

**A NARRATIVE STUDY ON THE
CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL
IDENTITY AMONGST THREE TESOL
TEACHERS: FROM PRE-SERVICE TO NOVICE
TEACHERS**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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by

MARIAH BINTI IBRAHIM

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for the degree of
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
LIST OF APPENDICES	x
ABSTRAK	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background.....	3
1.3 Research Problem	8
1.4 Objectives of the study	10
1.5 Research questions.....	11
1.6 Significance of study	12
1.7 Limitations of study.....	15
1.8 Operational definition of key terms.....	15
1.9 Conclusion.....	16
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Defining teacher professionalism	17
2.3 Defining teacher identity	22
2.3.1 Wenger's theory of identity.....	23
2.3.1(a) Identity in practice.....	24
2.3.1(b) Modes of belonging.....	27

2.3.1(c) Identification and Negotiability.....	29
2.4 Relevance of Wenger's theory to to teacher education	31
2.5 Teacher professional identity construction.....	34
2.5.1 Teacher identity	35
2.5.2 Negotiating teacher identity.....	39
2.5.3 Struggles with teaher professional identity.....	41
2.5.4 Teacher identity in the classroom	42
2.6 Context for teacher professional identity development	43
2.6.1 Reflection	44
2.6.2 Practicum	45
2.6.2(a) General review on practicum.....	46
2.6.2(b)Review on international practicum	48
2.7 Framing Wenger's theory of identity in this study.....	54
2.8 Conclusion	57
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	58
3.1 Introduction to narrative research	58
3.2 Research design.....	61
3.3 The rationale for using narrative inquiry.....	62
3.4 Sampling.....	64
3.5 Participants.....	65
3.6 Setting and period.....	71
3.7 Data sources and procedures.....	72
3.7.1 Reflection.....	73
3.7.2 Collecting storie s.....	75
3.8 Data analysis.....	76

3.8.1	Holistic analysis of content.....	77
3.8.2	Categorical analysia of content.....	79
3.8.3	Holistic analysis of form	80
3.8.4	Categorical analysia of form.....	80
3.8.5	Summary of data analysis.....	82
3.9	Data Presentation	83
3.10	Ethical issues in narrative inquiry	84
3.10.1	Free and infomed consent	84
3.10.2	Privacy and confidentiality.....	85
3.10.3	Protection from harm.....	85
3.10.4	Providing information and debriefing.....	85
3.11	Reliability and Validity.....	85
3.12	Philosophical assumptions and implication for practice	89
3.13	Role of researcher.....	91
3.14	Conclusion.....	94
CHAPTER 4	DATA ANALYSIS.....	96
4.1	Introduction.....	96
4.2	Research question 1: What challenging issues did the participants encounter during practicum?	96
4.2.1	Management	97
4.2.1(a)	Classroom management.....	97
4.2.1(b)	Authority.....	98
4.2.1(c)	Discipline, punishment and reward.....	100
4.2.1(d)	Time management.....	105
4.2.2	Pedagogical issues.....	107
4.2.2(a)	Syllabus and teaching style.....	107

4.3	Summary of Part A.....	108
4.4	Research question 2: What views of becoming a teacher are held by participants?.....	110
4.4.1	Yasmina.....	110
	4.4.1(a) Metaphors of teaching	111
	4.4.1(b) Views on teaching.....	115
4.4.2	Felicia.....	116
	4.4.2(a) Views on education.....	116
	4.4.2(b) Views on teaching.....	117
4.4.3	Nick	122
	4.4.3(a) Responsibility of teachers and learners.....	123
	4.4.3(b) Against teaching to the test	124
	4.4.3(c) Teacher is not the knowledge-giver.....	125
4.5	Research question 3: What personal professional issues appear prevalent in the construction of teacher identity amongst participants?.....	126
4.5.1	Yasmina.....	126
4.5.2	Felicia.....	143
4.5.3	Nick.....	152
4.6	Revisit with the participants.....	160
4.7	Conclusion.....	166
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....		167
5.1	Introduction.....	167
5.2	Summary of findings.....	167
5.3	Discussion of research findings.....	170
	5.3.1 Challenging issues.....	174
	5.3.2 Views held by the participants.....	177

5.3.3	Construction of teacher professional identity	177
5.4	Lost Opportunity	179
5.5	Implications.....	183
5.5.1	Implication for teacher education	183
5.5.2	Implication for practicum	185
5.5.3	Implication for construction of teacher identity.....	187
5.4.4	Implication for reflective practices	188
5.6	Recommendations	189
5.6.1	Structure of practicum	192
5.6.2	Reflection	192
5.7	Future research	193
5.8	Conclusion	195
	REFERENCES	197
	APPENDICES	

