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Vocational English Lecturers' Professional Identity: A Closer Look to the Six Domains

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Abstract: The growing research on teachers' identity focused mostly on pre-service teachers, beginning teachers, and teachers at the secondary level. Research on teacher identity in the tertiary context has indeed been carried out, however, not much research has focused on the identity of English lecturers in vocational institutions, which arguably face more challenges compared to non-vocational counterparts. Teachers' identity impacts the teaching process, in the way teachers see themselves, value their roles, and what their beliefs about teaching. These things significantly influence how they approach their work in the classroom. Aiming to fill in the gaps and add to the literature regarding the identity of vocational lecturers, this study seeks to answer three questions: (1) How do vocational English lecturers define their identities related to the six domains namely self-image, motivation, commitment, self-efficacy, task perception, job satisfaction, of teacher identity? (2) What are the things that cause the vocational English lecturer to define their identity, based on the six domains? (3) What are the advantages of knowing the teachers' identity regarding the challenges that the vocational English lecturers face in their professional lives? The research used the purposive sampling method in qualitative research and was based on the saturation principle to determine the number of research participants. Using questionnaires and interviews with three participants as well as three-stage coding techniques and inductive analysis, this research found various positive identities within all six domains of teacher identity. These identities stem from both personal and contextual factors. Despite these promising findings, vocational English lecturers encounter certain challenges, notably with students who often have limited academic abilities, resulting in feelings of inadequacy, and a lack of enthusiasm for the English learning process.

Key words: identity, six domains, English lecturers, vocational institutions

Abstrak: Penelitian yang berkembang mengenai identitas guru sebagian besar berfokus pada guru pra-jabatan, guru pemula, dan guru di tingkat menengah. Penelitian mengenai identitas guru dalam konteks perguruan tinggi memang telah banyak dilakukan, namun belum banyak penelitian yang berfokus pada identitas dosen bahasa Inggris di lembaga vokasi yang bisa dibilang menghadapi tantangan yang lebih besar dibandingkan dengan rekan dosen non-vokasional. Identitas guru berdampak pada bagaimana mereka melihat diri mereka, menilai diri mereka, dan prinsip-prinsip yang mereka percayai tentang pengajaran. Hal-hal ini secara signifikan mempengaruhi pendekatan mereka dalam kegiatan belajar mengajar di kelas. Bertujuan untuk mengisi kekosongan dan menambah literatur mengenai identitas dosen

Vokasi, penelitian ini berupaya menjawab dua pertanyaan: (1) Bagaimana dosen Bahasa Inggris Vokasi mendefinisikan identitasnya terkait enam domain (self-image, motivation, commitment, self-efficacy, task perception, job satisfaction) identitas guru? (2) Hal-hal apa saja yang menyebabkan dosen Bahasa Inggris Vokasi mendefinisikan identitasnya seperti itu, berdasarkan keenam domain tersebut. (3) Apakah keuntungan mengenal identitas guru dalam kaitannya menghadapi tantangan dalam kehidupan profesional mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode purposive sampling yang biasanya digunakan dalam penelitian kualitatif dan berpijak pada prinsip saturasi dalam penentuan jumlah partisipan penelitian. Dengan menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara kepada tiga partisipan serta teknik pengkodean tiga tahap dan analisis induktif, penelitian ini menemukan berbagai identitas positif. Identitas ini berasal dari faktor pribadi dan kontekstual. Terlepas dari temuan yang baik ini, dosen bahasa Inggris vokasi menghadapi tantangan tertentu, terutama dengan mahasiswa yang seringkali memiliki kemampuan akademik yang terbatas, sehingga menimbulkan perasaan tidak mampu, dan kurangnya semangat dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: identitas, enam domain, dosen bahasa inggris, institusi vokasi.

INTRODUCTION

The idea that successful teachers will usually be able to produce successful students (Basalama, 2022) and awareness that the important role of teachers in education is not only about the learning methods used (Palmer, 1997) encourages the growing research on the teachers' professional identity. In short, teacher identity refers to how teachers make sense of themselves in the context of their profession which is interrelated with their personal, social, and cultural identities as well as their roles as professionals and in the context, they are in (Ballantyne & Retell, 2020). Teacher identity includes factors such as personal beliefs, values, experiences, and professional development (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). Classroom interactions, teaching-learning activities as well as teachers' personal beliefs and values influence their professional identities. Then, the way teachers perceive themselves, their roles, and their beliefs about teaching significantly give impact how they approach their work in the classroom (Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Sang, 2023). Professionally, knowledge of teacher identity, therefore, provides insight into job satisfaction, commitment, self-efficacy, and teacher motivation. In addition, research on this matter can provide insight into how teachers can maintain motivation and commitment in their profession from year to year (Carrillo & Flores, 2017) and, therefore, prevent teacher attrition.

