

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ENGLISH NOVICE TEACHERS IN POST- PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates novice English teachers' perceptions of their professional development and the challenges that they experience in their teaching careers. A questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to obtain data from two novice English teachers who are now teaching in Vocational High Schools (SMK). Purposive sampling was utilized to identify participants who may give beneficial insights into the subject matter of the study. According to the findings of the study, both teachers displayed an extensive understanding of the pedagogical competencies essential to effective teaching, demonstrating the necessity of continuous advancement in academic skills, teaching techniques, and subject competence. They recognized professional development as a combination of formal experiences, such as workshops and mentorship, as well as informal experiences related to their academic discipline. Furthermore, the novice teachers highlighted the significance of personal and social competencies in their professional journey, including individual skills, positive personality traits, and fostering strong relationships with students and their families. In regard to professional development approaches, one teacher participated actively in the school's professional development program and attended seminars, whilst the other is currently studying for a master's degree to improve teaching quality and strengthen knowledge. The two approaches emphasized the need for continuous development and learning in the professional experiences of novice teachers. The study additionally highlighted challenges that novice teachers encounter, such as difficulty responding to curricular shifts, limited resources, and concern about employment rights. These findings shed light on the experiences faced by novice English teachers and offer suggestions for strengthening professional development programs and educational support systems.

KEYWORDS Novice Teachers, Professional Development, Perceptions, Challenges.



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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has made a consequence in practically every area, including education. Almost all countries influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic have implemented a policy of closing schools to tertiary institutions; also known as “physical distancing”. The level of activity and contact that occurs during the learning process must be reduced. Online distance learning serves as one of the effective strategies that can be utilized to anticipate the virus's transmission. This is verified by the research of Rizaldi and Fatimah (2020) which discovered that distance learning was an effective approach for maintaining the learning process as it has the potential to deal with different situations in the teaching and learning process while also preventing virus transmission. However, this should be supported by the facilities, teacher and student readiness, and targeted learning outcomes.

The transition to virtual learning during the lockdown exacerbates the consequences of children and young people having unequal access to digital technological devices and connectivity. The immediate effect felt by students is that the usage of internet media can increase internet costs, interacting with teachers is inefficient if there is information that is hard to comprehend, and there is frequent one-way contact during the online learning process (Daulay et al., 2021, p. 2374). With most students home-schooled during the coronavirus pandemic, there is a concerning issue that such a “digital divide” is harming impoverished students' education and expanding the social class achievement gap (Montacute, 2020; Reay, 2020). A comparable study on students' e-learning readiness by Alipio (2020) found that the majority (more than 800 respondents) were not properly provided for moving to entirely online delivery of learning, specifically those in low-income and remote places. Another research on college students by De Guzman and Pastor (2020) discovered a lack of readiness to switch to synchronous online learning settings, particularly in terms of device capabilities or accessibility to participate to this type of classroom setup.

However, it appears that these issues are not limited to students; in fact, teachers encounter similar difficulties while teaching online. The unexpected shift in the learning system from normal to online learning has undoubtedly had an impact on the preparation of resources, models, and learning methods (Daulay et al., 2021, p. 2374). One of the respondents in Rahayu and Wirza (2020)'s study reported that online learning was less effective since the teacher was not trained. They struggle with creating exciting content, presenting content, evaluating, providing feedback, and making students appreciate the learning process. This statement is in line with the findings in the study of Rasmitadila et al., (2020, p. 99), which stated that teachers, even experienced and senior teachers, who lack experience teaching online or who struggle with technology and information devices would typically struggle with online learning since it requires teachers to handle a variety of apps.

As a response, numerous scholars concentrated on discovering how teachers should manage their online learning strategies for enhancing the quality of the

learning process during COVID-19. As in the study of Rahayu and Wirza (2020) discovered that during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers maintained a positive attitude toward the use of technology in distance learning. Teachers' commitment to using technology and acquiring digital skills in online learning is significant, as is their engagement. Furthermore, in the thesis of Himmah (2021) which investigates the teacher's attempts to maximize science learning during the pandemic. According to her thesis, as the teachers still had issues in teaching online, the school decided to conduct asynchronous learning once a week to evaluate the materials that had been taught throughout the week. Regardless of the challenges that teachers confront, they progressively get an insight into how to manage teaching problems in an online environment.