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1.1	Parallels between practice and identity25
Table 3.1	Research design62
Table 3.2	Sample of holistic content analysis.....79
Table 3.3	Sample of categorical content analysis80
Table 4.1	Issues of classroom practice faced by te students98
Table 4.2	Summary of findings for research question 1 110
Table 4.3	Yasmina’s metaphor of people affecting her life as a teacher 114
Table 4.4	Summary of findings for research question 2.....127
Table 4.5	Summary of findings for research question 3.....160

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1 The development of international practicum from 1980s-2000s... ..	54
Figure 1.2 Conceptual Framework.....	56
Figure 3.1 The illustration of how data us anamyzed holistically	83
Figure 3.2 The illustration of how data is analyzed categorically	84
Figure 4.1 Felicia’s poem for her Hiriya Girls	152
Figure 5.1 A suggested model of teacher education programme emphasizing on the construction of teacher professional identity.....	191

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Sample of categorical content analysis

APPENDIX B Sample of categorical form analysis

**SATU KAJIAN NARATIF BERKAITAN KEMENJADIAN IDENTITI
PROFESSIONALISME KEGURUAN DALAM KALANGAN TIGA GURU
TESOL: DARI GURU PELATIH KE GURU BAHARU**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti kemenjadian identiti profesionalisme dalam kalangan tiga guru TESOL sepanjang menjalani praktikum di Malaysia dan seterusnya selama enam minggu di kepulauan Maldives, sebagai peserta projek yang dikendalikan oleh universiti tempatan di mana mereka mendapat pendidikan guru. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk meninjau pengalaman peribadi pelajar guru sewaktu mereka menjalani praktikum di dalam dan luar negara dan juga pengalaman mereka sebagai guru baharu. Peserta kajian ditemui semula setelah lima tahun untuk menceritakan perjalanan mereka sebagai guru baharu. Kaedah yang digunakan untuk kajian berbentuk kualitatif ini adalah secara inkuiri naratif. Oleh yang demikian, data dikumpul melalui naratif peserta yang diperolehi dari penulisan refleksi, temubual, serta nota lapangan penyelidik semasa pemantauan praktikum di dalam dan luar negara. Dapatan menunjukkan peserta penyelidikan menghadapi banyak cabaran dalam kemenjadian guru sepertimana yang mereka bayangkan. Cabaran yang dihadapi termasuklah keperluan untuk akur pada standard yang ditetapkan dan masalah pengurusan bilik darjah seperti menangani pelajar bermasalah dan isu hukuman. Pengalaman yang diperolehi dari praktikum di luar negara memberi manfaat dalam mendapat pendedahan kepada konsep keguruan yang berbeza. Dapatan dari kajian ini memberi implikasi penting kepada pendidikan guru di mana aspek kemenjadian profesionalisme keguruan perlu diberi perhatian sewajarnya

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the construction of professional identity amongst three TESOL teachers from the pre-service period while doing their practicum in Malaysia and a further six weeks in the Maldives as part of their special teacher education project. The objective of this study was to gain insights into the personal experience of the participants as they explored the local and international practicum as pre-service teachers and their journey as novice teachers. The approach used for this qualitative study is through the narrative enquiry. As such, data was collected through the narratives of the participants through their written reflections, interviews, as well as field notes of the researcher during observation both during the local and international practicum. Findings revealed that the participants faced many challenges throughout this period as they struggle to be the teacher they envisioned to be. The challenges ranged from personal issues such as the need to conform, as well as classroom management issues, such as dealing with students' behaviour and punishment. The experience between the local and international practicum proved to be a useful exercise as it gave the participants different views of becoming teacher from the one they are familiar with in the local context. The findings of this study indicated serious implications on teacher education especially in the aspect of teacher identity construction.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The study of teacher identity amongst pre-service teachers has become significant in the field of teacher education as the importance of hearing the voices of the teacher trainees is vital for understanding the early construction of teacher identity leading to positive teacher experience and retention in the teaching profession (Bullough,1997;Danielewicz, 2001; Britzman, 2003; Alsup, 2005).Britzman(1992) points out that roles can be assigned for teachers to function whereas identity must be negotiated. It requires a commitment from the teacher to the enterprise (Britzman, 1991). Danielewicz (2001) claims that to be a teacher one must adopt an identity. A major component of constructing an identity is to have the ability to imagining a different way of being(Wenger, 1998; Danielewicz, 2001). As such, the importance of studying identity has taken over from focusing on teacher's roles.

This study focused on the areas of teacher identity as a trademark of teacher professionalism and the participants' engagement in the local and international practicum. The research interest aimed in trying to seek understanding on how the construction of professional identities amongst the participants were developed through a period of local and international practicum as well as their first few years as novice teachers. Willard-Holt (2000) found that international practicum exercise has a lasting impact on the teachers in the professional as well as the social lives of the teachers.