Studies on teacher identity have typically focused only on pre-service teachers, novice teachers, and secondary school teachers (Hanna et al., 2019). Research on teacher identity in the university context indeed has also been carried out a lot and provides different insights because educators in tertiary institutions have roles that are more than just educators, for example being researchers and service practitioners. Unfortunately, there is not much research that focuses on the identity of lecturers in vocational institutions. Research on the identity of vocational educators is interesting because vocational education has special characteristics that are different from academic education. For example, a vocational institution offers an education that prioritizes practice and is close to industry (Nurtanto et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2022). Moreover, the condition of teachers' identity in higher education, within vocational education, has evolved significantly in recent years (Avis, 2014; Billett, 2014). This condition is signaled by changing educational paradigms, technological advancements, and shifting demands of the labor market (Chakroun, 2023; Levesque, 2018).

Unfortunately, the stereotypes of vocational institutions being the second choice compared to their academic counterparts (see Van de Weerd, 2022) may potentially influence the identity of educators in vocational institutions, including English lecturers at the tertiary level – which become the focus of this research. This is because the teacher's identity is closely connected to the context in which the educator is assigned. The culture of educational institutions, including how success is defined, and the ideology and pedagogy of these institutions affect educators who work in them (Buchanan, 2015). In addition, the process of forming teacher identity is also influenced by socioeconomic backgrounds and various social discourses about teachers and the teaching profession (Gu & Benson, 2014).

For English educators teaching in vocational institutions, this challenge is even more real because these educators are expected to teach students to learn English in a specific context (Pennington, 2015). Instead of teaching English for General Purposes, language educators in vocational education are expected to be able to teach language in a narrower context – English for Specific Purposes or ESP which is closely related to the graduate profile of the students. This becomes a unique challenge for English lecturers who are required to learn more to get to know students' fields of knowledge in more depth. English lecturers in vocational education are also required to educate students who tend to need more assistance compared to students who are specifically majoring in English (see Pennington, 2015).

Therefore, to complete the research gap and add to the limited literature on teacher identity, this qualitative research intends to investigate three matters, namely (1) how vocational English lecturers define their identities related to the six domains (self-image, motivation, commitment, self-efficacy, task perception, job satisfaction) of teacher identity; (2) what causes the vocational English lecturers to define their identity and (3) what advantages of knowing the teachers' identity regarding the challenges that the vocational English lecturers face in their professional life. It is hoped that this research will be able to provide new and comprehensive insights into how a vocational lecturer sees himself as the vanguard of vocational education at the tertiary level and can ultimately produce suggestions on how to advance vocational education in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Teacher Identity and Its Six Domains

Teacher identity is dynamic and not fixed – it continues to change and develop over time throughout the teaching career. The past, present, and how a teacher sees the future will also greatly influence how a teacher sees himself in the profession (Lee & Schallert, 2016). Past experiences, for example, biographies and values they believe in (Beijaard et al., 2004) or even experiences long before joining teacher education programs, such as their families, important people in their lives, observations made while still students (Sugrue, 1997), are some essential factors which greatly influence their identity. Conversely, future identity or how a teacher imagines their identity in the future also provides information about a person's current self about his progress towards achieving it (see Hamman et al., 2013). Furthermore, the present identity is greatly determined by the current professional context, especially how the current school or institutional policy, professional individual collaboration, and intercultural relationships are taking place (Rushton & Reiss, 2019).

Examining a great deal of studies conducted on the topic of teacher identity, Hanna et al. (2019) have provided six domains of teacher identity to cater to the complexity of its dimensions. These six domains may become the basis for understanding the complexity of teacher identity and become a benchmark in a broad perspective (Hanna et al. 2019). Each of the six domains is explained as follows:

1. Self-Image

The first domain of teacher identity is self-image. It answers the question of “how and in what way do individuals view and feel as teachers?” (Hanna et al., 2019, p. 20). To put it simple, this domain deals with the question of what kind of a teacher you are. A teacher’s self-image is based on his or her perception but is also influenced by how other people think of him or her (Kelchtermans, 2009). As further elaborated by Sutherland et al., (2010), self-image was first developed individually but then as he or she starts the engagement in the professional workplace, his or her self-image is refined and becomes a whole.

