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# Narratives of Indonesian pre-service English teachers' agency in an international teaching practicum

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**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose** — This study examines teacher agency among pre-service English teachers participating in an International Teaching Practicum (ITP), an area that remains underexplored despite extensive research on teacher agency in teacher education.

**Design/methodology/approach** — The study focuses on two participants: one who completed an ITP program in Vietnam and another in the Philippines. Data were collected through a series of semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis.

**Findings** — The findings reveal that the participants' teacher agency evolved through their experiences within different educational and sociocultural contexts. Several factors influenced this transformation, including sociocultural differences, teaching challenges, and support from other teachers. The participants demonstrated agency by adapting to diverse student backgrounds and implementing culturally relevant teaching strategies. They also addressed teaching challenges through collaboration with colleagues, mentorship, and professional support networks. Assistance from fellow educators provided emotional support, practical guidance, and opportunities for reflective practice, which further strengthened their professional development.

**Originality/value** — This research highlights the dynamic nature of teacher agency in international teaching contexts and provides empirical evidence that may serve as a foundation for further studies on teacher agency in ITP settings.

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## Introduction

Teacher agency examines teachers' ability to actively guide their processes, certainties and knowledge in teaching, professional development (Nezhad & Stolz, 2025), and school reform

(Imants & Van der Wal, 2020), and provides opportunities for them to make decisions and take actions that affect their teaching practices and learning environments (E, 2022; Molla & Nolan, 2020). A study by Wang and Li (2019) investigated the international teaching practicum experiences of Chinese pre-service teachers in the United States. The study discovered that navigating agency as a teacher is something that has to be understandable and considerable as challenges for pre-service teachers have to overcome.

A study conducted by Kim and Lee (2018) investigated the experiences of Korean pre-service teachers in the United States during their international teaching practicum in a different study. According to Kim and Lee (2018), pre-service teachers had difficulties controlling classroom behavior, adjusting to a new environment, and teaching in a foreign language. To illustrate, contemporary research, Priestley et al. (2012) suggests that teachers who have substantial experience in alternative professions may demonstrate a wider range of strategies when faced with the challenges and uncertainties inherent in their day-to-day teaching responsibilities. In this regard, providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to gain international teaching experience is one strategy to improve teacher agency standards (Flores, 2023; Wang et al., 2021).

According to Priestley et al. (2012) in essence, agency is not a possession but an action a descriptor of how individuals engage with temporal-relational contexts for action, rather than an inherent quality of the individuals themselves. This perspective on agency allows us to comprehend the human capacity for reflexivity and creativity (Kusters et al., 2025), enabling actions that challenge societal norms while also recognizing the limitations imposed by social and material surroundings on individual capabilities (Remillard et al., 2026). Pre-service teachers can have the opportunity to teach in foreign schools through an international teaching practicum program (Rodríguez-Gómez et al., 2026). The program's objectives are to improve the language proficiency, cultural awareness, and teaching abilities of pre-service teachers. Additionally, another study overtaken by Lestari et al., (2022) have explored the extent to which teachers develop a sense of agency and how this agency is visible in their decision-making processes. These studies may focus on the impact of personal and contextual factors on teachers' agency, such as beliefs, confidence, pedagogical competence, professional qualifications, teaching experience, leadership in the school or institution, education policy, collaboration with colleagues and other institutions.

In this context, teacher agency is considered important to facilitate student learning, professional development (Badal, 2025) and school development (Erss, 2024). However, more research is needed to understand the factors that support and hinder teacher agency in helping students overcome their learning difficulties in the context of higher education in Indonesia. In this issue, this study has found a problem where pre-service teachers who did an International Teaching Practicum have the experience of taking and doing something that arises when a teacher's capacity to make their own decisions and take appropriate actions to improve individual professional development and student learning (Heinz, 2024).

The present study additionally highlighted a concern with pre-service teachers' lack of autonomy and opportunity for decision-making during their participation in an international teaching practicum. These educators were frequently forced to adhere to stringent policies and procedures established by their host schools (Anindya & Triyoga, 2025), which gave them little freedom to decide for themselves and take the necessary steps to advance both their own professional development and the education of their students (Sari et al., 2022). Pre-

service teachers may find this lack of autonomy especially difficult as it may impede their capacity to gain the knowledge (Schwaller & Çakır, 2025) and self-assurance needed to become successful teachers (Lander et al., 2025).