This study was based on three participants who embarked and completed a B.Ed. TESOL teacher training programme in a local university. The B.Ed. TESOL programme was designed to train English teachers to teach in secondary schools in Malaysia. In the final year, the students underwent their practicum at local schools in Penang and as part of the university's project, six students were selected to embark on an international practicum experience. However, only 3 students had been selected for this study as they were willing and able to contribute to the descriptions of their experiences at these different terrains of their teaching lives. The three participants chosen also had a good relationship with the researcher which is an important factor for the trustworthiness of the stories shared for a narrative study. The two different settings provided the participants with varying experience as they engaged in different professional communities. This in turn provided the research participants with opportunities to (re)think about their own sense of professionalism. It was also expected that the research participants will encounter events and professional environment that are going to be critical in triggering thoughts about their own construction of teacher professional identities. The two practicum experiences presented the research participants not only with a local context where they began to construct their sense of what becoming a teacher involved, but also with a global context that had the potential to challenge their views and the construction of their teacher identity due to the difference in the social and cultural background.

There is sufficient evidence in the literature that support the notion that an international practicum experience contributes tremendously to the professional development of a novice teacher. The interest of this research was to capture the development in the process of becoming a teacher as the participants embarked upon

their local and international practicum. The research participants were then revisited after five years to look into the narratives of their construction of their professional identity.

1.2 Background

The starting point of this research came about through the four stories that will be narrated here. These stories were captured from the personal experience of myself, the researcher.

Story 1: Amelia

This story happened many years ago in Amelia's class. She was a colleague of mine. One day, she came out of her class looking very disappointed with herself after reprimanding her students for some crisis they had in the class. She appeared upset so I went up to her and asked her what had happened. And although I could not remember the precise detail of our conversation, I distinctively remember that she was upset with herself at the stern action she had taken on her students for a minor misbehavior. And I do remember clearly her answer when I asked her why she did what she did: "I don't know. That's what my teacher used to do."

Story 2: Kabir

This is a rather tragic story of regret involving one of my former teachers. I will call him Mr. Kabir. Mr. Kabir taught me Additional Mathematics in secondary school, a subject considered generally to be very challenging. He was very knowledgeable and always precise in his delivery. But being the discipline teacher in the school, he was a very strict teacher. He carried that identity even to the classroom. Many would remember him coming to class carrying a cane. Unfortunately for those who had

difficulty with Additional Mathematics, he would use it too on them. Being in his class can be very daunting for most of us, and would even involve experiencing excruciating physical and mental pain for some. But there were also days when it could be very pleasant, like the days when he would be presenting new topics. You could see that he took pride in his knowledge and enjoyed sharing his knowledge with his students. The problem arose when students were not able to solve the math problems. Students got punished for not passing test and not completing homework. I was lucky Mathematics was one of my favourite subjects and although I was not a star student I never fell victim to his anger.

I met Mr. Kabir again many years later at an extra-curricular function in a school where my children were schooling. I was a committee member of the PTA and he was a former Principal of the school. We were both standing at the school foyer when we noticed a teacher of that school having extremely friendly interaction with his students. He looked at them enviously and turned to me and said, “Today things are so different. If I could ask God for anything, I would ask for 20 years so that I can be a teacher again and do it right this time. I was so strict I don’t know how many students I lost along the way. I didn’t know how to teach. I thought that being strict was the only way”.

The next two stories are most significant as they incidences took place on teacher training grounds between myself and two of my trainees.

Story 3: Aliff

“Ma’am, must I be Ms. Lee? Can I be a teacher without being Ms. Lee?”. “Why, Aliff?” I asked. Here is an account of Aliff’s experience in a school. He had decided to gain some experience during one of his semester breaks and had gone to the District Education Office for a pavement as a substitute teacher.

One of the first advice he got from the head master of the school was “never go to class without a cane”. As if that was not enough, Aliff had to face the humiliation of the boys in the class telling him, “You can’t be a teacher”. Asked “why not”, the students answered, “You are not strict enough”.

Aliff was very upset. He was by nature a very gentle person; soft spoken, very well-mannered and kind. I could not imagine Aliff carrying a cane to class. This young person who had not even undergone any training (at that point he had only completed his two-year foundation course before embarking on the teacher education programme with one of the local teacher education institutes and a partnering university.)

We had a long chat over the phone. Aliff expressed his fears about the society’s expectation of him as a teacher. It appeared to me that Aliff wanted to challenge the notion that you have to be strict to be a teacher. He was seeking to engage in a dialogical manner about what constitute good practice.

