

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

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### Abstract

This paper explored internal and external factors that could influence pre-service English teacher in doing teaching in the classroom. The study aimed to investigate how pre-service teachers constructed their identity in order to prepare themselves to be teachers in true education field. However, it might help them to reflect themselves to be able to understand their identity as teacher candidates. Furthermore, interview would be conducted to get further and deep information from the participants and also to clarify their responses. Therefore, it encouraged the writer to conduct a qualitative study about pre-service English teacher identity.

Keywords: internal factors, external factors, pre-service teacher identity

### Introduction

Experiences that pre-service teachers get in doing teaching may affect their identity when becoming in-service teachers. Here, the term of pre-service teacher is teacher students who have already been trained to experience teaching (micro teaching) and also, they have done ELT practicum in schools. However, in doing teaching, experienced teachers will concentrate on developing and improving materials and teaching approach for the students to be better, while pre-service teachers focus on “their own satisfaction” (Hong, 2010). In other word, pre-service teachers are still thinking of themselves when teaching, for example, teaching is one of the requirements to be met in their study and they do teaching just to fulfill that demand.

This study aims to investigate how pre-service teachers construct their identity in order to prepare themselves to be teachers in true education field by exploring the internal and/ or external motivations that can influence English teacher candidates in doing teaching. Furthermore, interview will be shaped to get further and deeper information from the participants and also to clarify their responses.

### Literature Review

In the literature review, the researcher provides the theoretical review related to the topic of this study. There are four parts of this section. They are the related theories of teacher identity, pre-service teacher, internal and external factors, and opinions of a good teacher.

### ***Teacher Identity Theory***

Developing identity needs to be done in the people's lifetime because people do not have it since they were born (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004) and so does teacher identity. Teachers may also need their lifetime to construct their identity as teachers. Walkington (2005) says that teacher identity is built upon one's basic assumption in doing teaching and becoming a teacher and it is shaped constantly over practices. If teachers do more teaching and gain experiences from practices, teacher identity will emerge by itself. However, "teachers' identity as a starting point for teacher education is to learn how to bridge their identity to larger hope" (Sexton, 2008).

Moreover, teacher identity talks about teachers' thought as a question "who am I at this moment" (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). They also say that it may become a confusing question for the teachers in establishing conception on their path in determining teaching approach, self-development as teachers, and responses toward changes in education. Thus, they mentioned that the teachers who have "professional identity" are those who can teach in general and in various ways more than just the skills that they have based on their subject and teachers are demanded "to think and behave professionally". Therefore, teachers will be able to adapt with the changes in education which may influence their identity as teachers.

In the previous study, one of the participants in Nemser's study (2001) says that the teachers should be able to investigate their practices in both situation; good or bad circumstances. It may help teachers reflect on their approach in teaching. If it runs well in the classroom and it is suitable to the students, the teachers will be able to develop it to be better but then, if it runs badly and the students in the classroom do not feel comfortable, the teachers will be able to improve and look for other ways to make it more effective to be implemented in the classroom.

### ***Pre-Service Teacher***

Pre-service teachers need help and support when changing their identity "from school teaching to teaching teachers in the academic context" (Williams & Ritter, 2010) and in-service teachers can assist and influence pre-service teachers in learning teaching from the experiences (Nemster, 2001). It is because sometimes pre-service teachers unconsciously imitate what tutors or in-service teachers do, instead of teaching in their own way and identity. Sumara & Kapler (1996) call it as "fictive identity" which means that the pre-service teachers teach based on their knowledge from fictional character in the literature study and from "various cultural myths" related to insights about teachers. Thus, they provided self-identity concepts of pre-service teacher negotiation, namely "pre-teaching image" that is the insight they bear to the teacher education, "fictive image" that they develop while learning as teachers, and "lived image" that is constructed when teaching in practice and interacting with the students.

Moreover, Sumara & Kapler (1996) argue that many students think that becoming a teacher is easy because it does not need to develop their own lives with a broader repertoire of capabilities and concept of knowledge. In fact, the pre-service teachers require education to procure insights or knowledge to spearhead their way in developing their readiness perceptions and self-confidence in teaching. (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). Then, pre-service teachers also need to construct their relationship professionally with both; the other teacher trainers and the

students (Williams & Ritter, 2010). Nemser (2001) says that pre-service teachers will need teaching practice in order to give them visualization in teaching and applying moral values and tenet to the students.