When the teachers and students began to adjust to this method, the pandemic that used to necessitate online teaching, then switched its status to endemic; plainly affects the teaching process and forces educational institutions to make adjustments to new habits known as the *New Normal*. Learning in the new normal entails adapting available study time and health protocols. According to the study of Faturohman and Gunawan (2021), on-site learning of primary school in Serang District followed the maximum criterion of 50% in each class. Furthermore, during this period, the learning hours were limited to a maximum of 2.5 to 3 hours each day. Therefore, teachers are required to compress the content of the subject, explain the significant aspects, and highlight the problem-solving in quizzes (Suryani et al., 2022). It is indeed challenging to reintroduce on-site learning after becoming accustomed to distance learning.

Teaching English, unlike other disciplines, definitely has its own set of obstacles. The goal of language teaching, as is generally known, is communicative competence (Fauziah, 2020, p. 51). Students need to possess a decent understanding of the language and how to use it in order to develop their communicative skills. However, this becomes more difficult when the learning environment changes. As reported in the study of Kesuma (2022), the challenges that teachers experience when teaching English in the new normal era at SMAN 1 Balong are the time limitation, which is only one lesson hour or 45 minutes. As the time is limited, so that the teacher's inability to give the feedback to the students in the classroom. Sundari et al., (2021) also reported English teachers experienced some problems when they tried to develop their students' conversational English abilities. As is commonly known, grade 7 students who were used to have online classes hardly engage and interact with their classmates in person. This sparked awkwardness when schools started implementing face-to-face classes again. Because of the awkwardness, students prefer to be passive in practicing spoken English.

This new normal era is packed with struggles and new challenges; this is especially even more challenging for novice English teachers who had only experience teaching online during the pandemic COVID-19. Their lack of experience in the profession might bring several problems and obstacles in their teaching experience. Moreover, in the study of Sarnou-Kenza Belatrech (2018, p. 131) proved that the novice teachers believe that the knowledge they gained throughout their undergraduate program as well as during their induction period

was insufficient to ensure a positive introduction experience. Therefore, the professional development program was established to provide opportunities for novice teachers to evaluate the types of obstacles they confront while also provide the process that may assist them in exploring and learning from the root causes of pressure within those difficulties (Stewart & Jansky, 2022, p. 1). These conditions lead the researchers to discover the perception of novice English teachers about professional development, how novice teachers improve their professional development, what difficulties experienced by novice teachers in developing professional development, and how the novice teachers overcome the challenges. Furthermore, this study optimizing resources to promote novice teachers' professionalism. Therefore, the finding of this study is hopefully deemed to be a consideration for policymakers in designing and implementing new programs that are specifically designed to the needs of novice English teachers.

Literature Review

Novice teachers are categorized as teachers with less than five years of teaching experience (Kim & Roth, 2011). This fresh start might lead the novice teachers to the feelings of dissatisfaction and hopelessness (Fecho et al., 2020; Öztürk & Yildirim, 2013; Sali & Kecik, 2018; Sarnou-Kenza Belatrech, 2018). Smagorinsky et al., (2015) stated that the early years of teaching experience is the time of intensive change as new teachers take on the duties of preparing coursework, teaching, assessing students, and organizing a classroom; while also confronted with “incompatible conceptions of the ideal way to educate” (p. 289). That challenging period may be due to the awkwardness of the induction stage of teaching where everything is new, inexperienced and sometimes unexpected (Sarnou-Kenza Belatrech, 2018, p. 125). Fecho et al., (2020) added that novice teachers might also become frustrated when their pedagogical objectives and instructional environments clash. However, according to Öztürk and Yildirim (2013), the beginning year of teaching is not only packed with downs and frustration, but also ups and feeling wonderful; even there would be a few days in between (p. 294).