Pre-service teachers who took part in an international teaching practicum encountered a number of difficulties. These difficulties include the absence of autonomy and opportunity for decision-making, the requirement for better support and direction (Sharma & Mullick, 2025), and the possibility of communication problems and cultural misunderstandings (Martínez et al., 2026). It is imperative that these issues are resolved if pre-service teachers are to make the most of their foreign experiences and be equipped to teach effectively in a variety of settings (Phan & Zhu, 2020).

Regarding the previous studies highlighting teacher agency shaped by pre-service teachers, there has been limited research regarding pre-service teachers' agency in the context of overseas teaching practice, especially in Indonesia. To fill this gap, the purpose of this study is to investigate the agency narratives of pre-service English teachers from Indonesia during international teaching practice. Priestley, Biesta and Robinson's (2015) research on teacher agency found that they investigated teacher agency using an ecological approach which could support the finding that pre-service teachers have various teacher agencies within themselves.

This study aims to describe how two Indonesian pre-service English teachers exercise their teacher agency during their international teaching practicum in the "SEA-Teacher" program. This study describes the development of the participants' teaching agency especially related to their professional growth, the ability to teach, and the learning of their students. It would be of considerable interest to investigate how these changing factors shaped their teaching practices and decision-making processes during the international teaching experience. This could provide valuable insights into the challenges they faced and how they overcame them.

As it wraps up consequently, this study intends to provide and use an overview of pre-service English teacher during international teaching practice. This research is particularly crucial as it has the potential to improve the standard of teacher preparation in Indonesia and provide insights into what can be accomplished for teacher education programs. This research also adds to the knowledge of teacher agency in international teaching practice, which can help improve a number of difficulties faced by pre-service teachers, which include the absence of autonomy and opportunities for decision-making both in the classroom and in the school environment, so in this study it may expand the insights of pre-service teachers to take appropriate steps.

## Method

### *Research design*

The design of this study adopts a narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) to explore the experiences of pre-service teachers during their international teaching practicum. Narrative inquiry copes with storytelling and research either by using stories and lived experiences as research data or by employing storytelling as a tool for data analysis (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). By utilizing a narrative approach, this study aims to gather in-depth, qualitative data through

the participants' personal stories and narratives. This methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties and opportunities faced by pre-service teachers in taking their own decisions or initiatives and gives rise to teacher agency in this context.

### *Setting and participants*

This research analyzes the narratives of two participants to provide insight into the complexities and nuances of international teaching practicum experiences. Both participants were enrolled in an English language education program at a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and had taken part in an ITP program that provided practical teaching experience in an international environment. The first participant, Aby (pseudonym), is a 20-year-old man from West Java, he has experience as a teacher for approximately 2 years and is active in communicating and participating in various volunteers related to teaching to become a teacher and what is certain is that Aby was chosen to take part in teaching practice at a private school in Cao Lãnh, Vietnam. Aby was chosen based on his experience and ability in teaching and self-development abilities after participating in several selections. The second participant, named Ismail (pseudonym), a 22-year-old man from Aceh, has an experienced background that likes an approach to teaching. Based on his experience in teaching, Ismail was selected to be one of the students selected to carry out teaching practice at a state school in Batac, Philippines. By describing the demographic and contextual specifics of each participant, this research aims to capture their initiatives and emerging backgrounds within the broader framework of research on their narratives and capacity as teachers to make decisions and take appropriate actions that improve individual professional development and student learning. in the context of pre-service education.

### *Data collection*

Data were collected through a series of semi-structured interviews. One hour and a half was spent on the interview, which was done once in both pseudonyms. With the participants' permission, the audio recording of the interview was made. Based on Priestley et al. (2012) theory of "ecological approach."

### *Data analysis and trustworthiness*

In order to gain trustworthiness, by classifying the responses into multiple significant categories, thematic analysis has been used to analyze the collected data. Following numerous, in-depth readings, the researcher made an effort to accurately and completely transcribe the material, describe the information gleaned from the participant interviews, and clarify the information. A technique for discovering, assessing, and summarizing patterns (themes) in data that at least partially organize and explain the data set in robust detail was created by Braun and Clarke (2006). Afterwards, this technique was used to analyses the data obtained. The purpose of thematic analysis is to identify themes, or important or interesting patterns, in the data and then use these themes to explain conclusions or provide details about a particular topic.