2. Motivation

Motivation is the reason someone wants to be or to become a teacher. It is the second domain of teacher identity (Hanna et al., 2019). A lot of aspects influence one’s motivation to enter the teaching profession, ranging from extrinsic factors - such as competitive salary, great students, favorable working atmosphere, good education-related policies, and decent status, to the ones that are more intrinsic and altruistic. Some studies, such as one conducted by Wang & Zhang (2021) have found that it is often the extrinsic factors that encourage someone to join the teaching profession.

3. Commitment

The next domain of teacher identity is dealing with commitment. It explores someone's dedication to becoming a teacher (Hanna et al., 2019). Day et al., (2005) suggested that commitment is better understood as an interconnected phenomenon at the center of a ‘nest’ in which it is set up as the core; commitment relatively becomes permanent values based upon personal beliefs, images of self-role, and identity which are subject to challenge by a change which is socio-politically constructed. A teacher's commitment to stay in the teaching profession is affected by many factors. Skinner et al., (2021) highlighted bureaucratic changes, such as heavier workload and accountability put on teachers’ shoulders, as well as curriculum changes, may negatively affect teachers’ commitment. These changes, if not implemented carefully, may erode teachers’ well-being, and increase their work-related stress.

4. Self-Efficacy

First introduced by Bandura (1977), self-efficacy refers to one’s conviction of one's capability to carry out a certain task successfully. Concerning teacher identity, therefore, self-efficacy refers to teachers’ belief in whether they can perform their day-to-day teaching duties. Teachers’ self-efficacy has a strong relation to their behavior as teachers. If the teachers have high self-efficacy, it is most likely that they will repeat the behavior that yields positive results and, therefore, can be used as a job performance predictor (Afshar & Moradifar, 2020). Furthermore, teachers’ self-efficacy can also be used as a basis for

estimating teachers' resilience to circumstances changes in their teaching profession (Ballantyne & Retell, 2020). Having high self-efficacy is considered an essential characteristic of a teacher (Settlage et al., 2009).

5. Task Perception

Engelbertink et al., (2020) explain that task perception implies what a teacher considers as their tasks and duties. It also deals with the teachers' belief about what good teaching is (cf. Hermans et al., 2008). Analyzing the data collected from 145 teachers and educators, it is found that there are two kinds of task perception related to being a teacher: transmitting knowledge and facilitating (Richter et al., 2021).

6. Job-Satisfaction

The last domain, job satisfaction, refers to "how teachers feel about the school or institution they work for" (Hanna et al., 2019, p. 21). Atmaca et al., (2020) highlight that teachers' job satisfaction is influenced by both internal – such as making others' lives better and a sense of belonging – and external factors – such as decent salary, great status, and received support from the school, as well as great leadership. Whether or not teachers are satisfied with their job can be indicators of burnout, and therefore, inform the intervention strategies to decrease such burnout (Lu et al., 2022).

These six domains of teacher identity manifest three aspects that belong to human interests, namely technical, practical, and critical (Habermas, 1972; Rensijing & Hongbiao, 2023). These interests can reflect the multifaceted nature of being a teacher, making them appear 'human' while also being 'professionals' at the same time. Ultimately, the six domains can be used to depict teacher identity, both the human aspects and how they function professionally.

B. Teaching in Vocational Institutions

Literature has documented that there are still many who underestimate vocational education. In the Netherlands, for example, vocational education is seen as less prestigious and its students are less intelligent and difficult to manage (Van de Weerd, 2022). In the context of this study, in Indonesia, vocational education is also often the number two choice. Even though the government has boosted and promoted vocational education, there are still many people who do not realize that academic and vocational education are as good.

This stereotype may stem from several problems vocational students experience during their studies, including in learning the English language. Bal (2022) reported that vocational students generally have insufficient background knowledge of the target language, limited motivation, indifference to English, as well as inferior feeling, and low self-esteem. Similarly, students may have already lost confidence in learning English and, as a result, become passive or, worse, learning with resistance (Zhang, 2014). Furthermore, research has generally shown that vocational students tend to have limited self-learning abilities and initiative to learn English (Niu, 2021).