The number of studies on novice English teachers' challenges is still fairly insignificant when compared to the many studies on novice teachers' challenges. Numrich (1996) as cited in Sali and Kecik (2018) discovered the following challenges for novice language teachers, such as organizing class time, delivering clear instructions, listening to students' demands, effectively teaching grammar, evaluating learning outcomes, and putting more emphasis on students instead of themselves. The findings in the study of Sali and Kecik (2018) also revealed that the obstacles that novice English teachers experienced included a lack of utilizing language teaching techniques to provide complexity to the class, applying concepts into action, and the insufficiency of language teaching text book.

Professionals are described as members of professions who are usually regulated by standards and a determination to competence. Professional expertise, according to Akhmetova et al. (2013, p. 77) cited in Yuniandita and Mukminan (2020, p. 131), is a criterion that unifies the subject method and subject areas in a pedagogical module. Professionals must handle problems and complaints

professionally, and they have to follow disciplinary procedures to deal with the issue. While, professionalism is the manner in which a work or objective is accomplished. Evans (2011), cited in Jansem (2020, p. 2), professionalism includes of “behavioural, attitudinal, and intellectual elements.” Professionalism entails developing comprehensive, advanced knowledge, as well as putting the said knowledge into action. Furthermore, Evans (2011) contends that principles, perspectives, and ideologies shapes behaviour. In order to be classified as a professional teacher, comprehending the pedagogy is not enough. Beyond that, teachers should demonstrate professionalism in their personality, a determination to keep developing and improving their competence as teachers, and involvement in other educational programmes outside of classroom (M. S. Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005; M. Tichenor & Tichenor, 2009).

Jansem (2020)’s findings found out how twenty experienced English teachers in Thailand describe the professionalism. The participants describe the meaning of professionalism by stating what ‘excellent’ teachers are expected to do, teach, and live their personal life. The participants demonstrated professionalism by their mastery of the English language, lesson planning competence, teaching delivery approaches, and dedication to educating students. Next, the participants explain their views on the role of the professionalism itself. Jansem has divided this section into four types of teachers; the teachers who view professionalism as a “mission”, the teachers who think that professionalism is “a set of expectation”, the teachers who don’t have a really good perception on professionalism, they argue that professionalism is a mere of ideal, and at last, the teachers who considered professionalism as a “measure of accountability”.

According to Lauermann and König (2016, p.9) cited in Yuniandita and Mukminan (2020, p. 161), professional development for teachers, particularly includes professional competence, capacities, perceptions, and passion, is an essential feature that a professional teacher must possess. Since professional development is not a “one-size-fits-all” case, but rather a progressing operation that yields the best outcomes (Nazari et al., 2019, p. 5). This implies that there are many factors should be developed by novice teachers, such as competencies, academics, and approaches in teaching in terms of expertise or gaining knowledge or competencies with training, designing lesson plans, routine activities, and proper ways of teaching students. Moreover, EFL novice teachers typically struggle with language competence such as proficiency, pronunciation, or grammar.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is qualitative research which the data obtained from two novice English teachers who are now teaching in Vocational High School (SMK) through a questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Purposive sampling was used because the participants for qualitative research are determined based on “the individuals or the place that could aid the researcher to have a clearer understanding of the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2008, p. 206). Therefore, the researcher conducted a pilot study in order to determine the participants. The pilot study was conducted on October 14th, 2022 to October 28th, 2022. The instrument

used for the pilot study is a close-ended questionnaire adopted from Tichenor & Tichenor (2009) about Teacher Professionalism. This questionnaire employed the five Likert-scale; in which 5 is the highest value or strongly agree, while 1 is the lowest value or strongly disagree. Other than employing the said questionnaire and the mentioned general categories, the researcher also has set the specific categories for the participant; the prospective participants must remain college students while the Covid-19 was still a pandemic and become teachers when the Covid-19's status shifted to endemic.

The researchers reduced the number of participants in this pilot study from twenty to three by taking into account time limitations and their eligibility for the aforementioned categories. Following a brief approach with the three participants via WhatsApp, the researcher decided to employ two novice English teachers who are now teaching at Vocational High School (SMK). To preserve the privacy of the teachers and the schools, the researchers would be using the alias; Miss A for the first participant who has taught English for 6 months and Miss B for the second participant who has taught English for a year.