Being an inquisitive person, Aliff listened carefully about what I had to say about teacher identity. I persuaded him that what he was going through was normal

and shared with him the little I knew about the subject. Somehow that convinced him that his anxiety was not unfounded.

Story 4: Myra

This is a story of Myra, who at that time was a teacher trainee at a local teacher training college in Penang. She was enrolled in a twinning teacher training programme. By nature, Myra had a pleasant and friendly disposition, blessed with a pretty and smiling face. And that natural friendly person that she was, she carried into her classroom. I was observing Myra in a primary school in Penang when I noticed something intriguing. Most of the time, while teaching, Myra would be smiling and even joked with her students. In between the delivery of her lesson, Myra would suddenly take on a different persona. She would put on a strict face, bordering a look of anger and then tell the students to be quiet. These lapses happened quite regularly during the one hour while I was there. She would then go back to herself and I could see that she was enjoying her class and her students and they too were participating well in her class. I was not privileged to see the responses of the students as I sat at the back of the class and the students were all facing the front. Or perhaps I was too engrossed in observing Myra and trying to figure out what was going on with her. Immediately after class, I went up to her and this was the conversation that ensued:

Me: Myra what was going on?

Myra: Why Madam?

Me: One minute you are all smiles and fun and then the next you become strict and started to tell them to be quiet. What was really going on?

At this point, Myra laughed. She couldn't stop laughing. I assumed she was in a way relieved that I was not commenting about her lesson or lesson plan. And what she said startled me.

Myra: I keep forgetting it was you.

Me: Huh?

Myra: I thought it was her.

Me: Who do you mean? Your cooperating teacher?

Myra: Yes. She said I smiled too much and I should not do that. She doesn't want me to smile at the children whenever she is observing me. She said the students will never respect me if I am too friendly with them

We talked about that a little. At the end of I managed to convince that her she could be herself whenever I was observing and from then I continued to see the joy a teacher could bring to a classroom; for herself and most of all for her students who were gaining much from this young and enthusiastic teacher.

Stories 1 and 2 and 3 are examples of what Wenger, whose theory will be explained further in Chapter 2, would describe as representing the "institution's view of their expertise." (Wenger, 1998, p.150) The stories represent how we think of ourselves, in these cases as teachers, which is defined by the social categories. Without undermining the importance of roles, Wenger maintains that identities must be worked out in practice. Taking on roles is no doubt important, but this practice is not "discursive or reflective" (Wenger, 1998, p.151). The story of Aliff sends the message that trainees have the ability or want the opportunity to be reflective. This signals a significant opportunity for learning. In the narrative of Aliffabove, there is a signal for teacher

educators that trainees will be faced with many situations that will question their identity as a teacher. Even though Aliff had not even embarked on the teacher training programme (at that stage he was only undergoing his preparatory course), Aliff had already had the inclination of the teacher he wanted to be. Bullough (1998) points out that the story of becoming teacher starts way before the person enters a teacher education programme. Just as this story exhibits, the story of Aliff's becoming of a teacher started before his teacher education programme. Like him, many if not all, come to teacher training after having gone through thousands of hours observing teachers. "Their familiarity with teaching is both a blessing and a curse to becoming a teacher" (Bullough, 1998, p.81).

1.3 Research Problem

The salient points in the four stories above constitute some of the problems in the issue of teacher professional identity which in turn leads to the interest of this research. The evidence that teachers at different levels confront issues of identity must be addressed to inform future teacher education. Identity which is a combination of the personal and the professional cannot be ignored or it can result in an 'overly simplistic, essentially unsuccessful teacher education' (Alsup, 2006).

That with all the other stories led me the researcher to view becoming a teacher is not a straightforward process. Based on the 4 stories, there appear to be problems with the presentation of a teacher's identity such as follows:

- 1) Teachers struggle with identity with opposing views, knowledge and ways of being a teacher.
- 2) Teachers do not actively engage with the given teacher discourse i.e. they do not question the social norms attached to being a teacher.

- 3) Teachers lack understanding of becoming a teacher.
- 4) Teachers rely on previous experience when faced with critical events

The problems that I sensed from the stories above and my own personal observations during the supervision of teacher trainees on practicum, was that a high majority of the trainees do not question events that are taking place in the school environment and their personal feelings about issues were often unquestioned or unaddressed. When issues are left unquestioned, it could cause a loss to the teaching profession such as the case of Mr. Kabir. When issues are left unaddressed, what can be worse is that it could lead to teachers feeling unequipped to teach. This may lead to them leaving the profession, an even a greater loss to the teaching profession. Research findings indicated that even in countries where sufficient teachers are trained, the problems lie in the number of teachers leaving the profession (Lindqvist, Nordanger, & Carlsson, 2014).