Besides, the program of teacher education where the pre-service teachers learn should emphasize “the practicality of teaching” and develop a significant awareness of their emotion (Hong, 2010). Thus, Hong also says that education program needs to help the per-service teachers reflect professional identity in order to improve them in teaching and to become a good teacher. However, pre-service teachers get chance to implement “what they have learned” from “field experience” that they do in schools (Tarman, 2012).

### ***The possible internal and external factors that can influence teacher students doing or learning teaching***

According to Chong and Low’s study (2008), there are internal and external factors that may influence the teacher students to opt becoming a teacher by attending the teacher education program to learn teaching. Based on Papanatasiou and Papanatasiou (1997), internal factors are related to “the act of teaching itself and the values” that teacher students hold, and external factors are the things that may “influence students to enter” teacher education program but, it can also be as “benefits” in developing professionalism in teaching. Thus, both factors have some sub factors. Firstly, the sub factors of internal factors are teacher students do teaching because they “have interest in teaching, answer a calling, and fulfill a mission” (Chong and Low, 2008). “Interest in teaching” means that whoever is doing teaching because they really want to do it. It may be called as a passion in teaching. Moreover, “answer a calling” defines as a desire to take part in education world. Then, the last external sub factor, “fulfill a mission”, is related with realizing childhood dream to be a teacher or to give better education to children.

Secondly, the external sub factors are the teacher students do teaching because they are “inspired by role model, financial reason, teaching as stepping stone, and parents’ dream” (Chong and Low, 2008). “Inspired role model” means that the teacher students want to learn teaching and to be a teacher because they adore teacher(s) in their school experiences. It can be because the teachers use interesting methods so that the students can enjoy the learning process. Then, “financial reason” is related to the salary of being a teacher as a profession or a job. The teacher students may be motivated to choose being a teacher as their job if the salary given is relatively high (Kiziltepe, 2008). However, some of teacher students choose to attend teacher education program because they want to get a better job outside or overseas and it is called as “a stepping stone” (Chong and Low, 2008). On the other hand, parents advise them to become teachers because perhaps, the family background is teachers. So, choosing teacher education program as the major or being a teacher, later on, as their profession is one of the ways to realize “parents’ dream” (Chong and Low, 2008).

### ***Perceptions about a Good Teacher***

People’s perspectives of a good teacher are different one to another. They may have their own perspectives or criteria of a good teacher. Mullock (2003) describes good teachers as those who have plentiful knowledge of experiences and it may help the teachers to create a large repertoire of method, approach and design

(“schemata”) so that they are able to develop in preparing and doing reciprocal learning. Thus, she also mentioned that good teachers who can relate one issue (“they are focusing on”) to other related issue and have efficient and modernized ways in regulating the activities in the classroom so that the process of learning and teaching can be noticed by the teachers including the students’ performances. In her research, Mullock (2003) found some findings about good teacher criteria as follows:

1. understand students’ demand and expectancies and also tenacity and infirmity;
2. enable to know “the subject matter”;
3. have skills and abilities in teaching techniques, including in preparing the effective and up-to-date approaches and methods to the students;
4. pursue globalization era, especially in the education field; and
5. give the students education of how to behave (good characters)

In addition, Bloomfield’s study (2010) mentions a view from one of the participants about a good teacher. A good teacher is described as a person who is able to create and retain the good relationship to the students (Bloomfield, 2010) and that relationship can establish one’s perception about his or her identity in community of learning (Williams & Ritter, 2010).

In sum, good teachers are those who are able to aid the students in teaching and learning activities in the classroom by using various approaches and methods, including preparing and conducting suitable and interesting learning activities to the students. Different and interesting approach and/or activity for each meeting may create good atmosphere in the classroom so that the teachers can nurture the students to be active in teaching-learning activities in both inside and outside the classroom enthusiastically. Therefore, this theory may be used as a reference for beginner or pre-service teachers to be good teachers for their students in the future. Then, the study was driven by two research questions: First, how do pre-service teachers respond internal factors that influence them in doing teaching? Second, how do pre-service teachers respond external factors that influence them in doing teaching?