Semantic and latent layers of topic are distinguished by Braun and Clarke (2006). Semantic themes suggest taking the participants' meaning at face value and comprehending

nothing more than what they have spoken. In contrast, latent themes go beyond what has been stated to identify or investigate the underlying conceptions, presumptions, and conceptualizations as well as the ideologies that are thought to have contributed to the data's semantic relevance.

According to the level of themes offered by Braun and Clarke (2006), researchers try to provide data that has been analyzed in the opinion level, which then constricts into the latent level. Because of this study, researchers will be able to separate various topics and gather related data into a single, large core group depending on the information gathered. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the processes in this analytical procedure are as follows: (1) familiarization with the data; (2) generation of initial codes; (3) search for themes; (4) review themes; (5) definition of themes; and (6) write-ups.

It is noted by Braun and Clarke (2006) that there are no set standards for defining what constitutes a definitive topic. It is determined by the topic's relevance. There may be crossover between larger, more focused data sets and smaller, equally focused data sets. This will lead to a phase of coding and a stage of topic recognition, which will assist in consolidating the little data into a single, comprehensive area with a narrow focus. In this instance, it was evident from analyzing the codes that certain of them worked together to create a theme. Coding is a useful tool for beginning data organization since it breaks up enormous amounts of data into smaller portions that are meaningful to the study's objectives. The research question that had been established at the outset had to be followed in order to code the data and assign the appropriate initial codes.

Thematic analysis, as conceptualized by Braun & Clarke (2008), presents a powerful methodological framework for systematically collecting and interpreting data in studies centered on teacher agency. This analysis serves as a powerful tool for exploring the qualitative aspects of pre-service teachers' narratives, perspectives and experiences regarding their agency in educational contexts. By closely examining the data, thematic analysis reveals underlying patterns, themes and categories, highlighting the complex interplay of challenges and opportunities faced by pre-service teachers in exercising their agency.

This analytical approach facilitates a deeper understanding of the multiple dimensions that surround teachers' perceptions and experiences. Braun and Clarke's six-stage process illustrates a comprehensive roadmap for conducting thematic analysis. Initially, researchers immerse themselves in making sense of the data, engaging in iterative cycles of review and reflection. Next, they begin the coding process, systematically labeling relevant segments of the data. As themes began to crystallize, the researchers undertook a rigorous process of organization and synthesis, culminating in the delineation of overarching themes. These themes underwent careful examination and refinement, ensuring the coherence and precision of the analytical framework. Finally, the culmination of these efforts is summarized in a comprehensive analysis report, which synthesizes the findings and insights gained during the course of the thematic analysis. Through its iterative and reflexive nature, thematic analysis not only provides a robust methodological framework, but also serves as a conduit for generating nuanced insights into the complex landscape of teacher agency.

## Findings and discussion

### *Reflecting on personal experiences as a teacher and as a student*

The participants, Aby and Ismail, both believe that having personal experience in the realm of teacher agency gives them the capacity to act purposefully and constructively to direct their personal growth which can contribute to the growth of their peers. In this instance, reflecting on personal experiences from attending various micro-teaching classes, tutoring or even co-teaching in a school can be something that can exercise teacher agency for themselves during their time as pre-service teachers in the International Teaching Practicum in SEA-Teacher program. In the same way, they also believe that by exercising their teacher agency in reflecting on their personal experiences as a teacher, they can leverage these life experiences to open up innovations in teaching in the school environment, thus applying life values in the real world. Their own beliefs shape teaching practices that create meaningful relationships with their students.

> "Yes, when I was a teacher in Vietnam, I saw that the students had some similarities in their characteristics with my students whom I taught for 2 years. Then, I **decided** to apply the problem-based learning method, so I was inspired and reflected on my teaching experience. After using the problem-based learning method, I can see the results were excellent, and thank God it worked the results were that the students were more active in answering, and asking a lot of questions, and they thought about thinking critically too." (Aby, ITPer-01, Semi-structured interview, Researcher translation)

Based on the interview excerpt, Aby mentioned that making his own decisions in choosing learning methods because she saw similarities with the class, she had taught for 2 years made him more confident in making decisions because he had experienced such situations. In other words, having experience makes you bolder in making decisions and developing teaching strategies.