This problem is made worse by the fact that English learned in vocational institutions is not General English. Rather, it is English for Specific Purpose – i.e. with more emphasis on "professionalization, practicability and specialization" (Sincer, 2017, p. 39). This kind of English, therefore, entails more specific vocabulary and, most probably, styles and world structure depending on students' majors. The teachers in vocational institutions, therefore, need to teach

English components and special terms used in the area being studied (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020; Natsir et al., 2022) as well as integrating education and the workplace (see Fejes & Köpsén, 2014; Vähäsantanen & Hämäläinen, 2018). Therefore, as the real world and industry are constantly changing, it is expected that vocational educators need to be up to date on the subject they teach (Andersson & Köpsén, 2015; Antera, 2022).

Within this context and strong demands, teaching English in a non-English department, including in vocational institutions, will influence their professional identity as teachers (see Buchanan, 2015) presumably negatively (see Li & Xie, 2022). Research has highlighted that while teacher identity first stems from previous experiences, it is then negotiated through social context work demands, and interactions with other people (Köpsén, 2014). This includes vocational teachers whose process of identity negotiation happens in the workplace (Vähäsantanen & Hämäläinen, 2018). Therefore, it is safe to say that an unfavorable work environment could have a detrimental impact on their professional identity.

METHOD

A. Type of Research

As this research is to examine how vocational English lecturers define their identity with the six domains of teacher identity and what causes them to define their identity in this way, qualitative exploratory research (see Ary et al., 2010) was chosen with participants being English lecturers in the Vocational Education Program in Indonesia at the tertiary level. Qualitative methods are indeed widely used to investigate the topic of teacher identity (Hanna et al., 2019) because they can provide a complete and comprehensive picture of the topic under study.

B. Research Subjects

The research participants in this case were three lecturers in the field of English who were working at higher education institutions that provide vocational education. They come from different private universities which have vocational programs, in Surabaya. The criteria for selecting participants using the purposive sampling method (see Emmel, 2013) are grounded in the following considerations: teaching English courses in vocational education programs in Indonesia, being quite experienced which is proven by having taught for at least twenty years, and voluntarily willing to participate in this study. All participants were given a pseudonym (see Table 1).

Table 1:
Research Participants

No	Participant's Name (Pseudonyms)	Years of Teaching
1	Andrew	21 years
2	Bobby	33 years
3	Christine	33 years

Previously, ten lecturers were considered to fit the criteria. Then, the researchers narrowed down the number to three by implementing the following procedure, based on the purposive sampling method (Emmel, 2013).

1. Identifying and Recruiting Participants:

The researchers explored and identified ten potential participants meeting the criteria through their professional networks, institutions and organizations, and referrals from other colleagues. These ten lecturers were contacted and provided with information about the study.

2. Screening and Selection:

The researchers conducted initial interviews with those ten potential participants to collect more detailed information about their teaching experiences, methods, approaches, and especially, willingness to participate in the study. Based on this screening process, three participants were selected.

The number of research participants was only three because of the saturation principle. By reviewing the data collection from the three participants, it was found that the data had been saturated. The information from the three participants had already been repeated and gathering more data no longer yielded new insights or additional information about the research question (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, the three participants were considered to be sufficient to draw research information since no more additional themes and categories emerged from data, and all relevant categories and sub-categories about the six domains of teachers' identity had been identified and described (Daher, 2023).

The collection of research data was carried out through the distribution of open-ended questionnaires and interviews with all participants according to predetermined criteria. In an open-ended questionnaire, participants were asked to tell their background and their brief experience teaching English as a vocational lecturer. The questionnaires were made considering the construct validity, ensuring that the questionnaire is grounded in a strong theoretical framework that supports the research questions and objectives (Bryman, 2016). To support the reliability, the questionnaires had also been triangulated with an interview stage with the research participants (Bryman, 2016; Daher, 2023).

The data from the open-ended questionnaire was then used as the basis of the interview stage where the participants were asked to elaborate on their related experiences regarding the six domains of teacher identity, namely: self-image, motivation, commitment, self-efficacy, task perception, and job satisfaction. The data that has been collected is then processed using three stages of coding: open, axial, and selective coding (see Ary et al., 2010) and analyzed inductively. The themes that emerge are then presented in a comprehensive and structured qualitative description. Next, the research results are interpreted and used to draw valid and clear conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Analysis of the open-ended questionnaire data yields an encouraging initial result about their teacher identity – where all participants gave a positive perception of the teaching in the vocational program, with a rating score above six for each and eight on average on a scale of 1-10. These participants came into teaching professions for different reasons such as being offered by someone or an institution and because of a passion for teaching in technical institutions, which involves a lot of practices and application as well as connections to industries and

businesses. Some positive experiences related to teaching in vocational programs were also shared by the participants, ranging from helping students to get practical knowledge and skills applicable to the workplace to positive experiences of successfully teaching students.