As for the study itself, the instruments used were an adopted questionnaire of Adaptation Challenges of Novice Teacher of English developed by Özturk & Yildirim (2013) and semi-organized interview which the guidelines was adapted from the Regulation of the Indonesian State Minister for State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform No. 16/2009 about Teacher Functional Position and Credit Numbers and the Adaptation Challenges of Novice Teacher of English developed by Özturk & Yildirim (2013). These instruments are employed to discover the difficulties the novice English teachers encountered in developing professional development and how they overcome the challenges.

In collecting the data, the Adaptation Challenges of Novice Teacher questionnaire utilized a Likert-scale with five levels: (1) Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Sometimes, (4) Frequently, and (5) Always. The interview data was analysed through transcription, codification, and thematic analysis. In analysing the data, the researcher utilized the theory of Miles & Huberman (1994), which are data reduction, data display, and conclusion and verifying. The researcher selects, focuses, simplifies, and transforms raw data into written transcription throughout the data reduction process. Additional data reduction occurs as the data collecting process progresses, such as writing summaries, coding, classifying the topic, and writing the memo. This procedure would continue until a final report is finished. Then, the researcher displayed the data after doing the data reduction. In basic terms, data display refers to structured data that allows the researcher to conclude the study. The conclusion drawing process begins once the data has been obtained by developing a preliminary conclusion. The final findings are reached not only during the data collecting process, but also must be confirmed in order to be genuinely credible. Trustworthiness was verified through triangulation to collect the objectivity of the data from the two participants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Novice English teachers' perception about professional development

The semi-interview and the questionnaire of Tichenor & Tichenor (2009) about Teacher Professionalism were conducted to collect data for the first research objective; the novice teachers' understanding of professional development. According to the questionnaire results, Miss A gets a score of 243 out of 370, while Miss B gets a score of 217 out of 370. These results indicate that Miss A possesses a strong understanding of professional development, whereas Miss B exhibits a moderate understanding.

Table 1. Category Formulation of The Novice Teachers' Understanding of Professional Development

No.	Category	Formulation	Scale
1	High	$Mean + 1 SD < X$	$234.5 < X$
2	Medium	$Mean - 1 SD < X < Mean + 1 SD$	$209.5 < X < 234.5$
3	Low	$X < Mean - 1 SD$	$X < 209.5$

According to the results of the interview, it was observed that both novice English teachers demonstrated an understanding of the four competencies outlined in the Act of Teacher and Lecturer No. 14/2005. These novice teachers emphasized the significance of professional development in relation to their academic skills, teaching approaches, and subject mastery. Their statements align with the definition of pedagogical competence, which encompasses the ability to effectively manage the learning process, to comprehend the understanding of various aspects, including educational principles and foundations, student dynamics, curriculum and syllabus development, instructional design, implementation of educational strategies, assessment of learning outcomes, and fostering students' holistic development to unlock their maximum potential.

In addition to addressing the previously mentioned competencies, the novice teachers also acknowledged the importance of social and personal competencies in the realm of professional teaching. Personal competence encompasses individual skills and admirable personal qualities that reflect strength, reliability, competence, and wisdom, enabling teachers to serve as positive role models for their students. Social competence, on the other hand, pertains to the ability to effectively communicate, stay abreast of current technology trends, establish meaningful connections with both students and colleagues, and engage appropriately with the wider community.

During the interview, Miss B shared her belief that her social competence has been enhanced through active participation in various class assignments and her enthusiastic involvement in home visit programs. The latter initiative involves teachers visiting students' homes to foster communication and establish connections with both the students and their families. Miss B's engagement in home visit programs serves as a testament to her commitment to improving her social competency, as expressed in her insightful response during the interview.

In our school, we have implemented a program that involves visiting students' homes, which I have had the opportunity to be a part of on two occasions. During these visits, I was accompanied by fellow teachers who also participated in the program. The primary objective of this initiative

is to foster communication and gain insight into students' behavior and interactions within their familial environment. By engaging in these home visits, we aim to develop a deeper understanding of our students' lives outside the classroom and establish stronger connections with their families.