The results of reflection from previous experiences made his outcomes work well, where he realized that his students were getting more active in critical thinking. He believes that reflecting on previous experience is a very useful thing and he stated that he believes the agency of reflection to previous experience is something that must be owned by pre-service teachers. In the meantime, Ismail stated that he reflected on his personal experiences as a student.

> "Well from some of the courses I took, including language classroom management and reflective peer microteaching, I was **inspired and reflected** on how I manage students in the classroom. Starting from moving active students to less active groups, I got these tricks from the classroom management class itself, even making sugar cubes using sticky notes that I took from the reflective peer microteaching class yesterday, and the result was that students are more organized and they find it interesting from the way I teach. So, reflecting on the strategies in the course that I have taken, helps to provide insight, especially more to pre-service teachers." (Ismail, ITPer-01, Semi-structured interview, Researcher translation)

The interview data depicts that Ismail stated that having a great interest in modeling or reflecting on the course and the knowledge gained is extremely valuable for further development.

Based on the interview vignettes, they believe that personal experiences in by having teachers who have a lot of experience, the sensitivity of a teacher in making decisions is keener and produces the right results. Therefore, by having a broad stock of knowledge, it is

possible to say and be able to see that the way they inform, the way gives directions, the way makes decisions, and even the way to choose strategies have a more sensitive or faster initiative based on previous experience. Reflecting on teaching experiences as a teacher and students can lead to innovative teaching practices and meaningful relationships with students.

The report on data collection results in reflecting on personal experiences as a teacher and as a student. As Lestari et al. (2022) mentioned that reflecting on personal experiences as a teacher gave more empower to teacher confidence and when face the teaching difficulties. In addition, it confirmed by stated that during communication with other teachers, it received support from senior in the form of advice or suggestions and new ideas dealing with the teaching and learning process including dealing with students' learning problems. This type of seeking and support enabled these teachers to achieve agency within the teaching and learning process.

This finding is significant as a basis to bring out the desire from oneself to make a push by looking to previous experiences that can be seen from Aby as a participant in this study, he said that "*Yes when I was a teacher in Vietnam, I saw similar characteristics in the students with students I had taught for 2 years. Then, I decided to apply a problem-based learning method, because it was inspired and reflected my teaching experience."* Ismail mentioned, "*Well from some of the courses I took, including language classroom management and reflective peer microteaching, I was inspired and reflected on how I manage students in the classroom."* The finding corroborates with Charteris et al. (2025), reporting that using personal experience can enhance self-development as teacher improvement, as well as provide teachers with the capacity to use their initiative in dealing with situations that allow teachers to make their own decisions.

### *Seeking mentoring and guidance*

During the data collection process, Aby and Ismail mentioned that seeking guidance and mentoring from a mentor or someone with more experience can help build emotional support and understanding of students' needs. They mentioned that seeking guidance and mentoring from someone with more experience might boost high confidence when receiving positive feedback and guidance from guidance or mentor teachers. This sub-theme, through an approach to seeking mentoring and guidance, is the code that appears most frequently. Additionally, by reducing typical mistakes that may arise, the agencies requesting mentoring and guidance can boost teaching efficacy while saving time and energy.

> "I **immediately asked and consulted** the lecturer to get direction and guidance from them. In addition, seeking guidance and consultation assistance from the lecturer, gave me more valuable insight, like I **asked** what if I applied this method in the class, and he gave directions such as responses, views, or compatibility. Then from that it certainly makes me get new insights and apply them, according to the conditions and situations in the classroom. The thing is, when I **consulted** my lecturer, I instantly felt right and was really helped in making decisions." (Aby, SMG-01, Semi-structured interview, Researcher translation)

Informed in the interview data, Aby mentioned that seeking mentoring and guidance from lectures could give valuable input and suggestions for future classes. By seeking guidance from lecturers, Aby has higher confidence, as getting personalized advice from lecturers can provide feedback, especially about his performance as a pre-service teacher.