I believe that teachers at all stages struggle with issues surrounding identity where they are constantly faced with the need to negotiate between their personal and professional understanding of becoming a teacher in their own construction of a teacher identity. As Danielwich (2001) argues, trainees will be faced with the difficulty of connecting to information or focusing on methods because they are struggling with the whole notion of becoming teachers in the first place. For Mr. Kabir unfortunately, the struggle or rather awareness came about only after he had left the profession upon retirement, much to his regret. It is important to note that in his case, he was not presented with the different imaginations of becoming a teacher. '[He] thought being strict was the only way'.

As a teacher educator, it is felt there was a need to study what views and knowledge are held by pre-service and novice teachers that may influence their construction of teacher identity. It would be also useful to understand what could prevent them from engaging dialogically with the discourse of becoming a teacher. Any insights on these matters could contribute to the development of future teacher education programmes.

1.4.1 Objectives of the study

To understand the tensions that teacher trainees face, we must be concerned with the local-what happens in the everyday world of the training institutions and the school, as the workplace-and with the global- the social forces that organize, surround, and summon its institutions. In both contexts, we must examine the discursive practices that sustain its structures in taken-for-granted ways. As Britzman (2013) points out, teacher education starts before the trainees come to teacher education programmes and does not end once the programme is completed. Institutions of teacher education have the potential to design their programmes in ways that can make a difference in the quality of schools through the everyday lives of students and teachers.

Thus this study aimed to look at how we can gain some insights into the construction of teacher identity as seen through the eyes of three participants as they explore the local and foreign terrains as trainees and then as novice teachers in Malaysian schools. The study had been framed to seek insights into the tensions that

go on in the lives of the research participants as they go through the process of becoming teachers.

Based on the problems stated above, here are the main objectives of the research.

1. To examine what are the challenging issues the participants, who are pre-service teachers, struggle with.
2. To uncover what views of becoming a teacher are held by participants.
3. To seek insight into how/why the participants' past experience influence the construction of their professional identity.

1.5 Research questions

As professional development is an ongoing process, this study must take into account that the participants of this research is at the beginning of a very long process. Therefore, the research aimed to undertake the task of trying to observe what issues the participants were paying attention to in their process of becoming teachers. The study also aimed at studying how they shape their beliefs about what becoming a teacher involves. The study will revolve around the following guiding questions, in line with the research objectives.

- 1) Research question 1: What challenging issues did the participants encounter during practicum?
 - How do the participants respond to the challenges of teacher identity that they hold?
 - What kinds of identities might be made available to the participants?

- What kinds of knowledge, imagination, and ways of being would be desirable?
- 2) Research question 2: What views of becoming a teacher are held by the participants?
- What are the views of being a teacher held by the participants?
 - How do these views of becoming a teacher change over time?
 - What significant event may have affected these changes?
- 3) Research question 3: What personal professional issues appear prevalent in the construction of teacher identity amongst participants?
- What values/behavior of the past experience do the participants hold on to?
 - How would the new environment influence or alter their understanding of teacher professional identity?

1.5.1 Significance of study

The difficulty of teaching has become more complex as we are faced with a globalized world. It was the purpose of this study to capture the development of teacher professional identity from the perspective of three final year students leading into their early experiences into the teaching profession after having gone through a local and international practicum. The study experience provided an opportunity for the trainees to recognize and address their own struggles through their early formation of teacher identity.

A major significance of the study was that it can generate the discourse of teacher identity construction as not static but dynamic and fluid. This type of discourse is not common in teacher education in Malaysia which in the researcher's opinion is more traditional and prescriptive. By listening to the voices of the teachers, in this case from pre-service to novice teachers, this study wanted to acknowledge the worth of the struggles that they face. Thus by doing so, we would embrace and celebrate diversity and agency and ultimately this would be for the good for the understanding of teacher professional development in Malaysia.

The findings would also be highly useful for teacher education in curriculum design as to how to incorporate the issues surrounding teacher identity in the process of training. The literature review in the next chapter will highlight the significance of a positive construction of teacher identity towards creating invested and committed professionals. Therefore, this study can provide the foundation for future work in understanding the construction of teacher professional identity.

If we, as teacher educators agree that new teachers are our last, best hope for changing schools, then our course of action becomes quite clear. We must address the critical issues of beliefs, change and leadership in our pre-service programmes. We must find ways of using student teaching and other field experiences to help our students develop deeper understanding of themselves as well as of the contexts of teaching (O'Connell Rust, 1995).