## **Method**

### ***Study***

This study was based on a qualitative research study. The aim of the researcher doing qualitative study was to collect the data as much and detailed as they can (Sandelowski, 2000). Also, she also stated that “in qualitative study, language is a vehicle of communication”. Furthermore, this study used two steps of qualitative methods; questionnaire and interview. The first step was that distribution of the questionnaire to the participants. Then, those steps were done via email because it was quite difficult to meet them face to face. It was because some of them were still doing teaching practice in schools and the rest were busy working on their thesis. Likewise, the writer sent the questionnaire to the participants and after fulfilling the questionnaire, the participants sent back the completed version to the writer.

The questionnaire that was given to the participants contained some sub factors from both internal and external factors. Then, the subjects in the questionnaire were adopted from Chong and Low’s study (2008) about the internal (i.e. passion, calling, and embodiment of dream) and external factors (i.e. role models in

teaching, financial factor, a stepping stone, and parents' dream) that might influence them doing teaching or at least, the factors why they attended teacher education study program to learn teaching. Those had been mentioned in previous section. The second step was interview. This interview was done once in thirty minutes for each participant. As for its aim, the purpose of the interview was to clarify the participants' responses toward the questionnaire. However, that interview would give more information and deeper responses from the participants.

### ***Participants***

There were 6 participants of this study. All were teacher students in English Language Education Study Program, Sanata Dharma University (SDU) Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Furthermore, the participants who were involved in this study were those who had already been trained to experience teaching students as mentioned in introduction section. They had also experienced teaching in schools in Yogyakarta and they were chosen randomly. Thus, to interact with them in order to get information for this study, the writer contacted them via email because it was the easiest way, like what was explained previously.

### **Findings and Discussion**

In this section, the writer presented the data findings gained from the participants' responses toward questionnaire given and the participants' deeper information in in-depth interview formulation. There are two parts; the internal factors that influenced them doing teaching and external factors that influenced them doing teaching. These two parts are the elaboration of the findings based on the participants' point of view where they are English teacher candidates.

#### ***The internal factors that influenced them doing teaching***

The findings showed that based on internal factors there were two types of responses from the participants toward doing teaching; positive and negative responses. Positive responses were that the participants showed their desire to become teachers in their answers toward the questionnaire. Thus, in the negative responses, the participants showed their unwillingness to be a teacher. In accordance, the factors in questionnaire which were formulated in the tables below were adapted from Chong and Low's study (2008).

The table 1. showed the results of the participants' answers in the questionnaire which were related to the internal factors. Here, the writer used term Participant A for the first participants, Participant B for second participant and so forth in order to disguise the real name of the participants. Thus, there were three of them gave positive responses; Participant A, Participant C and Participant E. The first participant, Participant A, stated that she would be able to share her experience through teaching in order to give some values to the students for their life. Meanwhile, she also wanted to answer a calling and she would embody her dreams to be a teacher and can give better education for students.

Participant A: "I really love teaching because from that, I can share my experience. I want my students, later on, to get some values from both good and bad experiences in my life. Besides, I also feel that I have to be a teacher because I have a dream and mission to take part in making

the education world in Indonesia become better in many aspects. So, I think that being a teacher is an appropriate job for me.”

Table 1. The participants’ responses toward internal factors

Participants	Response	Internal Factors		
		Love teaching/ interest in teaching	Teaching is a calling	Embodiment of dreams
Participant A	Positive	very love teaching because experiences can be shared through doing teaching	really want to be a teacher since kindergarten	to take part in developing education, especially in Indonesia
Participant B	Negative	often lose temper when doing teaching, especially when facing naughty and uncontrolled students	never plan to be a teacher	have no specific mission in teaching
Participant C	Positive	very love teaching because it is fun, enjoyable and also as a tool to share experience and meet new people	teaching or being a teacher is a calling	to give good education to other people
Participant D	Negative	not like teaching	teaching is not my passion	have no specific mission in teaching
Participant E	Positive	having high interest in teaching since senior high school	not really sure whether it is a calling or not but always enjoy doing teaching	to help people reach better future by giving them good education
Participant F	Negative	doing teaching is just to fill spare time	being translator is my calling	have no mission

Thus, Participant C preferred to be a teacher because she assumed that teaching was so fun and from that she would be able to allot her knowledge to other people. Same as Participant A, Participant B also wanted to improve education in Indonesia and actualize her dream.