However, there were some challenges faced by the participants during their careers as vocational lecturers. The challenges range from dealing with low achiever student inputs to the graduate requirements from industry. These participants hope that the gaps between the ‘demands’ and ‘supplies’ will be minimized, and the students eventually can meet the needs of the industries and later even contribute to the advancement of the business.

The following sub-sections discuss their identities more deeply – each will report the findings of each research question, respectively. The first sub-section will discuss how the lecturers of English in the vocational program define their teachers’ identity in relation to the six domains proposed by Hanna et al., (2019). The second sub-section taps more into the reasons that underlie such identities. The following sub-section discusses what the result of the present research brings to help fill the research gap and the takeaways it contributes to the existing literature.

A. Vocational Teachers’ Identities Based on the Six Domains

The qualitative analysis from the interviews conducted with all the participants revealed different yet similar identities across the six domains of teacher identity, namely self-image, motivation, commitment, self-efficacy, task perception, and job satisfaction. The identities mentioned were generally encouraging. Table 2 shows the result in a big picture based on the participants’ responses.

**Table 2:
The Big Picture of the Six Domains**

No	Domain	Key Points of Participants’ Identities
1	self-image	motivator, mind-changer, responsible, disciplined, committed
2	motivation	passion, economics factor/financial factor
3	commitment	committed, proven in creative work, optimal performance, and building a good rapport with students and institution
4	self-efficacy	good self-efficacy, proven in: the ability to cope with challenge, willingness to open rapport with the students
5	task perception	making learning fun, staying humble and passionate, being a facilitator, and understanding students’ needs
6	job satisfaction	good level of job satisfaction, proven in: work acknowledgment, work environment, and students’ progress

1. Self-image

In the first domain, self-image, the participants mentioned various positive traits they use to describe themselves as teachers. Kelchtermans (2009) has highlighted that self-perception is both the way teachers typify themselves as teachers and the way others view them.

Therefore, this image not only is based on self-perception but also from a greater scope, on what others perceive the teachers (e.g. comments from pupils, parents, colleagues, principals, etc.). In this research, the participants consider themselves as having many positive self-images as teachers.

Andrew, a case in point, mentioned that “[he is] called to maintain the students’ motivation, keeping the students’ motivation optimal from the beginning of the study to the end”. He also perceived himself as a mind changer. Based on the regular feedback questionnaire given to the students at the end of the semester, Andrew could say that his students agreed that they were motivated and inspired after the meetings with him. Bobby, on the other hand, felt that he had been regarded “as a father or a parent by the students, probably because of [his] age.” He had also been sure that he had served as a servant leader in his institution and among his students and colleagues. For instance, it did not matter to him if he had to look for his students to settle some academic matters with the students as Bobby had also taken the role of an academic advisor for quite a long time. In addition, as he realized that most students in the vocational programs had relatively lower academic capability than their fellow students in the academic programs, he felt that he had been called to improve the way the students judged themselves. Finally, Christine felt somewhat different from the other two participants. She thought that during the education period of the students, her self-image in the students’ eyes would be different from her actual self-image. She was aware that the students perceived her as being “disciplined and strict in applying rules” and she believed that “a teacher can be adaptive, yet there had to be a standard to establish.”

2. Job Motivation

The result of the present study shows different kinds of motivation for the participants to enter the teaching profession. Job motivation refers to the motives that make people choose to become a teacher, to stay in teaching, or to give it up for another career (Kelchtermans, 2009). In return, the dynamics of motivation give more information about what drives the teachers when they first enter the teaching profession up to the current level of teachers’ motivation. In the present research, passion and economics or financial factors are the dominant motivational factors for the participants.

For Andrew, his initial motivation to join the profession was “the passion to teach”. As he went through his teaching career, Andrew shared that his motivation had improved in recent times because of the institution’s acknowledgment of his work. He perceived that the institution had acknowledged his work and rewarded him sufficiently. As a result, it was easier for him to keep being motivated. Similarly, Christine shared that her motivation for teaching was “a product of successful feeling in teaching after being able to improve a student’s level in learning and capability”. She also mentioned that experiences in successful teaching had improved her teaching motivation. A little different case was shared by Bobby. In the first place, “it was the financial condition” that made him dive into the teaching profession. However, as he spent more time teaching, the spiritual satisfaction gained by teaching the incapable students became central. This kind of experience made Bobby feel satisfied more than anything, even the financial reward. Thus, in the end, his motivation to teach had grown to something more valuable than just financial reward.