The differing notion and interpretation of the concept of teacher professionalism and the even more complex development of identity of a person makes the construction of a teacher professional identity a complex process to understand. This challenge however must be taken up by teacher education as the success of a teacher education

programme depends on it. How teacher education programs are able to harness and encourage the development of such self-awareness or 'growth experience' would go a long way towards creating a high but realistic level of confidence and optimism in Malaysian students aspiring to be teachers (Goh & Mathews, 2011).

1.7 Limitations of study

One of the limitations of narrative inquiry is the time commitment that is required which makes the study not feasible to be carried out with a large number of participants. Therefore, the normal expectation of a quantitative study that the findings can be generalized is not possible through a narrative inquiry. However, as Canagarajah (1996) argues, the narrative offers something that is in opposition to the elitist scholarly discourse and that what narratives can do is actually present an opportunity for marginalized groups to contribute to the body of knowledge in the academy.

The researcher must also be able to develop a close relationship with the participants for the worthiness of the stories told. It is a vital requirement in narrative inquiry that the researcher is able to foster close collaboration with the participants to showcase that the analysis represents the researcher as much as the participant (Bell, 2002).

However, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) warn that a good relationship between the researcher and participants is not enough. There is another issue of audience. The authors cautioned that a sense of audience must be present during the process of writing to ensure that valuable knowledge could be passed on to the readers. This will influence the way the narratives are presented.

A bigger challenge in the narrative enquiry is the issue of ethics. There is a danger of the researcher imposing meaning on the participants lived experience (Bell, 2002). In order to overcome this issue, it is deemed as good practice that the researcher shares the ongoing construction of the narratives to be presented with the participant.

Another important point raised by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) with regards to ethics is anonymity. They pointed out that it is not always clear that anonymity can be achieved in plausible way. The audience has a way of knowing who the participants are through the work that is being carried out. However, this does not necessarily be a point of weakness as it is possible that the participants would want to be recognized as doing the work in question. Through this way, the participants are seen as co-authors of the narratives.

In sum, from the lens of the narrative inquirer, what are often seen as limitations of the narrative inquiry can be presented as the special characteristics of this design that allows for a research to be conducted in a way that present unique stories of individuals in the area of research.

1.8 Operational definitions of key terms

a) Teacher professional identity refers to the identification of a teacher's characteristics that define what a teacher means. In this research, identity is seen as something that is not fixed and always changing. In the context of this study, teacher professional identity as a fixed definition but rather this research is looking at how the changes take place. Identity is produced through participation in communities.

b) Communities refer to groups that the participants belong to as a member either in the social or professional capacity before and during the study. The purpose is to acknowledge that the multi-membership of communities affects the construction of the identity of the participants.

c) Novice teachers refers to the first five-year tenure as classroom practitioners in local schools.

d) Roles refer to the function that the teacher plays that are technical in nature such preparing lesson plans, managing classroom and grading students work. In comparison to identity, a role of a teacher is to act like a teacher through action and behaviour. But having an identity of a teacher is to be one; to believe that one is a teacher.

1.9 Conclusion

In concluding this section, I would like to present to the readers that structure of this research mapped through the background study, statement of problem, objectives and research questions serve mainly as a guide. Although the study stems from a personal experience and observation, a review of literature related to the topics in the following chapter serves to provide evidence that the issues surrounding the narratives presented through the vignettes are legitimate and important issues that need to be addressed for a deeper understanding of the construction of a teacher identity. This research in the form of a qualitative study presses for “understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists” (Stake,1995). Therefore,I entered the field of study with openness to what lies in the complexities of becoming a teacher.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the understanding of teacher professional identity related to this study. It will also present the theory of identity by Etienne Wenger which will form the framework for this study. Finally, it will also review studies on local and international practicum and how they are significant to the development towards teacher professionalism in general as well as the construction of identity.

2.2 Defining Teacher Professionalism

The definition for teacher professionalism is varied and covers a range of areas. Gray and Whitty (2010) suggest that there are two ways of looking at teacher professionalism. Firstly, is to assume that there is a single way of looking at teaching with a pre-existing definition of teacher identity, or secondly is to accept that there are various forms with many different ways of defining teacher identity.

There are also definitions that are more prescriptive such being a moral foundation (Sockett, 1993), or the adaptive expert (Darling-Hammond & Bransford 2007). Sockett (1993) presents the idea of teacher professionalism as a moral foundations based on the roles and the professional demands it makes. The moral bases of teacher professionalism according to him lie in the dimensions of community, knowledge, accountability and ideals. Teachers need to be able to have sound knowledge and skills and have a commitment to ensure that every child will succeed. Adaptive experts are commitment to life-long learning (Darling-Hammond et al. 2005).

