlighted that peer evaluation fostered professional competence, reflective practice, and an enhanced sense of self. This ongoing feedback enables pre-service teachers to identify their strengths and learning gaps, contributing to identity development within the school context.

Both teachers experienced positive and negative emotions during the practicum. Positively, they focused on encouraging and motivating students and empathizing with their circumstances. This reflects [Handayani et al., \(2023\)](#) and [Richards, \(2022\)](#) who stressed that teaching extended beyond knowledge transmission to nurturing students' minds, creativity, motivation, and moral values. Cindy and Natasya fostered supportive classroom environments that promoted emotional well-being, echoing [Aldrup et al., \(2022\)](#), observations of the importance of empathy in teacher-student relationships and the extent to which they supported students emotionally in general through classroom management, instructional support, or student learning outcomes. Such empathetic practices bolster student confidence and motivation while reinforcing teachers' professionalism.

Moreover, Cindy and Natasya's enthusiasm for teaching positively influenced their students. [Faro et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasized that enthusiastic teachers actively engaged students and foster relationships that enhanced their academic confidence and willingness to participate in learning activities. This motivation creates a dynamic learning atmosphere that enhances teaching effectiveness.

Nonetheless, Cindy and Natasya also faced negative emotions, including anxiety about making mistakes and the pressure of first-time teaching. Such anxiety is common among novice teachers, attributed to inexperience and uncertainty [\(Zaki & Salsabila, 2024\)](#). [López \(2020\)](#) identified lack of trust as a key factor causing anxiety during pedagogical exercises, consistent with Cindy and Natasya's reported nervousness upon entering classrooms.

The presence of mentor teachers heightened these anxieties. Pre-service teachers often viewed mentors as evaluators, intensifying pressure to perform flawlessly ([Heryatun & Septiana, 2020](#); [Li et al., 2021](#)). [Dzulfikri & Azami \(2024\)](#) and [Mwamakula \(2020\)](#) similarly noted that mentor observation could reduce pre-service teachers' focus and self-confidence, fostering nervousness and self-doubt. Cindy and Natasya's experiences underscore the complex dual role mentors play as both support and source of stress.

Additionally, both felt discouraged when the students displayed inattentiveness or disengagement during lessons. Such feelings of frustration, disappointment, and discouragement were documented by [kavrayici \(2020\)](#) as common emotional responses during practicum. Cindy and Natasya perceived a lack of appreciation when the students were sleepy, chatting, or distracted, aligning with [Pazilah et al. \(2021\)](#)'s findings that such challenges hindered pre-service teachers' interactions with students. Overcoming these difficulties was a significant part of their professional growth.

The practicum experience was vital for Cindy and Natasya's development. [Lee & Kutty, \(2023\)](#) described teaching internships as essential for enhancing pre-service teachers' professional skills, including pedagogical and emotional competencies. Emotional regulation, in particular, is critical in shaping teacher identity and teaching effectiveness. [Muyunda et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasized the close link between teacher professionalism and education quality as teachers' skills directly affected learning outcomes. During training, pre-service teachers refine teaching methods, strategies, and approaches that facilitate effective learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study explored how pre-service English teachers construct their emotions and professional identities during their teaching practicum. Focusing on two participants, the findings highlight that these pre-service teachers actively employed pedagogical strategies to enhance their engagement in the classroom and the broader learning environment. Through effective communication and relationship-building with students, mentor teachers, and other school staff, they gained valuable insights into the school culture. Peer evaluations and shared teaching experiences further supported their adaptation and identity development within the school context.

The pre-service teachers reported experiencing emotional challenges such as discouragement, anxiety about making mistakes, and difficulties in classroom management. These emotions primarily stemmed from their lack of confidence as novice teachers, especially under the scrutiny of mentor teachers. However, these negative feelings were often balanced and mitigated by positive emotions, including motivation and enthusiasm, which helped them maintain consistent positive energy in their teaching practices. Their strong motivation and passion for teaching are likely to contribute to their successful completion of the practicum.

Analysis of interview and diary data suggests that teacher identity and emotional well-being are central to pre-service teachers' understanding of their professional roles. A well-developed professional identity and effective emotional management positively influence teaching practices, psychological well-being, and teacher-student relationships. By fostering these aspects, teachers can create supportive learning environments that promote holistic student development.

Given the study's focus on only two pre-service teachers from a private university in Indonesia, the findings represent a limited, small-scale sample. Future research should



include a more diverse participant pool and explore similar processes across different academic disciplines and educational settings. Nonetheless, this study confirms that emotions and identity construction are critical factors shaping pre-service teachers' professional growth, providing valuable guidance for their future roles as effective English teachers.

Based on the findings, two main recommendations are proposed. First, pre-service English teachers should identify and prepare specific teaching strategies prior to entering the classroom, and consistently maintain positive energy during lessons to foster student engagement. Second, they should experiment with varied teaching techniques and incorporate curiosity-driven questions to sustain student interest and excitement in each session. For researchers, further studies could investigate effective strategies that pre-service teachers use to navigate challenges related to emotion regulation and identity construction during practicum. Such research will contribute to the expanding body of literature on pre-service teacher development.

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