3. Commitment

Regarding the third domain of teacher identity, the participants indicate several points that encourage them to commit to the teaching profession. From the literature, teaching commitment itself has been defined as a degree of psychological attachment to the teaching profession (Rots et al., 2007). This research found out that all the participants have been committed to their teaching profession and all its consequences.

As for commitment, Andrew ensured that he was highly committed to his teaching profession in the past years. His commitment was manifested in various ways, such as working creatively, always looking for new ways to motivate, and putting as many positive aspects as possible in his students' mindset. As for Bobby, he fulfilled his commitment by his willingness to adapt to any teaching environment, even the hardest ones. He said that his commitment had driven him to *"do [his] best in any teaching situation, including building good rapport [his] students and my institutions as well."* In the same light, Christine had a motto that committing equals to *"being responsible in any possible way as a teacher"*. It is then manifested in the teaching performance such as being disciplined in time and sticking to the life calling as a teacher.

4. Self-Efficacy

Related to self-efficacy, the teacher's judgment of his or her capabilities to produce expected outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult (Armor et al., 1976; Bandura, 1977; Tscannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), the present research found that all participants reported having adequate self-efficacy. In addition, they expressed their commitment to continually enhancing their self-efficacy through various ways. When challenges come their way and interfere with their self-efficacy, the participants agreed that the ability to cope with challenges is based on willingness to open rapport and connections with the learners.

For instance, to maintain or even improve his self-efficacy, Andrew stated that he often *"joined workshops, seminars, and international conferences"*. By doing these and continuing to *"building rapport first with [the students], profiling their background [and] their initial state [before learning]"*, he hoped that he could always find better ways to help his non-English department students who generally struggled and *"felt inferior because of their English ability."* On the same page, Bobby also shared that because the challenges to his self-efficacy stemmed from the tendency of *"the non-English department students who learn English for administrative purposes, only to pass the semester,"* he decided to upgrade himself by *"joining international conferences and seminars, [and he] wrote articles and book chapters"* to actively seeking improved methods to *"encourage [the students], making them believe they can do it."* Finally, Christine also shared that she often shared that her self-efficacy was often challenged by the fact that her students often *"felt unconfident."* Therefore, she also tried to keep *"finding out new things by sharing and having conversations with [her] colleagues and joining workshops and seminars."* When necessary, Christine was also *"willing to give private lessons, for free, for the students who need help."*

5. Task Perception

Related to task perception, the fifth domain of teacher identity, the participants mentioned their definitions of what a good teacher should do. Task perception, indeed, reflects on a

teacher's answer to the question "What must I do to be a proper teacher?" Moreover, this domain also refers to the teacher's idea of what constitutes his/her professional program, his or her tasks and duties to do a good job (Kelchtermans, 2009). In general, the participants perceived different yet similar duties of a good teacher.

Andrew said that a good teacher must be willing to do whatever it takes to make the learning process take place. He stated that an educator "*even sometimes has to be willing to perform stand-up comedy when necessary.*" For Bobby, it is more on the self-traits of the teacher. He described that a good teacher should be humble yet passionate about making the students learn new things, or, in his words, "*a teacher is a facilitator: they facilitate learning. However, learning still appears from the learners' self-awareness.*" Christine, on the other side, mentioned a different definition of what a good teacher is. She puts the attention more to how a 'good' teacher understands the needs of the students, trying their best to fulfill these needs, not their wants. She particularly emphasized that "*a teacher must make a student able to do whatever necessary which they could not do before they meet us.*"

6. Job Satisfaction

In the last domain, job satisfaction, the present study revealed that the participants generally were satisfied with their work acknowledgment, work environment, and their students' progress. Job satisfaction, how teachers feel about the school or institution they work for, can be an indicator of their dedication to survive and thrive in the teaching profession. This domain has been measured based on teachers' relationship satisfaction, such as relationship with their co-workers, and received support and autonomy, in addition to teachers' satisfaction with their salary and fringe benefits.

What makes Andrew satisfied with her profession is the fact that "*the institutions had rewarded [him] and acknowledged [him] so well*" for his achievements as a lecturer. For Bobby, it is not the "*money of the salary*" that has been a contributing factor to job satisfaction. Rather, it is "*his call as a teacher.*" For Christine, it is the ample "*appreciation coming from her colleagues and her teaching environment*" that made her quite satisfied with her work, as well as the work environment.