The Malaysian *Standard Guru Malaysia* (Malaysian Teacher Standard, 2009) describes the following attributes that need to be acquired by a teacher to meet the required standard. The document specified 3 areas that are considered vital aspects of being a teacher.

The first part is classified as the 'Self Domain'. This refers to values or qualities that teachers need to have and uphold so that they can contribute efficiently to the teaching profession in order to achieve the aims of the nation's educational policies. The values or qualities that a teacher must possess are: god fearing, trustworthy, sincere, knowledgeable, caring, patience, polite, fair, considerate, resilience, competitiveness, active and healthy, possess interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, engagement in volunteerism, and efficient.

The second component has been classified as the 'Professional Domain'. This refers to the values or qualities that teachers should practice in portraying him/herself as a professional. The values that are of great importance are exhibiting love and passion for the profession, showing competence and integrity, serve as a role model for the students, a team player, proactive, creative and innovative. A teacher must also exhibit transparency in her capacity as a teacher.

The final part is labeled as the 'Social Domain'. The teacher is deemed as an agent of social change and managers of the human capital in society. As such, a teacher should have the ability to maintain harmony through good social skills promoting community spirit, patriotism and love for the environment.

What are prevalent in these descriptions are the implications that teachers need and can obtain the stated values as professionals in order to achieve the objectives of the national educational policies. There is also an implication that the teacher must already possess these qualities or must strive to do that on their own. Teacher training curriculum of the Teacher Education Institutes, for instance, addresses the need for the qualities through the *BinaInsan Guru (BIG)*, a Teacher Character Building course which is a compulsory course for all their trainees in the teacher education programme under the Ministry of Education. A major component of the contents of the course include study camps to focus on the aspects of confidence building through activities such as water confidence, group dynamics activities and other survivors skills.

A general look at these domain shows that there is an expectation imposed on the teacher. In all these aspects of the personal, professional and social domains, there is a sort of imposition on the teacher in terms of what values they should uphold, what behavioral practices are expected of them and what functioning roles they have to play in society. These values are top down, prescriptive and do not consider the teacher's personal take on issues of professionalism. The central focus of the SGM focuses on the teachers' behavior. The Malaysian teaching standards stipulate what personal characteristics teachers need to have, what values they should uphold and what roles a teacher need to play in carrying their duties as teachers. According to Britzman (2003), "[w]hen teachers are subject to rigid directives or expectations, then they are bereft of their capacity to intervene in the world, and knowledge is expressed as static and immutable" (p.46). Kelchtermans (2018) argues that policy documents only define what teachers and teaching are. However, it's the teachers' sense-making, navigating and negotiating with them will influence educational practices. Therefore, it is

important to acknowledge the importance of allowing a space in teacher education for the negotiating process to take place.

For the purpose of comparison, a committee for teacher education working for the National Academy of Education (US) outlines core concepts and strategies for teacher education. According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) this is a knowledge based framework which defines teacher professionalism and centres around a vision of professional practice. The framework defines the concepts and strategies for teacher education by asking these three fundamental questions:

- What kinds of knowledge do effective teachers need to have about their subject matter and about the learning processes and development of their students?
- What skills do teachers need in order to provide productive learning experiences for a diverse set of students, to offer informative feedback on students' ideas, and to critically evaluate their own teaching practices and improve them?
- What professional commitments do teachers need to help every child succeed and to continue to develop their own knowledge and skills, both as individuals and as members of a collective profession?

The targeted goal of this document is to help teachers become adaptive expert. This term refers to teachers “who are prepared for effective lifelong learning that allows them continuously to add to their knowledge and skills”. It goes on to say that “...beginning teachers need to have a command of critical ideas and skills and equally important for the capacity to reflect on, evaluate, and learn from their teaching so that it continually improves” (Darling-Hammond et al. 2005, p.3).

This study was more inclined to adopt the more open definition of teacher professionalism instead of the more traditional and prescriptive approach. Sachs (1997) concedes that the notion of teacher professionalism must be negotiated inside and outside of the teaching profession. 'To achieve this, teachers will need to develop new ways of talking about the work of teaching and what it means to be a professional' (pg.6). She argues against a 'commonsense' definition which is one developed passively. She refers to this definition as one that is used commonly to describe the characteristics that portray the teaching occupation which is determined by the 'political and ceremonial needs of the profession' (pg.6) such as the two examples cited above. This is supported by Chen, Horn and Nolan (2018) who argue that teachers make choices about which practice they seek to develop which is deeply rooted in their sense of identity.

Sachs (2003) defines teacher professionalism as the role that they play as the activist who is able to confront challenges and solve complex practical and theoretical problems amidst the rapid changes socially and technologically. They should be able to develop quality learning opportunities for their students. Mockler (2005) suggests that teachers should be given autonomy at local and global level. They must be allowed to acknowledge their own professional needs and to develop their expertise collaboratively with other teachers.