Aby believes that having his desire to get guidance from lecturers is beneficial for pre-service teachers since the lecturers can help him identify his strengths and areas for improvement in his teaching. He also believes that a good lecturer not only provides academic guidance but also provides emotional support and motivation when you face challenges in the learning process. Then, Ismail stated,

> "I explained to the mentor teacher that I was from Indonesia. I explained that there are some things that we never learn. Then, the presence of the mentor teacher helped me to choose a teaching strategy more quickly, since I believe that the teacher has a deeper knowledge of the students, considering that I felt like I was just a new teacher here, it was impossible to get to know the students that quickly, so I **promptly undertake the initiative to ask my mentor**, so he gave me direction on what strategy to use and the strategy gave me good results after I applied it. Therefore, personally asking the mentor teacher to help me provide guidance is one thing that was appropriate for me to do." (Ismail, SMG-01, Semi-structured interview, Researcher translation)

The interview excerpt illustrates that when having the desire and sensitivity to ask for direct guidance from the tutor is something that can respond to the response of an incident quickly, as this will get accurate information and observations that do not take a long time, to speed up and shorten the time to prepare for teaching readiness.

The interview data portray that Aby and Ismail, in the data-collection procedure, emphasized the value of getting guidance and mentoring from people with experience to develop emotional support and comprehend the needs of students. They underlined how encouragement of this kind, particularly in the form of encouraging remarks, increases self-assurance. This theme appears frequently, which suggests that it is significant. Working together with knowledgeable educators also helps to get insightful criticism and recommendations that will help you prepare for the next lessons and steer clear of typical pitfalls. Furthermore, pre-service teachers acquire a responsiveness in dealing with situations that require quick direction and are aware of their next actions when they seek guidance and mentoring.

The findings agree with Goldshaft's (2024) study, stating the results of asking for guidance and mentoring from lecturers or mentor teachers are significant in making decisions, since asking for direction from lecturers or mentor teachers encourages pre-service teachers to improve their self-confidence and find new insights in making decisions. Kim and Choi (2018) also mentioned that the participants believed after observing the teachers, these participants realized that building a trusting and interactive community, emotionally caring for their students, and responding to students' different needs were indeed essential roles they needed to have as teachers.

As Aby said, "*I immediately asked and consulted the lecturers to get direction and guidance from them. In addition, asking for guidance and consultation assistance from lecturers, gave me more valuable insights, such as when I asked what if I applied this method in class, and he gave directions such as responses, views, or compatibility."* In the same case, Ismail said "*I efficiently took the initiative to ask my mentor, so he gave me direction on what strategy to use and the strategy gave me good results after I applied it"*, this proves that seeking guidance and mentoring are something that can make pre-service teachers have a broader view and knowledge so that they have an increased feeling of being more confident in making a decision (Tiainen & Lutovac, 2024).

### *Collaboration with colleagues or communities*

Working together with friends or the community might assist one develop fresh perspectives and knowledge, and it additionally has the potential to assist a pre-service teacher in establishing a positive teaching experience. Working with friends or this community can help build a bridge that will allow students and instructors to raise questions and share ideas about the differences in the cultures of the home and school. Given that they feel and live in a community, Aby and Ismail think that seeking out collaborations for ideas and innovations will greatly enhance our experience. This is for the reason that they exchange resources, such as educational materials, references, and creative ideas. This can enhance the educational process and better prepare aspiring teachers to handle obstacles in the classroom.

> "So, I **did ask** one of my friends whom I trusted and was in the same room, I asked my friend how to implement ice-breaking activities in the classroom, and he explained to me in detail, so it gave me creative ideas too. Even in making lesson plans, I also asked him, such as various views and opinions. As a result, it makes teaching in my class not monotonous and makes my lesson plans more interesting." (Aby, CCC-2, Semi-structured interview, Researcher translation)

The interview excerpt portrays that Aby stated that he did work with his friends as initiated by him as a pre-service teacher, Aby felt to take steps like these to facilitate and support his development as a teacher by enabling them to make decisions design lesson plans, or even innovate in class. This initiated or this acted classified as teacher agency. The urge feeling to seek collaboration with others to expand knowledge and point of view. Moreover, Aby stated that he also collaborated with his friends, as Ismail mentioned,

> "Yes, I get **initiated** to collaborate with my friends even from different universities, so we exchange ideas and share ideas for lesson plans, for ice-breaking, even to the point of exchanging ideas, I ask my friends, what are the suitable teaching methods for my students, and I applied in class alhamdulillah it worked out." (Ismail, CCC-2, Semi-structured interview, Researcher translation)

Informed in the interview vignette, collaboration together with friends or the community can help us gain fresh perspectives and knowledge. It can also contribute to establishing a positive teaching experience for pre-service teachers. In addition, collaborating with friends or the community allows for open discussions about cultural differences between home and school, fostering a bridge of understanding. By exchanging resources and ideas, such as educational materials and creative insights, this study enhances the educational process and better prepares aspiring teachers to handle challenges in the classroom. Furthermore, collaborating with colleagues and communities, like dealing with quiet students or talkative children, and collaborating on media and lesson plans are valuable steps in our journey as pre-service teachers. It showcases a form of teacher agency, empowering us to make decisions that support our development.