Participant C: “Since entering English Language Education Study Program, I began to create a new belief that teaching is fun. Now, I’ve proven it. Teaching a lesson, sharing knowledge, and meeting new people to be taught are some things that I enjoy to do so far. That’s why, I’m interested in teaching. Additionally, I also want to complete my

mission to improve education in Indonesia and in my opinion, education in Indonesia is not really good enough. So, I assume that being a teacher is a calling for me.”

Moreover, Participants E also stated that she is interested in doing teaching since senior high school (SHS) and she wanted to help people to get good education. However, she was not really sure whether it was a calling or not but she really enjoyed doing teaching.

Participant E: “Teaching is like my desire in life. I have a high interest in teaching since SHS because actually, I feel sorry for children who cannot get good education in their life. Therefore, I want to give my knowledge for children so that they will have good education.”

Other three participants gave negative responses. Participant B stated that when doing teaching, she would lose her temper easily. So, she would be angry if the students could not be controlled. It was not an appropriate thing for her as well.

Participant B: “Honestly, I don’t have any passion in teaching. Teaching needs a big passion, especially in facing the children. When I am teaching, I often lose my temper. Since I’m not interested in teaching and I don’t have a plan to be a teacher, it’s not my reason to choose teacher education program. So, I think being a teacher is not my calling or passion because indeed, I never plan it before.”

Thus, Participant D also did not have interest in teaching because she did not like doing teaching. She claimed that becoming a teacher was not her passion.

Participant D: “I never think that in the future I will become a teacher because actually, I don’t like doing teaching at all and if I am questioned whether it is my passion or not, I will answer ‘NO’. Yeah, I do care with education in Indonesia but then, I will help to reform it in another way, not being a teacher.”

Meanwhile, Participant F said that she just wanted to fill her spare time while doing teaching because she preferred to be a translator rather than being a teacher.

Participant F: “Even though being a teacher is a good thing but I prefer to be a translator than being a teacher. Besides it’s not my passion, being a translator is more interesting for me. I think I have passion in that field.”

Those three participants had the same interest in doing teaching. Likewise, they had similar dreams and purpose to learn teaching, i.e. being a teacher. They thought that it was one of the ways to help children, especially in Indonesia, to get better education. It meant that they had high desire to improve education in Indonesia.

***The external factors that influenced them doing teaching***

Like previous section, the findings showed that based on external factors there were two responses from the participants toward doing teaching positive and negative responses. Table 2 showed the results of the participants' answers in the questionnaire which were related to the external factors.

The participants who gave either positive or negative responses toward external factors were the same as the previous. Participant A, C, and E gave positive responses and they thought that those external factors supported and did not influence them to actualize their passion to be a teacher. Thus, Participant B, D, and F gave negative responses. Here, the external factors did not have any influences at all for those participants who gave negative responses.

For Participant A, her teachers who had good method and communication to the students were her favorite teachers and she made them as role models. Meanwhile, her parents never asked her to be a teacher and for salary, it was not a matter for her. Also, she opined that it was not as a stepping stone because she really liked teaching.

Participant A: "This factor is one of the factors that makes me want to become a teacher because not all teachers are good in my view. Based on my experience, I have a teacher who can transfer the knowledge very well. From that, I want to have a good communication like the teacher who can transfer the knowledge successfully. Then, for the salary matter, I don't really think about that because I love teaching and I will spend some of my time to teaching even though my parents don't force me to do that. So, I teach because I like to share my knowledge, not for searching other job."

Thus, Participant C considered teaching or being a teacher was not as a job to earn money so that whether the salary is high or not, it was not a problem for her. Then, she did practice in teaching as a stepping stone to be a good teacher and also, she learned from her lecturers to improve her teaching ability. However, it was her choice because she claimed that her parents did not ever ask her to be a teacher.

Participant C: "Indeed, one of the reasons why I'm interested in teaching is that I'm inspired by some lectures in college who do fun learning activities in class. It always seems that I want to be like them. Then, earning salary from teaching is quite big and good for me. However, I don't want to consider teaching as an activity to earn much money because it's my own willingness to be a teacher, not my parents' wish. Indeed, I use some practices of teaching as a stepping stone to be a teacher."



Table 2. The participants' responses toward external factors

Participants	Response	External Factors			
		Having role model in doing teaching and/or being a teacher	Financial reason (e.g. salary)	Teaching as stepping stone	Learning teaching because of parents' dream
Participant A	Positive	the teachers who have good method and communication in teaching	The salary of being a teacher is not high, but I'll spend some of my time to do teaching.	I like teaching, so it is not as a stepping stone.	My parents never force me to be a teacher.
Participant B	Negative	have no inspiring model	Good salary is needed in nowadays life and salary of being a teacher is not enough	To get another suitable better job; in education field or other field	It is my parents' wish because the teacher education program in this university is the popular and the best program.
Participant C	Positive	the lecturers who do fun learning activities in classroom	I never consider teaching as an activity to earn money.	It is not my stepping stone, just doing teaching practices as stepping stones to be better in teaching.	It is my willingness to be a teacher and my parents do not force me.
Participant D	Negative	the teacher who help to create attractive and meaningful learning	Teachers' salary is not good enough, especially in Indonesia.	I learn teaching is to get better job because being a teacher is not a good path.	My parents do not want me to become a teacher because they are really concerned about teaching.

Participant E	Positive	I like teaching but I have no role models of teaching.	The salary of being a teacher does not really influence me.	Learning teaching and being a teacher are my choice.	My parents wanted me to be a doctor but they never force me to be a teacher too.
Participant F	Negative	My mother and my sister are teachers and they are my role model.	The salary is quite important and civil servant teacher's salary is quite good.	My purpose is to be a translator so it is a stepping stone for me to reach my purpose.	My parents' dream was to see me become a civil servant.

Then, Participant E said that being a teacher was her choice and her parents did not ask her at all to choose that way. Although, she admitted that she had no role model who inspired her in doing teaching. She just did practices to improve her skills in teaching.

Participant E: "I never think that being a teacher is my stepping stone since I decided to be a teacher as my choice. In addition, my parents actually do not want me to be a teacher. On a contrary, they wanted me to be a doctor, not a teacher. It is funny, right? So I think those do not really influence me to be a teacher."

Again, other three participants gave negative responses. Participant B told that her parents asked her to be a teacher so that she attended teacher education program as her major, even though she did not really want to be a teacher in the future. Then, she admitted that she followed her parents' suggestion to enter teacher education program as a stepping stone to get a better job.

Participant B: "I don't have any inspiring person in English teaching when I apply to teacher education program. I enter this program because I think that if people can speak English well, automatically they will get a job easily and they will get a better salary than others who can't. By learning English, especially education program, it can be suitable to any job in both educational field or other. Then, my parents also want me to apply to English teacher education study program because this is the most popular and the best program in SDU."

Likewise, Participant D stated that actually in doing teaching, she was inspired by some teachers who created attractive and meaningful learning process, but then, when looking at the salary of being a teacher, she changed her path to another way. Whereas, her parents were concerned about teaching so they wanted her to take a

part in improving it. However, the parents did not force her to be a teacher and she was free to choose her choice.

Participant D: “Becoming a teacher doesn’t have a good career path for me because teachers’ salary is not good enough, especially in most areas in Indonesia. However, actually I am inspired by the teachers who help to create attractive and meaningful learning.”

Lastly, for Participants F, salary from a job was important and she thought that teacher’s salary was quite low, unless teacher’s salary as a civil servant. That’s why her parents wanted her to be a civil servant in education field. It was because her mother and her sister were civil servants who got high salary.

Participant F: “My mother and my sister are teachers and they are my role model, even though I don’t want to be a teacher. They are civil servants and they want me to be like them in order to get high salary too. Therefore, I have a passion in being a translator, so attending teacher education program in this university is a stepping stone for me to reach my purpose.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, not all of teacher students in teacher education study program have a desire to be a teacher. Some of them who give positive responses have a passion in doing teaching and they want to help other people to get good education. They do not think about the salary they will get because they only want to take a part in improving education, especially in Indonesia, and also to realize their childhood dreams to become a teacher in the future. However, other participants who give negative responses show that they are not interested in becoming a teacher because they emphasize in salary that they will get. It is such an important thing in their life. Furthermore, the reason why they enter teacher education as their major is because their family’s dream and also as a stepping stone to get better and suitable job rather than being a teacher.

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