Although the participants' job satisfaction was quite high, the participants also mentioned some improvements that could be made to improve their satisfaction level. Andrew, for instance, suggested continuous improvement of the teaching infrastructures like the building and the internet service. For Bobby, it is suggested that the institutions can accommodate "*bottom-up policy making*". Christine, on the other hand, was hoping that the vocational institutions could be more recognized than before. Society's acknowledgment of vocational education would affect the appreciation of vocational teachers and educators, which in turn would give the lecturers more job satisfaction.

The previous elaboration has covered the participants' professional identities across the six domains proposed by Hanna et al., (2019). In particular, it has been pointed out that the participants reported generally positive identities in all domains although they differ from one participant to the others. The following section will delve into the reasons underlying such identities.

B. The Reasons

Teacher identities emerge from one's experiences which then are contested and negotiated within the teaching context (Köpsén, 2014). Table 3 summarizes the underlying reasons for the identities discussed in the previous subsection.

For the first domain, self-image, all participants agreed their identities stem from the fact that being a lecturer, or a teacher, is a life call. In addition, each participant pointed out that the individual's personality would also reflect how the teacher or lecturer regards the teaching profession. To mention an example, Andrew perceived himself as a “*student's mind changer and a motivational lecturer because [he] believed that [he was] called in life for those roles*”.

Table 3:
Underlying Reasons for the Identities

No	Domain	Key Points of Participants' Reasons
1	self-image	a life call, one's personality
2	motivation	passion, personality, and personal life principles
3	commitment	self-awareness of the profession and institutional acknowledgment
4	self-efficacy	one's personality
5	task perception	willingness to be in the learners' shoes
6	job satisfaction	the outcome and feedback from the environment and the learners

The second domain, motivation, is essentially based on the lecturer's passion, personality, and personal life principles. This is still in line with the underlying reasons for the first domain. For example, Bobby had perceived job motivation as the “*spiritual satisfaction [as he] gained by teaching the incapable students and resulting in their improved capability*”. Based on this principle, Bobby felt satisfied more than anything after he could empower a student to reach his or her goal in education. His kind of success kept him motivated, even more than the financial reward.

For the third domain, commitment, all participants agreed that commitment was based on both self-awareness of the profession as well as institutional acknowledgment. They agreed on how a lecturer realized why he or she had become a lecturer and the responsibility that had been attached to it. The obvious example is from what Christine said regarding commitment. She always “*comes early or on time for teaching because [she] feels that being on time for [her] class is the manifestation of being responsible to the profession as a lecturer*”.

The response regarding the fourth domain, self-efficacy, generally originated from the participants' personalities. All the participants were confident enough that they had been doing well in their professions. They had been finding ways to handle all the challenges and complications appearing in their professions. One obvious factor for their self-efficacy was that they regularly upgrade their professional capacity by joining conferences, sharing experiences with colleagues, and writing academic journal articles, as well as updating their skills in technology for teaching.

The fifth domain, task perception, generally emerged from the willingness to be in the learners' shoes. All the participants stated that they were willing to do anything to profile and register their students' needs in learning, and then tried their best to fulfill those needs. A lecturer

or teacher needs to do whatever it takes to make the students able to proceed in their learning, even to perform a *stand-up comedy*, as Andrew said.

The last domain, job satisfaction, was closely related to the outcome and feedback of what the participants had done from the environment and the learners. All participants testified that they were satisfied enough if they could see progress in their students' learning and when they received positive feedback on their teaching performance. Moreover, the participants also highlighted that when they felt supported by the institutions in terms of facilities, infrastructure, personal rewards, bottom-up policy, and acknowledgments, their level of job satisfaction would likely increase.

C. Discussion

The objectives of the present study are twofold, i.e. describing how English lecturers define their identities related to the six domains of teacher identity as well as identifying the reasons for such identities. The analysis of the qualitative data from the open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews in the previous sub-sections has shown that all the lecturers reported various identities with the six domains, which may stem from various reasons. From the findings, three things can be discussed.

First, the findings have shown that the participants generally have reported strong and positive professional identities as English lecturers in a vocational institution across six domains. They mentioned many positive traits they adopted as a part of their professional identity. This result is in line with what Vähäsantanen & Hämäläinen (2018) highlighted in their research, that when teachers were able to find a harmonious relationship between professional interest and teaching as well as receiving support for their professional development as a teacher, they can show their commitment to the teaching profession. The present finding is satisfactory despite the common challenges any educators may face when teaching in a vocational institution, including the demand to master teaching skills and the vocational subject (Fejes & Köpsén, 2014) as well as the negative stereotypes associated with vocational education (van de Weerd, 2022).

Second, various reasons affect the generally favorable vocational English lecturers' professional identity, ranging from personal and contextual factors which fall across all six domains. The analysis of the qualitative data showed that the participants mentioned a variety of personal reasons for the development of their professional English lecturers' identity, such as life calls, personal principles, and passion. Moreover, the present research also shows that contextual reasons also contribute to their development of professional identities, such as institutional support and acknowledgment, financial reasons, the outcome, and feedback from the environment and the learners. This finding resonates well with previous literature that has been documented. Köpsén (2014) for instance, highlighted that professional teacher identity, in this case, professional English lecturers' identity, indeed initially comes from the individual experience, which is then negotiated in the teaching context. Similarly, Lin et al., (2023) and Sang (2020) also argues that rather than being merely formed by individual minds, professional identity is also a result of progressive interaction between person and context, therefore, helping the participants to negotiate and develop their own unique identities as English lecturers. In this research, even when the participants are working in arguably similar places, in a vocational institution, and even teaching similar subjects, their professional identity varies. Both their personal and contextual factors that might slightly differ from one another, such as the institutional acknowledgment, salary, or working hours, may have an impact on how a professional identity is constructed, leading to a certain profile of that identity.

Third, the challenges to the participants' professional identity as vocational English lecturers usually stem from non-favorable students' profiles. This stereotype might have appeared from several problems vocational students may experience during their studies, especially in terms of learning the English language. In this research, the participants reported various challenges related to their students' profiles and how they eventually coped with these challenges. These challenges range from generally low academic ability, and thus feeling inferior compared to their counterparts, to low enthusiasm to learn the English language.

This finding is in the same light as the previous research which found out that these students typically lack motivation, have little prior understanding of the target language, are uninterested in English, feel inferior and low in self-worth, and have low levels of initiative and self-learning skills when learning English (Bal, 2022; Niu, 2021; see Vähäsantanen & Hämäläinen, 2018). Identically, these students may have already lost confidence in learning English and, as a result, being passive or, worse, learning with resistance (Zhang, 2014). This condition implies a huge challenge for vocational educators, including English lecturers in vocational institutions. The teachers were put in a position where they could not adequately concentrate on teaching vocational subjects. Teachers were forced to impart knowledge and abilities that pupils ought to have mastered at their comprehensive school (Vähäsantanen & Hämäläinen, 2018).

One possible thing vocational English lecturers could do to bridge the gap created by the students' lack of English competence and subject interest is to create a meaningful and supportive relationship between the students and the lecturers. Rustipa (2018) showed how the at-risk student's perception of a teacher's affective qualities can affect their learning outcome. Because of their teacher's positive affective traits, at-risk students can effectively complete the learning objective. They believe their teacher fosters an atmosphere of trust and safety where they feel comfortable sharing their struggles. This condition has shown that teachers' identity impacts teacher-student relationships and student engagement. Lecturers with a strong sense of identity are better prepared to create a positive and constructive learning atmosphere where students feel valued, motivated, and supported in their academic journey (Guo et al., 2023; Zhou, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The present study has elaborated on the professional identity of English lecturers working in vocational institutions as well as the underlying reasons for such identities. In brief, this research has pointed out various positive identities across all six domains of teacher identity. These various identities emerged from the lecturers' reasons, which are then contested and negotiated through their teaching context. Despite the encouraging findings, some challenges are still faced by vocational English lecturers, especially in dealing with the generally unfavorable students' profile, such as limited academic prowess leading to a sense of inferiority, coupled with a lack of motivation to engage in the English learning process. To minimize the challenges, the lecturers should establish a meaningful and supportive connection between the students and the lecturers to overcome the gap resulting from students' insufficient English proficiency and lack of interest in the subject.

On a side note, there is a caveat that should be noted within the framework of this research study. The participants of the study are lecturers who have been teaching for a long period, that is more than 20 years into their teaching career. This may imply that the participants are

committed lecturers who have a strong professional identity. Therefore, future researchers should pursue other studies involving participants from various levels, i.e. novice lecturers to seniors to provide a holistic picture of vocational English lecturers.

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