Another data collection finding in this study found one's desire to collaborate with friends or certain communities to exchange ideas or opinions that can help in building creativity in the classroom (Bagazi, 2025), and making lesson plans that follow the conditions in the field, as said by Ismail, "*Yes, I took the initiative to collaborate with my friends even from different universities, so we exchange ideas and share ideas for lesson plans".* Here it can be seen that taking the initiative to ask and exchange opinions can add insight from other people's views that can be taken or adapted according to the situation, as said by Aby, "*So I did ask one of my friends who I trusted and was in the same room, I asked my friend how to implement ice-breaking activities in the classroom, and he explained to me in detail, so it gave*

*me creative ideas too".* The findings are in accordance with Li (2025), asserting that collaboration with friends can help to understand different perspectives, thus enhancing creativity and innovation. Therefore, having a willingness to collaborate with friends or the community can build cooperation skills, which can help in organizing tasks, and developing learning strategies (Salsabila, 2024).

### *Resource allocation*

By using the results of resource allocation, pre-service teachers are able to use school facilities to meet the needs of students or the needs of teachers to develop lesson plans, innovations, or ways of teaching in the classroom that will be used even by taking the initiative to get or use school facilities such as student learning areas, e-book, or websites. It is very helpful in terms of introducing the school environment. Moreover, the perspectives of teachers and students in the school provide a way to assess how to implement teaching that is appropriate for students from the school's standpoint, therefore pre-service teachers have an insight into the views of the school or students that are developed more broadly. Aby mentioned that he found something new from looking at the students in the library, and he followed to analysis how the point of view of the school, he mentioned:

> "At that time, I took the **initiative directly** to ask for a guidebook facility from them to make the material, and my mentor teacher gave me a pdf e-book whose material was adopted by them from the Cambridge Curriculum, from which I took it for worksheet activities in class, and also made several other materials from the **pdf e-book**, the result was that the students became familiar with the material I brought and the class was **easier going**." (Ismail, RA-2, Semi-structured interview, Researcher translation)

The interview excerpt shows that during that time, Aby had own initiative to ask for a guidebook or school facilities that he could use to support learning in class, he asked his mentor teacher and was given an e-book that he could take for class exercises, and from this the desired to use school facilities is an agency that pre-service teachers have that helps them in terms of teaching. By borrowing books from the school as a teaching guide, and even looking for material patterns similar to Indonesian stories so that students can get to know them from a different perspective. He believed that in this way, pre-service teachers must have the initiative to take facilities or materials from schools to be more creative and innovative following the school's learning methods in order to adapt better.

> "I **asked** the school for **a book** so that I could get an overview of their lessons, so from the book I was able to make a comparison of stories between legendary stories in the Philippines and legendary stories in Indonesia, and it turned out that there were many similarities too, so my students were happy and they found it interesting with the material I brought." (Aby, RA-2, Semi-structured interview, Researcher translation)

Based on the interview excerpt, by utilizing the outcomes of resource allocation, pre-service teachers can leverage school facilities to cater to the needs of students and teachers, facilitating the development of lesson plans, innovations, and teaching methodologies. Taking the initiative to access and utilize resources such as a book or e-book school can significantly enhance the introduction to the school environment.

Furthermore, understanding the perspectives of both teachers and students within the school setting offers valuable insights for implementing teaching strategies that align with the school's ethos. This insight enables pre-service teachers to better understand the school's

and student's viewpoints, allowing for more comprehensive development. Aby and Ismail both had initiated viewing the guidebook from within school facilities underscoring the importance of actively engaging with school resources and environments to improve teaching practices and student learning experiences.