The definition of teacher professionalism in this study then refers to the teacher professional identity that is constantly changing (Wenger, 1998; Britzman, 1992; Danielewicz, 2001). The research interest sought to understand how teachers create a sense of professionalism for themselves in line with the theory of identity by Wenger who believes that identity must be negotiated.

2.3 Defining teacher identity

In chapter 1, Wenger's theory of identity was mentioned to explain the phenomena that were attached to the vignettes which led to the enquiry of this study. In this chapter, Wenger theory will be explained in more depth followed by the review of works done specifically on the formation of identity in the context of teacher training.

Wenger's theory was chosen as the underpinning theory for this study as his work focuses on the formation of identity through the practices that are undertaken within a community. This research aimed to look at how the engagement of the trainees affects their sense of identity. His theory also looks at how conflicts are often very much a part of the development of a person's identity. This study was interested in the conflicts that might arise during the participants' experience during practicum. Amongst other things, Wenger also points to the understanding that the construction of identity is affected not only by the local environment which are the communities we are directly linked to, but also the global such as how television influence can play a role in the identity formation. This project was focused on the construction of teacher identity both at the local and international practicum. Finally, Wenger points to the significance of practices across boundaries of different communities which he says we are part of. This concept is in line with some of the major works on teacher identity that I will be referring to in this chapter.

2.3.1 Wenger's theory of identity

Wenger's (1998) theory of identity is essentially placed in his social theory of learning which focuses on practice, community and meaning. He narrows his focuses on the individual but from a social perspective, and at the same time expands the focus to the communities of practice paying attention to the process of identification and social structures. On top of that, Wenger focuses on the issues of non-participation as well as participation, and of exclusion as well as inclusion. Therefore, our identity is defined with a person's "ability and inability to shape the meanings that define our communities and our forms of belonging" (p.145). Here is what he says:

I have argued that we know who we are by what is familiar and by what we can negotiate and make use of, and that we know who we are not by what is unfamiliar, unwieldy, and of our purview. This is an important point. We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through practices we do not engage in. our identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what are not (p.164).

The concept of building an identity is presented by Wenger (1998) as involving the negotiating of meaning of our experiences in social communities. Wenger argues that the building of an identity should not be seen singularly as either the person or the community but rather, the process of a mutual constitution between the two. He asserts that our acts of participation or non-participation (reification) either thin the public or private domain, is the result of the mutual constitution between individuals and collectives. Wenger maintains that we cannot become human by ourselves.

Therefore, we cannot become teachers ourselves. We become teachers through our connection with our communities of practices where we make meaning through the process of identification in those communities.

Our social relations are reflected by our practices, our artifacts and our world views. He argues that even our most private thoughts are shaped through our participation in social communities. This is supported by the work of Dimitrieska (2018) where she concluded that the sociocultural framing allows us to look at the way the ‘intersubjective, socially situated domain (i.e., their interactions with peers and tutors) plays out and affects how the knowledge and skills they are exposed to become appropriated, internalized, and integrated into the teachers’ own knowledge and teaching skills repertoire’ (p.164).

2.3.1 (a) Identity in Practice

Wenger’ theory on identity states that there is a ‘profound connection between identity and practice’ (Wenger: 149).

Table 1.1

Parallels between Practice and Identity

Practice as ...	Identity as ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation of meaning (in terms of participation and reification) • Community • Shared history of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiated experience of self (in terms of participation and reification) • Membership • Learning trajectory

“Table 1.1. Continued”

Practice as	Identity as
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary and landscape • Constellations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nexus of multi-membership • Belonging defined globally but experienced locally

In presenting his argument of identity as negotiated experience, Wenger (1998) argues that although we own self images of who we are, they are ‘not the full, lived experienced of engagement in practice’ (p.151). They are no doubt important, but not discursive or reflective. He argues that what we are lies in our everyday practices and not only what we think of ourselves, although this is part (and he stresses that it is only a part) of the way we live. What this means is that identity in practice is produced as a lived experience of the specific communities that we engage in. In other words, the formation of an identity that is placed against any narrative, category, role or position must be worked out in practice. Wenger (1998) posits that an identity is a “layering of events of participations and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other” (p.151). As we encounter and engage in life experiences, the experiences are interwoven in a complex construction of who we are. The participative experience and create meaning through negotiation and subsequently identity exists, not as a final object but as the result that comes out of the negotiating the self.

Another significant notion of identity lies in its community membership. In defining communities, as Wenger has argued, identity is formed through “participation as well as reification” (Wenger,1998, p.152). He conceptualizes it as having three dimensions; mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire.