
Experiencing Professional Doubts: A Narrative Study of Islamic Religious Education Teacher Candidates

Erniati¹, Sitti Mania², Kasmah³, Muh. Aril Widi Saputra⁴

^{1&4} Universitas Islam Negeri Datokarama Palu, Sulawesi Tengah, Indonesia.

² Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia.

³ Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone, Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia.

*Correspondence to: erniati@uindatokarama.ac.id

Abstract: This study aims to explore how prospective Islamic Religious Education teachers experience and interpret professional doubts during their transition from university coursework to real classroom practice. The research focuses on understanding the feelings, meanings, and identity negotiations that emerge as students confront the realities of teaching. A qualitative narrative inquiry design was employed, involving four final semester students from a public university in Indonesia. Data were collected through a series of in-depth interviews and reflective dialogues, then analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns and significant meanings within participants' narratives. The findings reveal four dominant themes: the perceived dual responsibility of transferring knowledge and moral values, lack of confidence in public communication, emotional unpreparedness in managing classroom dynamics, and discomfort with crowded social environments. These doubts are shaped by the interaction between personal characteristics and structural expectations of the teaching profession. Rather than functioning solely as obstacles, doubts serve as reflective turning points that encourage deeper self-awareness, value clarification, and adaptive coping strategies. The study concludes that professional doubt is an integral part of teacher identity formation. Teacher education programs should therefore provide reflective spaces and emotional support to help students transform doubt into professional resilience and sustained commitment.

Keywords: Professional doubt; teacher identity; Islamic education; emotional readiness; narrative inquiry.

How To Cite: Erniati, E., Mania, S., Kasmah, K., & Saputra, M. (2026). Experiencing Professional Doubts: A Narrative Study of Islamic Religious Education Teacher Candidates. *Al-Ta'lim Journal*, 33(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.15548/jt.v33i1.1118>

Article info: Submitted: 29th September 2025 | Revised: 05th January 2026 | Accepted: 28th February 2026

INTRODUCTION

Choosing a teacher profession is not a simple process for prospective teachers, because it involves personal, social, and professional considerations that are intertwined. In practice, the decision to become a teacher is not always born from a stable belief, but is often accompanied by doubts that arise as the educational process progresses, especially when students begin to deal with the reality of teaching practice (Ballová Mikušková et al., 2024; Kang, Viljaranta, et al., 2024; Saito, 2024). The transition phase from theoretical learning to field experience is often a crucial point that raises fundamental questions about self-readiness, the meaning of professions, and the sustainability of career choices in education. A number of studies show that students' doubts are related to internal factors, such as teaching anxiety, low self-confidence, and feelings of not being prepared to face emotional and pedagogical complexities in the classroom (Fan & Xie, 2025; Gorospe, 2022; Nguyen, 2025).

This doubt is influenced not only by individual psychological pressures, but also by the misalignment between the professional identity that is being formed and the social and cultural realities in which aspiring teachers practice. In addition, external factors such as family expectations, social perceptions of the teaching profession, and the context of the education system also strengthen students' ambivalence towards this profession choice, empirical studies of student doubts of prospective teachers have developed in various perspectives (Calkins et al., 2024; Kang, Kim, et al., 2024). Some studies emphasize psychological aspects, such as career motivation, stress, and professional readiness (Selvia et al., 2025; Taufik et al., 2024); Wang & Wang, 2023; Ertaş & Pekmezci, 2025). Other studies highlight the influence of structural factors, including education policy, political stability, and remuneration systems, that affect the attractiveness of the teaching profession (Kwa & Kim, 2022; Pavin Ivanec, 2023; Chaaban et al., 2023).

In addition, there is also research that emphasizes the role of professional readiness and self-efficacy in shaping the intention to stay or leave the teaching profession, third studies expressly show that students' doubts about the teaching profession are greatly influenced by the lack of professional readiness both in terms of technology, classroom practice, and self-identity (Klassen et al., 2023; Özer-Altinkaya & Yetkin, 2025; Ma et al., 2025). However, most of these studies still position doubt as a psychological variable or risk indicator for the sustainability of teachers' careers. This approach tends to emphasize the measurement of self-efficacy, motivation, or job satisfaction, without exploring how doubts are experienced, interpreted, and narrated by prospective teacher students as part of the process of forming a professional identity. In other words, doubt is not widely understood as subjective and narrative experiences that play an active role in the formation of pedagogical identity.

This gap is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of Islamic Religious Education teacher education, where the teaching profession is not only understood as a pedagogical role, but also as a representation of moral, religious, and social values. Doubts about the choice to become an Islamic Religious Education teacher have the potential to carry more complex implications, because they touch on personal, spiritual, and professional dimensions at the same time (Selvia et al., 2025; Taufik et al., 2024). However, studies that specifically examine the doubts of prospective Islamic Religious Education teacher students through a narrative approach are still very limited. Based on these gaps, this study aims to explore in depth how prospective students of Islamic Religious Education teachers narrate the professional doubts they experience in the process of choosing and interpreting the teaching profession.

Specifically, this study examines: (1) how prospective Islamic Religious Education teacher students narrate their feelings and doubts about the education profession; (2) the dominant feelings that arise in the narrative of doubt; and (3) the meaning that prospective Islamic Religious Education teacher students build through the experience of doubt in their professional journey (Mustafayev & Kazimi, 2023; Yilmaz & Gülbahar, 2025). Using a narrative study approach, this research is expected to make an empirical and conceptual contribution to the understanding of doubt as an integral part of the formation of the professional identity of prospective teachers, while offering reflective implications for the development of a more contextual and humane teacher education. However, empirical studies that raise doubt as a narrative formation of teachers' professional identities are still very limited. Many approaches tend to focus on self-efficacy, career satisfaction, or

adaptive strategies without examining the existential and deep emotional side of the process of becoming a teacher (Giralt-Romeu et al., 2024; Walkington, 2005).

The narrative inquiry approach in this study is intended to fill this gap by exploring the authentic voices of teacher teachers who experience ambiguity and identity dilemmas as part of their professional journey. Recognizing that teacher education is not just a cognitive or technical process, but also the formation of a complete and meaningful self-narrative, this study contributes to expanding the understanding of doubt as part of professional growth. This understanding is also in line with the need for higher education institutions to accommodate a more reflective and personalized approach in fostering prospective teachers, so that they are able to make doubt a learning space, not an obstacle. Therefore, this research was conducted with the intention of delving deeper into how prospective teacher students narrate the doubts they experience, what feelings arise in the process of choosing this profession, and what meaning they try to convey through their experiences.

From an empirical perspective, this research aims to deepen our understanding of how prospective teacher students who question their professional choice experience, interpret, and emotionally process their personal journeys toward becoming educators. It seeks to uncover the meanings they construct around doubt, identity, and professional commitment within the context of teacher education. From a practical standpoint, this study is intended to broaden insights into how prospective Islamic Religious Education teachers negotiate career decisions amid personal, social, and institutional pressures. Furthermore, the findings are expected to generate constructive recommendations for developing more responsive and reflective education policies that not only address professional competence but also support psychological readiness, identity formation, and the mental resilience required to sustain long term commitment in the teaching profession.

METHOD

This study uses the design of the narrative inquiry approach as a research methodology based on life experience (Clandinin, 2022; Creswell & Poth, 2016) To photograph reality and explore the feelings of four prospective teacher students in Indonesia who experience doubts about their choice of profession as an educator. This approach was chosen to explore their personal experiences in dealing with emotional dynamics, internal conflicts, and professional identity challenges during the transition from theoretical education to practice. The personal narratives of the three participants were constructed through in-depth interviews and reflective dialogues, which resulted in an understanding of how they framed doubts, interpreted experiences, and searched for meaning in their career decisions. These narrative findings reveal the inner battle between expectations, reality, and social pressures, as well as how they seek to overcome doubts in the process of becoming teachers.

In this study, the researcher placed himself as a reflection facilitator who played an active role in building a dialogical relationship with the participants. Researchers not only act as data collectors, but also as reflective partners who help participants express their experiences more deeply. Clarification of this position is important to improve methodological transparency, as it shows that narrative interpretation is the result of an interaction between participants' experiences and researchers' reflections. Four prospective teacher students under the pseudonyms NR, RI, AF, and VR are willing to be participants in this study. The four are final semester students from a public education

university in Indonesia, who are taking the Field Experience Practice program with diverse backgrounds. They were recruited as participants because they had openly expressed doubts about the teaching profession in the Field Experience Practice program reflection session.