The findings confirm Urkunova et al. (2025), uncovering that where in-service teachers use and utilize school facilities to get teaching results that follow the school. As Aby said, *"At that time I took the initiative to directly ask for guidebook facilities from them to make materials, and my mentor teacher gave a pdf e-book"*, and so did Ismail who took the initiative to borrow books from the mentor teacher, as he said, *"I asked the school for a book so that I could get an overview of their lessons, so from the book, I could make a comparison of stories between legendary stories in the Philippines and legendary stories in Indonesia."* From this, it can be seen that the desire to use school facilities can clarify the teaching program in the classroom which can make it more focused. As Setyaningsih et al. (2023) mentioned that the problem where the PSTs found in their textbooks, they discovered many objects which are only found in Indonesia, thus creating another problem for them. Finding proper and interesting material for each level also became their problem. In addition, they had to make their own materials and could not fully use the media in the classroom (Ma et al., 2025). Some exercises in the book were too difficult for the students, so they had to adjust them by creating new material.

## Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to showcase the pre-service English teacher on their agency in an international teaching practicum. Specifically, this research aims to explore how two Indonesian pre-service English teachers exercise their teacher agency during their international teaching practicum in the "SEA-Teacher" program. This study promotes that teachers must have the desire to make decisions, which is very important in developing the quality of education that can improve things wisely and effectively. This can help teachers to clarify their competencies as teachers. With the ability to take control of their professional development and decision-making process, teacher agency will depend on a combination of personal, behavioral and environmental determinants and play an important role in ensuring equitable access to English language education for students in developing countries.

Despite the promising result, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations of this study. Firstly, the study design relied on an interview, which may base on real experiences. Secondly, the participants were predominantly late teenage years, with limited experiences and skills that led to a lack of competence in teaching English. Lastly, this study did not assess habitual activities outside of teaching, which could have influenced the outcomes. To further build upon these findings, future research should consider including objective results from observational reports. In addition, it would be beneficial to take more than two participants from pre-service English teachers in the international teaching practicum. Furthermore, drawing on more data from a variety of participants who have different backgrounds could add to broader insight regarding teacher agency.

## Declaration of the use of AI-assisted technologies

The authors of this article declare that no AI-assisted technologies were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

## Credit authorship contribution statement

Nadya Loemongga: Methodology, Investigation, Data collection, Data analysis. Willy Prasetya: Conceptualization, Writing the original draft, Reviewing and editing the manuscript.

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## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare no competing interests that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

## Ethics approval and consent to participate

Formal ethics approval was not obtained for this study. Oral consent to participate was obtained from the participants.

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**Appendix**

*Matrix of Interview Questions Instrument*

| Construct | Conceptual definition | Components | Interview questions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher agency (Priestle et al., 2012) | The concept of teacher agency is the capacity of teachers to shape critically their responses to problematic situations, partly informed by their underlying sense of purpose and beliefs about their professional roles. Teacher agency is also understood in terms of its interplay with the work context and is partly determined by actors' commitment to the goals that are important to them. | 1. Iterational | - Life histories:<br>1. Can you share your experiences in your teaching journey, and how have they shaped your understanding of teacher agency?<br>- Professional histories:<br>2. How do you think your personal and professional backgrounds have influenced your approach to teaching and your interactions with students? |
| | | 2. Practical evaluative | - Cultural (Ideas, values, beliefs, discourse, language)<br>3. Can you describe a specific instance where you had to adapt your teaching practices to accommodate diverse cultural or social backgrounds? How did you ensure that your practical evaluation of the situation took into account the unique needs and perspectives of the students?<br>- Structural: Social structures (relationship, roles, power, trust)<br>4. How do you establish and maintain positive relationships with your students, and how do these relationships impact your sense of agency as a teacher?<br>- Materials (Resources, physical environment)<br>5. How do you ensure that the materials and resources you use are culturally responsive and appropriate for students?<br>6. Can you provide an example of how you have created an inclusive and engaging physical environment within your classroom, and how you have evaluated its impact on student learning and well-being? |
| | | 3. Projective | - Short term<br>7. How do you ensure that your short-term teaching goals align with your long-term objectives as an educator, and how do you evaluate the impact of these goals on your professional growth and student outcomes?<br>- Long term<br>8. Can you provide an example of a long-term educational project or initiative you have been involved in, and how you have assessed the effectiveness of this project in meeting its objectives and contributing to your sense of professional agency? |