The recruitment of participants was conducted using a purposive sampling approach, focusing on students who had openly expressed doubts about the teaching profession during their field practice reflections. Their willingness to share personal and emotional experiences became the primary consideration in their selection. Before participating, all individuals were provided with a clear explanation of the research objectives, procedures, potential benefits, and ethical considerations, including confidentiality and voluntary participation. Each participant formally agreed to take part in the study without any form of coercion. This approach was intended to foster trust, facilitate open communication, and enable a deeper exploration of their emotional dynamics, reflective processes, and identity negotiations throughout their journey toward becoming professional teachers.

Tabel 1. Participant Data

No	Informan	Gender	Age	Status	Study Programs	Field Experience Practice Program Experience
1.	NR	Female	22	Unmarried	Islamic Religious Education	3 Times (SD)
2.	RI	Female	23	Unmarried	Arabic Language Education	2 Times (MTs)
3.	AF	Male	24	Unmarried	Tadris IPA	2 Times (SMA)
4.	VR	Female	23	Unmarried	PGSD	4 Times (SD)

Data collection was carried out for one month, from early February to early March 2025, using interview techniques in a semi-structured style. The implementation is using online media, through the Zoom application and WhatsApp Calls, adjusted to the comfort of the time and conditions of the participants. Each participant was interviewed four times, with a duration of 45–60 minutes for each session. The interview was conducted based on a time agreement and all participants agreed to be recorded and interviewed in depth according to the needs of the research data. In the first interview, the researcher asked questions about his educational background, the reason for choosing the teacher study program, and the initial expectations for the teaching profession. The second interview focused on the experience of undergoing Field Experience Practice, including first impressions of teaching, interaction with students, and emotional dynamics felt.

The third interview was directed to explore the forms of doubt that arise, such as self-confidence when speaking in front of the class, difficulty managing emotions, discomfort with a crowded atmosphere and pressure to be a moral agent in education. In this session, the researcher also asked about the personal efforts that the participants had made to deal with these doubts. The fourth interview aims to confirm and deepen the narrative that has been conveyed, as well as asking participants to reflect on the entire interview process. This process also serves as narrative validation. All data from the interview was recorded (with the consent of the participants) and transcribed verbatim by the researcher to facilitate the process of data reduction and encoding. Furthermore, the analysis process is carried out using a thematic approach to identify patterns, themes, and meaning tendencies from participants' subjective experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nieman, 2023)

Braun & Clarke (2021) explains in the following order: 1) familiarization with data; 2) creating the initial code; 3) searching for a theme; 4) review themes; 5) defining and naming themes and 6) compiling the final report. To support a deeper interpretation of participants' feelings and expressions, the researcher used an analysis tool in the form of four attitude parameters in the theory of language evaluation from Sujatna & Kuswoyo (2023); Azzra & Hartati (2024) namely affect, judgment, appreciation, and graduation. In addition, the researcher also refers to the theory of social semiosis from Monbec & Ding (2024) to understand how the narrative conveyed is a form of social practice that is inseparable from the relationship between social structures and individual agencies. With this approach, the researcher focuses not only on the content conveyed, but also on the way participants express doubts, form identities, and interpret the teaching profession.

The process of data reduction and presentation was carried out in a reflective and contextual manner to ensure that the findings remained closely connected to participants lived experiences. Rather than merely categorizing statements into rigid themes, the analysis sought to preserve the narrative flow and emotional nuances embedded in each account. Through this approach, doubts expressed by prospective teacher students were not interpreted as weaknesses or deficiencies, but as meaningful moments within their professional journey. These doubts were understood as integral to the dynamic process of identity formation, in which personal values, pedagogical knowledge, and real classroom experiences interact continuously. Consequently, professional identity emerged as a complex, evolving, and open construction, shaped by reflection, negotiation, and the ongoing search for meaning in becoming a teacher.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

These findings provide an in-depth insight into the life experience of being a teacher, where doubts reflect not only technical or academic limitations, but also the moral and emotional tensions experienced by prospective teachers. This tension, although it poses a dilemma, actually serves as a process of forming a more mature professional commitment. Thus, doubt can be understood as an integral part of the teacher's identity journey leading to value awareness, emotional resilience, and long-term commitment to the educational profession

Heavy Teacher Duties: Knowledge Transfer and Transfer Value

This narrative demonstrates that participants interpret the teaching profession as embodying a dual responsibility: as transmitters of knowledge and as shapers of values. Teaching is not perceived merely as the delivery of academic content, but as a moral vocation that requires integrity, exemplary conduct, and personal commitment. Within this perspective, educators are expected to model ethical behavior alongside intellectual competence. However, doubts emerge when individuals feel that these moral expectations have not been fully realized in their own lives. Such tension reflects an internal struggle between professional ideals and personal realities. It also highlights the reflective awareness of participants regarding the ethical weight of the teaching role and the high standards attached to it.

"I think being a teacher is not only teaching lessons, but teaching children to be good people as well. That's what makes me doubtful, because I myself am sometimes still confused about how to convey those values without patronizing."

(RI, Zoom Interview, February 20, 2025) *"Especially nowadays there are many critical children, so you have to be very careful."* (RI).

This statement indicates that the characteristics of contemporary students are perceived as a significant factor influencing participants' cautiousness in conveying moral and educational values. Today's students are often viewed as more critical, open, and influenced by diverse social and digital environments, which requires teachers to be more reflective and strategic in their approaches. As a result, participants tend to exercise greater prudence when expressing opinions or instilling values, fearing misunderstanding, resistance, or misinterpretation. This heightened awareness, while demonstrating professional sensitivity, simultaneously generates ambivalence regarding their role as educators. On the one hand, they feel responsible for guiding students morally; on the other, they experience uncertainty about the most appropriate and effective way to fulfill that responsibility in a rapidly changing educational context.

Self-Confidence in Communicating in Public

This quotation indicates that participants' doubts about entering or sustaining the teaching profession stem largely from issues of self-confidence, particularly in public communication settings. Teaching is perceived not merely as the transfer of knowledge, but as an intensive form of public speaking that demands clarity of expression, verbal fluency, and persuasive delivery. Participants associate the classroom with a public stage where educators must demonstrate confidence, maintain students' attention, and respond spontaneously to questions or unexpected situations. Such expectations require not only mastery of subject matter but also mental readiness and emotional stability. When individuals feel uncertain about their speaking abilities or fear negative evaluation, this insecurity can intensify hesitation toward the teaching profession and contribute to ongoing professional ambivalence.

"I have always lacked confidence when I had to speak in front of many people. In the past, I could only shudder at presentations, especially if I had to teach children who were active and asked a lot of questions. I was afraid of saying the wrong thing or even confusing myself in front of the class." (NR, Zoom Interview, February 18, 2025).

Previous presentation experiences marked by trembling and anxiety create a lingering negative association with classroom situations. Such memories shape participants' perceptions of teaching as a potentially stressful and intimidating activity. The fear of making mistakes, misspeaking, or losing control in front of students reinforces feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. In particular, the image of an active and dynamic classroom—where interaction, questioning, and spontaneous responses are expected—intensifies this concern. Participants worry that they may be unable to manage discussions effectively or respond confidently under pressure. Consequently, these past experiences do not merely remain isolated incidents but evolve into psychological barriers, leading participants to question their readiness and suitability to assume the professional role of a teacher.

Lack of Patience in Dealing with Children

This quotation reveals that participants' doubts regarding the teaching profession are closely linked to their level of self-confidence in public communication contexts. Teaching is understood not only as the delivery of subject matter but also as an intensive communicative performance that resembles public speaking. It demands courage to stand before an audience, clarity and fluency in articulating ideas, and the ability to manage voice, gestures, and expressions effectively. Moreover, classroom interaction requires mental agility and emotional composure to respond spontaneously to students' questions, comments, or unexpected situations. When participants perceive themselves as lacking these competencies, particularly in high-pressure communicative settings, they experience hesitation and uncertainty about their professional readiness. Thus, concerns about public speaking competence become a central factor shaping their ambivalence toward the teaching career.

"I have always lacked confidence when I had to speak in front of many people. In the past, I could only shudder at presentations, especially if I had to teach children who were active and asked a lot of questions. I was afraid of saying the wrong thing or even confusing myself in front of the class." (NR, Zoom Interview, February 18, 2025)

Previous presentation experiences characterized by trembling and heightened anxiety create enduring negative associations with classroom settings. These experiences shape participants' perceptions of teaching as an emotionally demanding activity that exposes them to evaluation and potential embarrassment. The fear of misspeaking, forgetting material, or losing control in front of students reinforces feelings of vulnerability and inadequacy. In particular, the image of an active and dynamic classroom—where spontaneous interaction, critical questioning, and lively discussion are common—intensifies these concerns. Participants anticipate difficulty maintaining composure and authority under such conditions. As a result, past moments of anxiety evolve into psychological barriers that undermine their confidence and lead them to question their preparedness to assume the professional responsibilities of a teacher.

Uncomfortable with a Crowded Environment

VR statements indicate a clear personal preference for a quiet work environment characterized by minimal social interaction and a high degree of individual focus. Participants describe themselves as more comfortable in settings that allow concentration, reflection, and independent task completion. In contrast, the teaching profession is perceived as a dynamic workspace filled with noise, constant communication, and intensive social engagement. Classrooms are imagined as lively environments requiring continuous interaction, emotional involvement, and active classroom management. This contrast generates a perceived incompatibility between personal temperament and professional demands. As a result, participants experience internal tension, feeling that their introverted or quiet disposition may not align with the energetic and socially demanding nature commonly associated with the role of a teacher.

"I've always preferred quiet work, behind the scenes. If you look at the teachers, they have to deal with a lot of children every day, noisy, and crowded. I feel like it's not my world." (VR, Zoom Interview, March 1, 2025)

In contrast to VR, NR highlights the psychological impact of a crowded and noisy learning environment. For NR, the primary source of fatigue during teaching practice is not the instructional activity itself, but the constant classroom noise and dense social interaction. The accumulation of sounds, overlapping conversations, and continuous student movement are perceived as mentally draining. This experience fosters a heightened awareness of personal sensitivity to stimulus-rich environments, particularly those characterized by auditory intensity and sustained interpersonal engagement. Rather than questioning their pedagogical competence, NR's reflection centers on environmental compatibility. Consequently, the challenge lies less in the act of teaching and more in managing the psychological strain triggered by noise-dense and socially demanding classroom settings.

"During PPL yesterday, I was stressed because of the constant noise of children. Coming home feels really tired, not because of teaching, but because of the noise."
(NR, WhatsApp Interview, February 28, 2025)

RI narrates that the discomfort associated with the teaching profession stems primarily from the intensity of ongoing social communication. The requirement to engage continuously with students, collaborate with colleagues, and participate in various institutional interactions is perceived as emotionally and mentally demanding. Rather than viewing communication as an enriching professional element, RI experiences it as a sustained social obligation that can become exhausting over time. This perception shapes a preference for occupational settings that prioritize independent work, structured tasks, and limited interpersonal engagement. Consequently, the inclination to avoid highly interactive professional roles reflects not a rejection of responsibility, but a desire for alignment between personal disposition and workplace communication demands.

"I'm a person who doesn't really like to talk to people. So, if I have to meet the children continuously, then meet with other teachers, I think that's hard." (RI, Zoom Interview, March 5, 2025) *"I've tried to adjust to the practice time, but it's still noisy and the interaction is intense."* (AF, WhatsApp Interview, March 3, 2025)

AF quotes describe the adaptation efforts that have been made, but have not been able to reduce the discomfort of the crowded learning environment. Noisy and socially intense classroom conditions are still perceived as exhausting, leading to the desire to switch to a quieter, less interaction type of work. NR's statement shows that discomfort with a crowded learning environment is not always faced individually. Participants took advantage of peer support as a way to relieve psychological stress that arises during teaching practice. Interaction with the PPL group becomes a safe space to express discomfort while obtaining emotional reinforcement before returning to face the crowded and noisy classroom situation.

"If I am in doubt, I usually tell my PPL group friends. We love each other passionately. "I even prayed before I went to school." (NR, Zoom Interview, February 20, 2025)

This study reveals that the doubts of prospective Islamic Religious Education teacher students are not a single phenomenon, but the result of a complex interaction between personal factors and the structural demands of the teaching profession. The four

main themes that emerge are the dual burden of knowledge and value transfer, self-confidence in public communication, emotional unpreparedness in the face of students, and discomfort with the crowded social environment reflect the dynamics of professional identity formation in the transition phase to the world of work.

Double Burden of Teachers: Transfer of Knowledge and Transfer of Value

The findings show that participants understand the teaching profession as a moral as well as pedagogical role. Awareness of responsibility to shape students' character (transfer of value), in addition to conveying material (transfer of knowledge), actually raises psychological pressure and professional doubts. This is in line with the findings Gong et al. (2022); Zhu & Chen (2022); Yip et al. (2022); Qoyyimah et al. (2023) which states that teachers are not only responsible for the transfer of knowledge, but also actively involved in the formation of values, moral identity, and character of students (transfer of value). This dual role creates professional and emotional tension, especially when teachers must navigate the institutional, curriculum-oriented demands, along with social expectations of being moral figures or role models. The moral and social responsibilities of a teacher are often heavier than the teaching duties themselves, as they concern the dimensions of personality formation, life values, and ethical relationships with students.

This burden may generate doubt and anxiety, particularly among aspiring educators who lack substantial classroom experience. As noted by Nickel & Crosby (2022) novice teachers frequently feel caught between institutional expectations and their own personal values. Similarly, Botha et al. (2023) argue that without the cultivation of moral identity through deep reflection or self-authorship, prospective teachers are vulnerable to role confusion when required to function simultaneously as character educators and subject specialists. From a professional ethics perspective, teachers are expected to demonstrate pedagogical tact the sensitivity to integrate knowledge transmission with value formation in balanced ways. When individuals feel unprepared to enact these dual responsibilities, they may perceive a gap between professional ideals and personal readiness. Therefore, such doubt should not be viewed merely as individual weakness, but rather as a reflective response to the complex moral and social demands embedded in the teaching profession.

Self-Confidence in Public Communication

Becoming a teacher is not only about mastering the material, but also the ability to convey it effectively in front of students with diverse backgrounds and needs. One of the challenges felt most by prospective teachers in this study is the lack of confidence when it comes to delivering something in front of many people. Anxiety and inability to manage social pressures made participants feel doubtful about their choice to become an educator. NR's statement reflects considerable psychological pressure related to the expectations of public communication in the teaching profession. Feeling "shaking", "afraid of saying the wrong thing", and "confused themselves" indicate that participants experience high communication anxiety, a condition referred to by McCroskey (2015); Shulyhina et al. (2024) as communication apprehension, which is excessive fear or worry that can hinder a person's public speaking performance.

According to Fitriyana & Kurniawan (2024); Alhasan et al. (2024); Okoro & Cardon (2024) communication apprehension is a form of communication anxiety that not only appears in formal contexts such as public speaking, but is also very real in academic and professional situations, including during small group discussions, team meetings, and

interpersonal interactions. This anxiety can hinder an individual's performance in conveying ideas, reduce confidence, and have an impact on learning achievement and work effectiveness. The studies also emphasized that social context, audience character, and previous personal experiences greatly influence perceived anxiety levels. Therefore, the approach to addressing *communication apprehension* needs to consider various communication situations, as theorized by Mccroskey (2015). In this case, unpleasant past experiences during the presentation reinforce the participant's negative perception of his or her abilities.

This situation shows that self-confidence or self-efficacy in the context of teaching has not been fully formed. The theory of self-efficacy put forward by Mudhar et al. (2024); Xie et al. (2024) states that a person's perceived self-efficacy or self-confidence is formed through four main sources: direct experience (mastery experience), vicarious experience (vicarious experience), verbal support (verbal persuasion), and physiological and emotional states. These four factors play an important role in determining how much effort and perseverance a person has in facing challenges. This concept remains relevant in the modern context, as evidenced by recent studies. Rodríguez-Ruiz et al. (2025); Xie et al. (2024) showed that students' confidence in online learning was strongly influenced by previous successful experiences and social encouragement. In addition, Beatson et al. (2020) affirm that students' academic performance can be improved through self-confidence formed by previous learning experiences and perceptions of external support.

These two findings reinforce the importance of developing self-efficacy in the contemporary learning process. Thus, the recent study remains to place Bandura's self-efficacy theory as a strong foundation in explaining the dynamics of individual confidence formation, and supports the importance of a holistic approach that combines experience, personal interpretation, and environmental support. This condition can also be understood through the formation of the teacher's professional identity in depth through the framework of structuring theory which emphasizes that social structures not only limit, but also allow individual actions (agencies) (Huang & Wang, 2024; Wong & Liu, 2024; Wu et al., 2024). In the context of education, this theory provides a conceptual basis for explaining how teachers and prospective teachers face the pressures of institutional expectations, while also seeking to maintain their professional autonomy.

Four recent studies reinforce this framework through empirical findings that show that the tension between structure and agency is key in the formation of teachers' professional identities. Ahmad & Shah (2022) show that Cambridge's teacher training programs in the Gulf region, which are highly structured and of international standards, create limitations on the agency of trainees. Teachers are not only required to meet global standards, but also experience limitations in actualizing pedagogic approaches that are appropriate to the local context. Sang et al. (2023) confirm similar tensions in rural Chinese schools, where social structures such as community roles and administrative pressures often hinder teachers from taking professional initiatives, even though they have strong personal intentions and motivations. Chávez et al. (2023) present the finding that the professional identity of novice teachers is actively shaped through their experiences in coping with institutional pressures.

When the dominant structure is not balanced with space for reflection and autonomy, teachers are at risk of identity crises and low self-confidence. Meanwhile, Jerdborg (2024) extends this understanding to the realm of school leadership, asserting that novice principals face a dilemma between following a bureaucratic structure and

expressing agency as a transformative leader. These four studies consistently show that the dominance of social structures in the form of policies, regulations, and institutional culture without adequate agency space has a direct impact on the quality of the formation of individual professional identities. Within the framework of Giddens' structuring theory, this condition is a manifestation of the dialectical relationship between structure and agency: when structure becomes hegemonic and does not allow space for reflective and creative action, then individual agency is distorted, and professional development becomes stagnant.

Thus, these four studies affirm the relevance of Giddens' structuration theory within educational contexts and highlight the critical role of agency in shaping teachers' professional identities amid shifting systemic pressures. Professional identity is formed not only through structural expectations but also through individuals' capacity to act, reflect, and negotiate meaning within those structures. In this regard, self-confidence in public communication should not be reduced to a mere technical limitation. Rather, it represents a fundamental dimension of identity construction for prospective teachers. Communication competence influences how they perceive authority, legitimacy, and professional belonging. Therefore, teacher education institutions must prioritize structured communication training and create supportive environments that allow safe practice, constructive feedback, and progressive confidence development.

Emotional Unpreparedness and Reality Shock

Patience is one of the key qualities needed in the teaching profession, especially when dealing with dynamic, energetic, and often difficult to manage children. For some prospective teachers, the demand to continue to be patient in dealing with unexpected situations in the classroom actually raises doubts about their suitability for the profession. One of the participants, NR, expressed deep concern about the inability to manage emotions and pressure when interacting with students. The phrases "easily provoked by emotions" and "afraid that later they will not be able to hold back" reflect that participants are aware of emotional vulnerability that can be an obstacle in carrying out their role as educators. This situation is in line with the theory of Assertive Discipline developed by Hardin (2014), which emphasizes that effective classroom management relies heavily on the ability of teachers to be calm, assertive, and consistent in dealing with diverse student behaviours.

According to Hardin (2014), teachers who are able to enforce the rules with firmness without being aggressive, as well as show stable authority, will be more successful in creating a safe and productive learning environment. Conversely, teachers who fail to display assertiveness and emotional control risk losing their authority in front of students, thus creating a classroom that is not conducive and prone to disciplinary disorders (Hardin & Carlette, 2014; Letuma, 2024). Findings from the study Mkhasibe & Mncube (2020) support and reinforce the assumptions of this theory. In their study titled "Evaluation of classroom management skills of prospective teachers during teaching practice in rural communities", they found that many pre-service teachers have not been able to demonstrate a firm and consistent attitude in implementing classroom management. This indecisiveness has an impact on increasing student behavior disorders during the learning process. This reflects what Hardin has argued, that indecisiveness and weak emotional control can lead to a decline in the authority of teachers, which ultimately worsens the classroom climate.

Furthermore, Mkhasibe & Mncube (2020) emphasize that to create a conducive classroom, teachers not only need pedagogical knowledge, but also need to be equipped with managerial competencies based on consistent assertiveness and authority. Without these abilities, many teachers face difficulties in controlling the classroom and building effective professional relationships with students. This underscores the relevance of the Assertive Discipline approach as a framework that is not only theoretical, but also proven to have practical implications in the implementation of education in the field, particularly in the context of schools in remote or challenging communities. Furthermore, the uncertainty of participants in dealing with children also reflects a conflict between the ideal perception of teachers as patient figures and the reality of themselves who feel that they are not able to meet those expectations.

According to Coppe et al. (2024); Kroeger et al. (2024) in the process of professional development of teachers, the early stages of the career are often coloured by insecurity and reality shock when prospective teachers begin to realize that teaching is not only about delivering material, but also facing the psychological pressure of direct interaction with students. This phenomenon has been confirmed in various recent empirical studies that emphasize symptoms such as emotional exhaustion, loss of confidence, and confusion of professional identity (Caires et al., 2009; Rots et al., 2012; Kim & Cho, 2014; Cheng & Szeto, 2016; Voss & Kunter, 2020). On the one hand, a number of studies highlight that novice teachers often start careers highly motivated and strongly believed in teaching effectiveness, but these expectations quickly change when they face real challenges in the field, such as heavy workloads, complex student behaviours, and limited structural support (Kim & Cho, 2014; Voss & Kunter, 2020).

These changes can trigger increased emotional exhaustion and decreased confidence in constructivist pedagogic approaches, as well as reinforce the reality shock effect as described by Arega & Hunde (2025). Furthermore, observational teaching practice experience is often insufficient to prepare teachers to deal with the emotional and social dynamics in real-life classroom management (Caires et al., 2009; Mischenko et al., 2024; Walker et al., 2024). Novice teachers also experience a process of negotiating social and professional identities in the communities where they teach, which can lead to feelings of alienation, especially when they have not been able to internalize the prevailing cultural and professional norms (Abbaspour et al., 2024; Ghamrawi et al., 2024; Gul et al., 2025; O'Brien et al., 2024). In fact, as explained by Rots et al. (2012) some novice teachers experience existential uncertainty about their choice of profession due to the failure to align personal idealism with actual working conditions.

From the perspective of structuring theory Brown (2024); Stahl (2024) the inability of participants to be patient can be seen as a form of agency limitation in responding to the ideal social role structure of teachers. In this context, participants' doubts are a reflection of the mismatch between structure (societal expectations and the education system) and agency (personal capacity to manage emotions and form role models). Similar statements by VR reveal concrete experiences that reinforce the narrative that emotional unpreparedness, especially in the face of uncontrollable classroom conditions, is a major source of doubt in choosing a teaching profession. The *phrases* "I had time to leave class" and "calm down" indicate the existence of an emotional coping mechanism, but at the same time indicate that the participants do not have a mature classroom management strategy.

When viewed from the perspective of assertive discipline developed by Kempen et al. (2024); Weber et al. (2025) VR experiences reflect the weak capacity to display a firm, calm, and consistent attitude of characteristics that Hardin believes is crucial in creating a safe and productive learning environment. The inability to set and enforce rules clearly, without being aggressive, has the potential to erode the teacher's authority in the presence of students. In this context, indecisiveness not only causes student behaviour disorders, but also threatens the professional identity of novice teachers who are still fragile. Furthermore, situations such as those experienced by VR illustrate how field experience can be a crucial moment in building the confidence of prospective teachers. When not equipped with a class management approach based on assertiveness and self-control, prospective teachers can experience role confusion, emotional exhaustion, and even re-question their choice of this profession.

This finding supports Hardin's warning that teachers who do not demonstrate stable authority and controlled responses to student behavior are more vulnerable to stress and classroom mismanagement (Alasmari & Althaqafi, 2024; Aldrup et al., 2024; Arifin et al., 2024). The experiences described by the two informants highlight the urgency of integrating assertive discipline-based classroom management training into teacher education programs. Such preparation ensures that prospective teachers develop not only pedagogical competence but also emotional resilience and credible professional authority in authentic classroom settings. Furthermore, their narratives illustrate what Ben-Amram & Davidovitch (2024); Smith Washington (2024) describes as "reality shock," a condition often experienced by novice teachers when confronting the complex demands of actual teaching. Reactions such as leaving the classroom or struggling to regulate emotions indicate limitations in self-management and practical classroom control skills.

According to Hardin and Carlette (2014), teachers who fail to demonstrate assertiveness, consistency, and emotional composure are at risk of losing authority in the classroom, resulting in disorder and heightened stress during teaching. In this study, the challenges faced by the two informants indicate insufficient preparation in classroom management strategies grounded in professional firmness. Viewed through Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, this situation reflects a tension between the structural expectations attached to the teacher's role and the individual's capacity to enact them effectively. When personal readiness does not align with institutional demands, doubts and emotional strain may intensify. Therefore, teacher education programs should integrate emotional regulation training and assertive discipline frameworks to cultivate resilience and professional stability from the outset.

Inconvenience to a Crowded Social Environment

The school environment is crowded and full of social interaction is a source of discomfort for some participants. For those with introverted personality tendencies or high sensitivity to external stimuli, the noisy classroom atmosphere, repetitive communication demands, and social pressures from interacting with many parties are challenges. From the beginning, some participants admitted that becoming a teacher was not their main goal. The choice to enter the world of education arises more because of the demands of the environment or circumstances, rather than because of an intrinsic impulse. This is illustrated in the following quote: VR's statement in the interview showed a discrepancy between the participants' personal character and the teacher's crowded and social work environment. The phrases "keep busy" and "not my world" reflect the

psychological distance between participants and the demands of intense interaction in the teaching profession.

The same thing was stated by other participants who experienced immediate discomfort during field practice. This experience shows how sound and social activity in the classroom can be a significant factor in psychological fatigue. Fatigue does not arise from the content of work (teaching), but from the work atmosphere (intense social environment). Sensory sensitivity tendencies and a preference for calmness are the determining factors for this discomfort. One of the other participants, who was more assertive, expressed his doubts about choosing the teaching profession due to social factors. Participants realized that the teaching profession demands a high intensity of communication, both verbally and emotionally. The reluctance to "talk a lot" and the preference for independent work indicate a person-environment mismatch, where personal values are not aligned with the social character of the teaching profession.

Even for participants who attempted to adapt, as illustrated by AF, the dense social dynamics of the school environment continued to be perceived as overwhelming. Constant interaction with students and colleagues generated emotional fatigue, despite efforts to adjust. The need for calmness, structure, and personal space appeared more dominant than the motivation to perform in highly social classroom settings. This finding supports Hargreaves' (2000) argument that teaching is shaped by emotional geographies arising from sustained interpersonal engagement. Furthermore, Chang (2013) emphasizes that teachers' resilience depends on their ability to appraise stress, regulate emotions, and implement coping strategies effectively. Without adequate preparation and institutional support, such pressures may increase vulnerability to burnout and professional identity doubts.

The findings of this study indicate that the hesitation of prospective PAI teacher students in choosing the teaching profession is shaped by intertwined personal and structural factors. Four central themes emerged: (1) the pressure of acting as agents of value transmission, (2) self-confidence in public communication, (3) emotional unpreparedness in dealing with students, and (4) discomfort within crowded and highly interactive social environments. These themes reflect the complex process of professional identity formation among prospective teachers. Participants' doubts did not arise merely from individual limitations; rather, they represent critical reflections on structural expectations perceived as demanding and misaligned with their psychological conditions and personal inclinations. Within Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, these experiences illustrate the tension between social structures and individual agency. When structural demands dominate without sufficient adaptive space, career uncertainty intensifies.

The findings on the first theme are a double burden as a teacher, namely the task of *transfer of knowledge* as well as *the transfer of value*. This is in line with the findings (Gong et al., 2022); (Zhu & Chen, 2022); (Yip et al., 2022); (Qoyyimah et al., 2023) which states that teachers are not only responsible for the *transfer of knowledge*, but also actively involved in the formation of values, moral identity, and character of students (*transfer of value*). This dual role creates professional and emotional tension, especially when teachers must navigate the institutional, curriculum-oriented demands, along with social expectations of being moral figures or role models. namely sensitivity to convey values wisely and not patronize. This unpreparedness to carry out this moral responsibility makes them doubt their ability as authoritative and inspirational figures in front of students. The findings of the two participants showed *communication apprehension* (McCroskey, 2015) which is

panic when speaking in public. This shows that confidence in the context of public communication has not been fully formed.

Referring to Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, this condition arises from negative past experiences and insufficient social support in fostering professional confidence. Self-efficacy functions as a central determinant: when individuals perceive themselves as capable and prepared, their intention to remain in the teaching profession becomes stronger. Conversely, when classroom experiences reinforce feelings of inadequacy, doubts deepen and withdrawal intentions may emerge. This study contributes to the discourse on professional identity formation in teacher education by exploring how internalized doubt shapes reflective capacity, value consciousness, and emotional resilience. Moreover, it demonstrates that doubt can serve as a transformative turning point, enabling prospective teachers to construct a more mature, resilient, and authentic pedagogical identity grounded in critical self-understanding.

This lack of self-confidence is the main obstacle in playing a teacher profession that relies on communication as the main skill. The third finding showed the presence of *reality shock* (Huberman, 1993) when participants underwent field practice. This situation is in line with the *Assertive Discipline* theory of (Hardin, Carlette, 2014) which emphasizes that effective classroom management relies heavily on the ability of teachers to be calm, assertive, and consistent in dealing with diverse student behaviors. Teachers who are able to enforce the rules firmly but remain non-aggressive, and show stable authority, will be more successful in creating a conducive and safe learning environment. This condition shows that emotions are a central aspect of the teaching profession, and without good regulation, individuals will easily feel unsuitable. Meanwhile, the fourth finding raised the issue of discomfort with a crowded social environment, which afflicted participants with *introverted personality tendencies*.

They feel that the teacher's work environment is too dense with social interaction and causes psychological fatigue. This is in line with the concept of *Person Environment Fit* (Amy I. Kristof-brown, ryan d. Zimmerman, 2005) which states that the mismatch between individual character and work environment characteristics will affect motivation and job satisfaction. In this case, participants experienced a *misalignment* between personal preference for calmness and the social nature of the teaching profession. Overall, the results of this study show that the doubts of prospective PAI teacher students are a form of reflection on social structure and professional expectations. This process of doubt is not just an obstacle, but can be an important moment in the formation of a professional identity. In the professional journey of prospective teachers, doubts about career choices are not solely understood as psychological obstacles, but also as part of a contemplative process that has spiritual and reflective nuances.

Some participants narrated the doubts they experienced not as a sign of weakness, but as an invitation to dive deeper into their self-meaning, values, and calling. This doubt becomes a "pause moment" that forces them to pause, reflect back on their initial motivation for choosing the profession of teacher, and seek spiritual confirmation of the direction in which they are headed. For example, one participant revealed that in times of uncertainty during field practice, he "often pondered after prayer" and felt that "in silence, there was a new calmness that being a teacher was not a matter of being sure or unsure, but of wanting to continue learning or give up." The term "professional doubt" in the context of prospective teacher students represents a complex *psychosocial condition*, in

which individuals question the identity, career choices, and personal values inherent in the educator profession.

This doubt does not arise in a vacuum, but is part of the dynamics of professional identity formation that takes place in the teacher higher education system (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009); (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). According to the identity formation theory of (Breakwell & Jaspal, 2022) there are several main principles that support the formation of a stable identity, namely: continuity between the past and the present, uniqueness or the feeling of being a distinctive individual, self-efficacy as the ability to control the environment, self-esteem through internalized values, a sense of social inclusion or togetherness in the community, and the meaning of life or orientation towards long-term goals. In the context of teacher education, doubts about the profession indicate a challenge to these principles.

When students doubt the choice of becoming a teacher, it is often rooted in a feeling of inability to meet social expectations of teachers as moral figures, public communicators, and agents of critical learning. As Jiang & Wei (2025); Zhai et al. (2024) points out, early experiences in education often act as "corrective reality" that shift initial idealism into a painful, yet potential, process of reflection on identity. Previous research has identified that doubt can actually trigger critical professional reflection and lead to a stronger transformation of teacher identities Smetana & Kushki (2025); Tajeddin & Keshvari (2025); Trent, 2010). In this case, doubt is not just a symptom of personal weakness, but an epistemological process that shows metacognitive functioning and value awareness. Thus, understanding the doubts of prospective teacher students in depth provides an opportunity to design a teacher education curriculum that is more contextual, empathetic, and fosters identity resilience.

Narratives like this suggest that doubt can be part of a spiritual journey, in which individuals try to reconcile shaky mental states with transcendent values they believe in, such as sincerity, patience, and meaningfulness in contributing to others. Some participants also mentioned that support from the community in the form of discussion groups, lecturer mentors, and teaching practice friends was an important factor in reorganizing their professional beliefs. One participant stated: *"If I am in doubt, I usually tell my PPL group friends. We love each other passionately. I even prayed before I went to school."* (NR, Zoom Interview, February 20, 2025) This statement shows that there is a conscious effort to rebuild beliefs, through affective and spiritual pathways that come from supportive social relationships. In this case, prayer, personal reflection, and relationships with trusted people become concrete forms of adaptive mechanisms for overcoming professional doubt.

These findings are in line with studies Dzikra et al. (2025); Kadir (2025) which show that spiritual practices such as prayer, dhikr, and self-contemplation serve as self-guidance strategies in dealing with stress and inner pressure, especially among college students and young professionals. Furthermore, in the study Reaves (2024); Willard (2024) practice of a deep relationship with God, oneself, and those closest to us was seen as a major force in maintaining identity and direction of life, including in the context of professional pressure. Prayer and spiritual relationships play a role not only as comfort, but also as a means of reconstructing the meaning and direction of life's purpose that is threatened by existential anxiety. This emphasis is reinforced in the book Cooper-White (2024); Peristein (2025) which states that a pastoral approach through silence, relational presence, and prayer is capable of activating inner resources to deal with professional confusion.

A similar thing was found in a phenomenological study by Lubis (2025); Olusegun (2024) which emphasizes that personal prayer serves as a space for emotional release, value reflection, and the restoration of spirit in the face of complex social and moral challenges. In fact, in the context of college, Jia et al. (2024); Uzoigwe & Elvis (2023) reveals that students who experience spiritual struggles often find recovery through social support and spiritual practices, which serve as emotional anchors when facing identity crises or professional uncertainties. Thus, practices such as prayer, spiritual reflection, and supportive relationships are not just additional activities, but part of the broader process of professional and moral identity construction. Without this mechanism, individuals, especially those who are in the early stages of their careers or are facing major transitions, are prone to decreased motivation, role confusion, and existential burnout. Therefore, spirituality and social affection must be seen as essential components in strengthening a whole and sustainable professionalism.

An individual's readiness to enter the world of work is not only determined by technical skills, but also by their cultural capital such as self-awareness, reflective ability, and adaptation to professional expectations (Hosen et al., 2024; Jo et al., 2024). In a longitudinal study by Ho et al. (2023) it was found that the career development learning process substantially increases students' perceived employability through increasing self-awareness and reflective understanding of personal competencies. This shows that the accumulation of cultural capital plays a crucial role in shaping conscious learning and professional development strategies. In line with that Barkhi & Seref (2025); Batat (2024) proposes a holixec education approach that places self-awareness and personal values as the core of work preparation. Through the meaning, emotion, context, conflict, development, action, dan learning method, education is not only instructional but also transformative, emphasizing the importance of understanding the position of the individual in the "social field" of the world of work, a concept that is very close to Bourdieu's thinking on habitus and the field.

In this framework, self-awareness of limitations and previous learning experiences is not an obstacle, but rather a form of *symbolic capital* that can be capitalized to form self-development strategies that are more adaptive and relevant to the demands of the profession. Thus, both Batat (2024); Ho et al. (2023) reinforce the idea that self-awareness is a form of cultural capital actualization, which serves as a foundation for building work readiness in a sustainable manner. This integration of perspectives expands Bourdieu's understanding of education as a process of social stratification, towards a more emancipatory and reflective approach in modern professional development. The doubts experienced by prospective teacher students are not just obstacles, but an important part of the process of forming a professional identity. This doubt reflects the tension between institutional expectations, practical realities, and personal values, while also opening up a space for reflection that deepens self-understanding as an educator.

However, a very important question arises based on the results of the research that has been obtained, why does this happen? If we reanalyse the current education policies to become a teacher, such as, must have a minimum academic qualification of S1/D4, teachers are required to meet four core competencies: pedagogic, professional, personality, and social, teachers are required to participate in the teacher professional education program to obtain certification, mandatory microteaching courses at educational personnel education institutions, and the implementation of teacher professional education program. So, we realize that the policy is not optimal in forming a

competent teacher. This is not without reason, from the results we have obtained before, prospective teacher students are not fully formed to become educators, why can this happen?

After the evaluation process of education policy, several answers were found: First, the current approach tends to be theoretical, courses such as microteaching are not fully based on real practice in the field. Limited training in a simulation space is not enough to face the complexity of the world of work so that it does not prepare prospective teachers to deal with the diversity of students' characters, social problems, and technological demands. Second, the lack of integration of *soft skills* and mentality, the focus of teaching is still dominant on technical skills, while the mentality as an educator (commitment, responsibility,) is not honed optimally. Third, the incompatibility of expectations and reality, many graduates realize that the teaching profession has a low administrative burden and welfare, so that the teaching profession is less economically attractive. Graduates choose other professions for a better income.

This phenomenon occurs because education policies tend to be strong in the formulation of regulations, but weak in implementation and supervision. Although conceptually there are already policies that support teacher competency improvement, such as SNP, PPG, and the latest curriculum policies, the implementation mechanism has not been consistent. Microteaching practices, for example, are unable to anticipate various complex problems such as differences in student character, socio-economic problems, and the use of technology in learning. This condition is exacerbated by external factors, such as low teacher welfare and labour market dynamics, which make the teaching profession less attractive than other professions. Thus, it can be concluded that the current education policy has not been fully able to answer the challenges in producing competent teachers.

Policy evaluation must be conducted comprehensively, addressing not only formulation but also implementation, monitoring, and alignment with field realities. Expanding practical teaching exposure, ensuring continuous mentoring, and providing incentives to encourage graduates to remain in the profession are strategic priorities. The implications of this study underscore the urgency of systematic policy intervention in teacher education. First, curricula should balance theory, practicum, and structured reflective spaces that nurture professional identity formation. Second, recruitment and retention frameworks must incorporate both financial and non-financial incentives to manage professional doubt as part of growth rather than attrition. Third, evaluation systems should integrate emotional and reflective competencies alongside academic performance. In this way, teacher education policies function not merely administratively but as instruments for sustaining long-term professional identity development.

The generalization of this study is limited to a qualitative study with a small number of participants, namely four prospective teacher students from one higher education institution in Indonesia. All four participants were recruited based on their openness in narrating professional doubts, which indirectly demonstrated a relatively high level of self-reflection and value awareness. This caveat is important considering that the findings of this study are strongly influenced by the backgrounds of participants who are in the Field Experience Practice period, as well as their tendency to reflect on the experience emotionally and spiritually. Therefore, similar results may not appear in students with different backgrounds, other institutions, or those who do not have similar reflective experiences. In addition, it is important to note that the four participants in this study have

not fully undergone work experience as full-time teachers, so the forms of doubt and identity dynamics displayed are still transitional and have not been tested in the long term.

Nevertheless, this study offers a distinctive and nuanced perspective on the emotional and reflective dynamics of prospective teachers, particularly prospective PAI teachers, whose experiences remain relatively underrepresented in teacher education literature. By positioning professional doubt as a constructive and developmental process rather than merely a deficit, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of identity formation and professional readiness. Future research is encouraged to adopt mixed-method approaches on a larger scale, incorporating more diverse institutional, cultural, and social contexts. Involving participants from various study programs and educational backgrounds would further broaden insight into how professional doubt interacts with identity construction, resilience, and long-term commitment to the teaching profession across different educational settings.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the professional doubts experienced by prospective Islamic Religious Education teacher students represent a deep reflective response to the demands of the teaching profession rather than merely personal weakness. These doubts emerge from the tension between structural expectations placed upon teachers and the psychological conditions, preferences, and capacities of individuals. Theoretically, this research enriches understanding of professional identity formation by positioning doubt as an integral and constructive component of reflective growth that fosters value awareness, emotional resilience, and adaptive strategies. Practically, the results highlight the urgency of teacher education programs that provide safe reflective spaces, strengthen communication competence, enhance emotional regulation, and support psychological readiness. Therefore, teacher education should balance technical mastery with identity development.

REFERENCES

- Abbaspour, F., Hosseingholizadeh, R., & Bellibaş, M. Ş. (2024). Uncovering the role of principals in enhancing teacher professional learning in a centralized education system. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 38(3), 873–889.
- Ahmad, H., & Shah, S. R. (2022). Teacher agency and professional development: A study on Cambridge English teacher program in the Arabian Gulf. *Cogent Education*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2080352>
- Akkerman, S. F., & Meijer, P. C. (2011). A dialogical approach to conceptualizing teacher identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 308–319. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.013>
- Alasmari, N. J., & Althaqafi, A. S. A. (2024). Teachers' practices of proactive and reactive classroom management strategies and the relationship to their self-efficacy. *Language Teaching Research*, 28(6), 2158–2189. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211046351>
- Aldrup, K., Carstensen, B., & Klusmann, U. (2024). The role of teachers' emotion regulation in teaching effectiveness: A systematic review integrating four lines of research.

Educational Psychologist, 59(2), 89–110.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2023.2282446>

- Alhasan, R. F., Alkhaldi, A. A., Huwari, I. F., Abushaaban, H., & Al Bataineh, K. B. (2024). understanding and addressing oral communication apprehension in Jordanian students: A Guide to Academic Success (pp. 681–690). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-50939-1_54
- Amy I. K. B. Ryan d. Zimmerman, E. C. J. (2005). Consequences of individuals' fit at work: A meta-analysis of person–job, person–organization, person–group, and person–supervisor fit.
- Arega, N. T., & Hunde, T. S. (2025). Constructivist instructional approaches: A systematic review of evaluation-based evidence for effectiveness. *Review of Education*, 13(1), e70040. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.70040>
- Arifin, A., Suryaningsih, S. S., & Arifudin, O. (2024). The relationship between classroom environment, teacher professional development, and student academic performance in secondary education. *International Education Trend Issues*, 2(2), 151–159.
- Azzra, K. S., & Hartati, E. (2024). Students' attitudes in writing reflection on microteaching course: An appraisal analysis. *J-Lalite: Journal of English Studies*, 5(2), 199. <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jes.2024.5.2.13913>
- Ballová Mikušková, E., Verešová, M., & Gatíal, V. (2024). Antecedents of teachers' professional competencies. *Cogent Education*, 11(1), 2286813. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2286813>
- Barkhi, R., & Seref, M. (2025). Holixec Education: experiential and personalized learning implemented with mindfulness. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 45(3), 491–496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02761467251323513>
- Batat, W. (2024). Introducing holixec education: A human-centric approach to learner workplace readiness via the MECCDAL method. *Journal of Macromarketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02761467241269873>
- Beatson, N. J., Berg, D. A. G., & Smith, J. K. (2020). The influence of self-efficacy beliefs and prior learning on performance. *Accounting & Finance*, 60(2), 1271–1294. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acfi.12440>
- Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: An overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(2), 175–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640902902252>
- Ben-Amram, M., & Davidovitch, N. (2024). Novice teachers and mentor teachers: From a traditional model to a holistic mentoring model in the postmodern era. *Education Sciences*, 14(2), 143.

- Botha, C., Marais, E., & Reyneke, M. (2023). Self-authorship: a pedagogical tool for pre-service teachers to develop (pre)professional identity. *Education Sciences*, 13(11), 1067. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci1311067>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Thematic analysis: A practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 04. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642537.2024.2391666>
- Breakwell, G. M., & Jaspal, R. (2022). Identity processes and musicians during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Musicae Scientiae*, 26(4), 777–798. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10298649221102526>
- Brown, O. R. (2024). The underside of order: Race in the constitution of international order. *International Organization*, 78(1), 38–66.
- Caires, S., Almeida, L. S., & Martins, C. (2009). The socioemotional experiences of student teachers during practicum: A case of reality shock? *The Journal of Educational Research*, 103(1), 17–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220670903228611>
- Calkins, L., Wiens, P., Parker, J., & Tschinkel, R. (2024). Teacher motivation and self-efficacy: how do specific motivations for entering teaching relate to teacher self-efficacy? *Journal of Education*, 204(2), 427–438. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220574221142300>
- Chaaban, Y., Alkhateeb, H., Abu-Tineh, A., & Romanowski, M. (2023). Exploring teachers' perspectives on career development: Q methodology research. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 122, 103987. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103987>
- Chávez, J., Fauré, J., & Barril Madrid, J. (2023). The role of agency in the construction and development of professional identity. *Learning: Research and Practice*, 9(1), 93–108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23735082.2022.2134575>
- Cheng, A. Y. N., & Szeto, E. (2016). Teacher leadership development and principal facilitation: Novice teachers' perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 58, 140–148. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.05.003>
- Clandinin, D. J. (2022). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003240143>
- Cooper-White, P. (2024). *Shared wisdom: Use of the self in pastoral counseling*. Augsburg Fortress.
- Coppe, T., Parmentier, M., Kelchtermans, G., Raemdonck, I., März, V., & Colognesi, S. (2024). Beyond traditional narratives about teacher professional development: A critical perspective on teachers' working life. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 139, 104436.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- Dzikra, O. C., Umayah, U., Meidyansyah, R., Zubaidah, Z., Adam, Y., & Iloakasia, A. J. (2025). Islamic spirituality based self-guidance model for managing stress among working

- college students. *Al-Musyrif: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islam*, 8(1), 90–104. <https://doi.org/10.38073/almusyrif.v8i1.2502>
- Ertas, B. D., & Pekmezci, F. B. (2025). Career motivation and job satisfaction in Türkiye: Mediating role of teacher innovativeness and instructional practice. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 34(1), 193–207. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-024-00846-1>
- Fan, Y., & Xie, Z. (2025). Exploring preservice EFL teacher anxiety in the teaching practicum: An ecological case study in China. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 34(2), 675–687. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-024-00887-6>
- Fitriyana, N., & Kurniawan, Y. (2024). Effectiveness of respiratory relaxation to lower academic communication apprehension in students (pp. 125–133). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-50939-1_10
- Ghamrawi, N., Shal, T., & Ghamrawi, N. A. R. (2024). Cultivating teacher leadership: Evidence form a transformative professional development model. *School Leadership & Management*, 44(4), 413–441. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2024.2328056>
- Giralt-Romeu, M., Liesa, E., & Castelló, M. (2024). Teacher identity as inquirer: Voices of teacher educators. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 47(1), 140–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2021.2015319>
- Gong, Y. F., Lai, C., & Gao, X. A. (2022). Language teachers' identity in teaching intercultural communicative competence. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 35(2), 134–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2021.1954938>
- Gorospe, J. D. (2022). Pre-service teachers' teaching anxiety, teaching self-efficacy, and problems encountered during the practice teaching course. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 11(4), 84–91.
- Gul, T., Criswell, B., & Demir, K. (2025). Impacts of teacher-driven professional development on teacher leadership identity. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 28(4), 875–902. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2022.2052754>
- Hardin, Carlette, J. (2014). *Effective classroom management models and strategies third edition*. Pearson New International Edition.
- Ho, T. T. H., Le, V. H., Nguyen, D. T., Nguyen, C. T. P., & Nguyen, H. T. T. (2023). Effects of career development learning on students perceived employability: A longitudinal study. *Higher Education*, 86(2), 297–315. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00933-6>
- Hosen, S., Hamzah, S. R., Ismail, I. A., Alias, S. N., Abd Aziz, M. F., & Rahman, M. M. (2024). Training & development, career development, and organizational commitment as the predictor of work performance. *Heliyon*, 10(1).
- Huang, X., & Wang, C. (2024). Pre-service teachers' professional identity transformation: A positioning theory perspective. *Professional Development in Education*, 50(1), 174–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2021.1942143>

- Huberman, M. (1993). *The lives of teachers*. Teachers College Press.
- Jerdborg, S. (2024). Structure, agency and change: Early careers of novice principals in Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 10(1), 27–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2024.2304680>
- Jia, D., Zhang, K., & Xu, Y. (2024). The relationship between social support and relapse tendency among those who struggle with drug addiction: Multiple mediators of exercise self-efficacy and health-related quality of life. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 54(1), 120–133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220426231152912>
- Jiang, Z., & Wei, B. (2025). Understanding Science identity development among college students. *Science & Education*, 34(3).
- Jo, H., Park, M., & Song, J. H. (2024). Career competencies: An integrated review of the literature. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 48(7/8), 805–832.
- Kadir, S. (2025). The Practice of Remembrance: Qur’anic Techniques for Mindfulness and Wellbeing. In S. Kadir, *Mindfulness and Wellbeing* (Vol. 12, pp. 65–113). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-90190-4_5
- Kang, J., Kim, H., Lee, B., Tolppanen, S., Viljaranta, J., & George, S. (2024). Career entry motivations and teaching perceptions of science preservice teachers: A comparison of trends between Finland and South Korea. *International Journal of Science Education*, 46(15), 1559–1577. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2023.2291690>
- Kang, J., Viljaranta, J., George, S., & Jäppinen, I. (2024). Relationship between science teachers’ teaching motivations and career development aspirations. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2024.2311698>
- Kempen, E., Labuschagne, M. J., & Jama, M. P. (2024). Elements of a safe learning environment: A student perspective. *African Journal of Health Professions Education*, 16(2), e1222. <https://doi.org/10.7196/AJHPE.2024.v16i2.1222>
- Kim, H., & Cho, Y. (2014). Pre-service teachers’ motivation, sense of teaching efficacy, and expectation of reality shock. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(1), 67–81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2013.855999>
- Klassen, R. M., Wang, H., & Rushby, J. V. (2023). Can an online scenario-based learning intervention influence preservice teachers’ self-efficacy, career intentions, and perceived fit with the profession? *Computers & Education*, 207, 104935. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2023.104935>
- Kroeger, S. D., Doyle, K., Carnahan, C., & Benson, A. G. (2024). Microteaching: An opportunity for meaningful professional development. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 56(6), 462–471. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00400599211068372>
- Kwa, K. X., & Kim, S. (2022). Understanding career choice motivations: A case study of public-school teacher candidates in Singapore. *International Review of Public Administration*, 27(3), 249–271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12294659.2022.2123291>

- Letuma, M. C. (2024). Alternatives to establishing conducive learning environment (aecle) model for schools: assertive discipline perspective. *Research in Educational Policy and Management*, 6(2), 42–57.
- Lubis, M. (2025). A Phenomenological study of personal spiritual experiences in navigating religious pluralism within interfaith communities. *Irfana: Journal of Religious Studies*, 1(6), 212–220.
- Ma, K., Cavanagh, M., & Mcmaugh, A. (2025). Sources of pre-service teacher self-efficacy: A longitudinal qualitative inquiry. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 45(2), 463–478. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2022.2136140>
- Mccroskey, J. C. (2015). *An introduction to rhetorical communication*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315663791>
- Mischenko, P. P., Schussler, D. L., & Jennings, P. A. (2024). Mindfully teaching mindfulness: A conceptual framework based on the compassionate school's project teacher experience. *Mindfulness*, 15(2), 327–344. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-023-02285-3>
- Mkhasibe, R. G., & Mncube, D. W. (2020). Evaluation of pre-service teachers' classroom management skills during teaching practice in rural communities. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 34(6). <https://doi.org/10.20853/34-6-4079>
- Monbec, L., & Ding, A. (2024). Educating for agency and solidarity: a social semiotics knowledge base. In *Recovering Language in Higher Education* (pp. 115–138). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-76699-2_6
- Mudhar, G., Ertesvåg, S. K., & Pakarinen, E. (2024). Patterns of teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education associated with teacher emotional support, collective teacher efficacy, and collegial collaboration. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 39(3), 446–462. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2023.2233297>
- Mustafayev, A., & Kazimi, P. (2023). Motivation and nature of choosing the teaching profession. *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, 10(5), 1823–1830.
- Nguyen, T. A. (2025). Addressing English-speaking anxiety in Vietnamese initial teacher education: Beyond coping strategies. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 10(1), 24. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-025-00324-1>
- Nickel, J., & Crosby, S. (2022). Professional identity values and tensions for early career teachers. *Teaching Education*, 33(3), 317–331. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2021.1895107>
- Nieman, S. (2023). Thematic analysis: A practical guide. *Qualitative Social Work*, 22(3), 606–608. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250231170275>
- O'Brien, S., McNamara, G., O'Hara, J., Brown, M., & Skerrett, C. (2024). Teacher leadership in school self-evaluation: An approach to professional development. *Irish Educational Studies*, 43(4), 703–718. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2022.2135568>

- Okoro, E. A., & Cardon, P. (2024). Overcoming oral communication apprehension: A call for a renewed focus on confidence building in business education. *Journal of Education for Business*, 99(1), 52–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2023.2255724>
- Olusegun, J. (2024). The role of personal prayer in the spiritual growth of christian believers. *Phenomenological Approach*.
- Özer-Altinkaya, Z., & Yetkin, R. (2025). Exploring pre-service English language teachers' readiness for AI-integrated language instruction. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554480X.2025.2451299>
- Pavin Ivanec, T. (2023). Motivation for the choice of a teaching career: Comparison of different types of prospective teachers in Croatia. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 49(3), 355–369. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2022.2113736>
- Peristein, B. (2025). Pamela Cooper-white, shared wisdom: use of the self in pastoral care & counseling. Fortress Press, 2024. *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry*, 45(45).
- Qoyyimah, U., Singh, P., Exley, B., Doherty, C., & Agustawan, Y. (2023). Professional Identity and imagined student identity of EIL teachers in Islamic schools. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 22(2), 121–136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2020.1833726>
- Reaves, A. M. (2024). *Grounded in faith: Maintaining a relationship with God, self, and others*. Liberty University.
- Rodríguez-Ruiz, J., Marín-López, I., & Espejo-Siles, R. (2025). Is artificial intelligence use related to self-control, self-esteem and self-efficacy among university students? *Education and Information Technologies*, 30(2), 2507–2524. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12906-6>
- Rots, I., Kelchtermans, G., & Aelterman, A. (2012). Learning (not) to become a teacher: A qualitative analysis of the job entrance issue. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.08.008>
- Saito, A. (2024). I chose to receive teacher training because motivations for teaching and career aspirations among teacher education students in Japan. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 6, 100330.
- Sang, G., Huang, J., Chao, T., Ye, B., & Muthanna, A. (2023). Understanding rural school teachers' professional agency and its relationship to social structure. *Educational Studies*, 59(1), 30–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2022.2051033>
- Selvia, S., Rahmat, M., & Anwar, S. (2025). The Effect of religious maturity on substantive religiosity of prospective PAI teacher students. *ISLAMKA*, 7(3), 433–454.
- Shulyhina, R., Kochubei, M., Lashkul, V., Malyk, Y., & Titarenko, S. (2024). Rhetorical and virtual communication: Innovative characteristics of future professionals' communication culture. *Amazonia Investiga*, 13(75), 32–44.

- Smetana, L. K. T., & Kushki, A. (2025). Confronting, investigating, and learning from professional identity tensions. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 48(3), 544–562. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2023.2212854>
- Smith Washington, V. (2024). A case study: A novice teacher's mentoring experiences the first year and beyond. *Education and Urban Society*, 56(3), 309–344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245221121664>
- Stahl, G. (2024). The constitution of group cognition. In *The Routledge handbook of embodied cognition* (pp. 381–393). Routledge.
- Sujatna, E. T. S., & Kuswoyo, H. (2023). An appraisal perspective on students' use of attitudinal resources in university EFL academic oral presentations. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2195728>
- Tajeddin, Z., & Keshvari, Z. (2025). Emotional tensions in identity transition from teachers to teacher educators: Voices from early-career teacher educators. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 10(1), 14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-024-00313-w>
- Taufik, M., Setiawan, M. N. K., & Mahmud, M. E. (2024). PAI teacher qualification standards as the main pillar in Islamic character education. *International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Sciences (IJHESS)*, 6(4), 1141–1151.
- Trent, J. (2010). Teacher education as identity construction: Insights from action research. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 36(2), 153–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607471003651672>
- Uzoigwe, T., & Elvis, U. C. (2023). *Relationship Between Intellectual Humility and Spiritual Struggle*.
- Voss, T., & Kunter, M. (2020). “Reality Shock” of Beginning Teachers? Changes in Teacher Candidates' Emotional Exhaustion and Constructivist-Oriented Beliefs. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 71(3), 292–306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487119839700>
- Walker, D., Patten, T., & Stephens, S. (2024). Peer observation of teaching in a post-primary context. *Irish Educational Studies*, 43(1), 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2021.2022512>
- Walkington, J. (2005). Becoming a teacher: Encouraging development of teacher identity through reflective practice. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 33(1), 53–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866052000341124>
- Wang, W., & Wang, Z. (2023). Why choose a career in teaching? Exploring motivational factors that influence the decision to teach. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 51(1), 46–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2022.2040003>
- Weber, C. L., Boswell, C., & Behrens, W. A. (2025). Creating safe and productive learning environments. In *Exploring Critical Issues in Gifted Education* (pp. 115–139). Routledge.

- Willard, D. (2024). *Hearing God: Developing a conversational relationship with God*. InterVarsity Press.
- Wong, C. Y. E., & Liu, W. C. (2024). Evaluating the Teacher professional identity of student teachers: development and validation of the teacher professional identity scale. *Journal of Education*, 204(1), 131–144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220574221101375>
- Wu, J., Ghayas, S., Aziz, A., Adil, A., & Niazi, S. (2024). Relationship between teachers' professional identity and career satisfaction among college teachers: Role of career calling. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1348217.
- Xie, Z., Zhang, L.-F., & Deng, M. (2024). Self-efficacy and work motivation among inclusive education teachers in China. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 71(2), 236–250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2022.2094900>
- Yilmaz, B. B., & Gülbahar, B. (2025). AN Investigation of the reasons of new teachers for choosing the teaching profession. *Uluslararası Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8(2), 205–220.
- Yip, J. W. C., Huang, J., & Teng, M. F. (2022). Identity and emotion of university English teachers during curriculum reform in China. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 35(4), 421–439. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2021.2024843>
- Zhai, Y., Tripp, J., & Liu, X. (2024). Science teacher identity research: A scoping literature review. *International Journal of STEM Education*, 11(1), 20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-024-00481-8>
- Zhu, G., & Chen, M. (2022). Positioning preservice teachers' reflections and I-positions in the context of teaching practicum: A dialogical-self theory approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 117, 103734. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103734>