How novice teachers improve their professional development

To address the second objective, which focuses on how novice teachers enhance their professional development, the insights gathered from the interviews were analyzed. The professional growth of teachers is evaluated based on three key aspects: personal development, scholarly publications, and innovative contributions, as outlined in State Minister for State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Law No. 16/2009. Regarding personal development, it was found that Miss B actively engaged in the SMK PK program, participating in it at least 12 times within her school. This program serves as a platform for her to enhance her knowledge and skills in specific areas of instruction. Additionally, Miss B demonstrates her dedication to continuous learning by attending seminars that focus on teaching specific subjects or materials. These endeavors underscore her commitment to personal growth and professional improvement.

Moreover, Miss B's interview responses align with the findings obtained from her participation in the pilot study questionnaire. When asked about actively seeking professional development opportunities, such as attending seminars, lectures, or conferences focused on effective curriculum or teaching methods, she scored a 4, indicating "agree (A)". Similarly, when questioned about staying updated on current topics through reading journals or attending conferences and seminars, she scored a 5, indicating "strong agree (SA)". These scores reflect Miss B's positive attitude and proactive approach towards continuous professional growth and her commitment to staying informed about the latest developments in the field of education.

In contrast to Miss B's proactive approach to professional development, Miss A has not had the opportunity to attend any seminars or workshops that could contribute to her growth as a novice teacher. During the interview, Miss A expressed that she had not received any recommendations or guidance from her workplace regarding attending such events, nor had she been provided with any information regarding available seminars or workshops.

Neither the supervisors nor the senior teachers here gave any information about the seminars, even about pre-service PPG either. I know this information from my lecturers and college friends. Even though I have never attended a seminar or workshop, I am currently pursuing my master's degree as another effort to improve my quality as an English teacher.

Regarding scientific publications and innovation, Miss B, who has solely worked as an English teacher thus far, has not engaged in research activities or presented at seminars or scientific forums. On the other hand, Miss A is actively involved in a mini-research project focused on incorporating media into her

classes. She describes undertaking this project as a student and an English teacher, aiming to assess and refine her instructional methods within the classroom. While Miss B possesses valuable teaching experience, Miss A's proactive involvement in research showcases her dedication to continuous learning and professional growth.

The difficulties experienced by novice; the challenges and how they overcome the challenges

To address the third objective, which focuses on the challenges novice teachers face in their professional development, a combination of questionnaires and interviews was employed. While both novice teachers demonstrated a decent comprehension of professional teaching, they also highlighted certain difficulties encountered during their teaching practicum. The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale, ranging from a minimum score of 74 to a maximum score of 370. The researcher has presented the questionnaire responses to offer further insights into the specific aspects covered by the Adaptation Challenges of Novice Teacher Questionnaire.

Table 2. Aspects of Adaptation Challenges of Novice Teacher Questionnaire

Aspect	Miss A	Miss B
Workload Challenges	18	20
Instructional Challenges	33	37
Classroom Management Challenges	10	19
Social Status and Identity Challenges	35	53
Challenges in Relationship with Students	14	24
Conflict with Colleagues	8	14
Supervisor Challenges	11	27
Challenges in Relationship with Mentor Teacher	8	22
Total score:	137	216

The findings from Table 2 emphasize that novice teachers encounter notable challenges in the realm of instructional, social status, and identity. In contrast, the "conflict with colleagues" appears to present a relatively lower level of difficulty. This convergence between the questionnaire results and the insights obtained from the interviews strengthens the validity and coherence of the findings, reinforcing the consistency in the data.

Instructional Challenges

The interview findings reveal that Miss B has encountered challenges in understanding the curriculum, requiring additional support in lesson planning, facing difficulties in executing planned lessons, and grappling with the selection of suitable teaching approaches. Miss B specifically highlights the notable differences between creating lesson plans aligned with Kurikulum Merdeka compared to those based on Kurikulum 2013.

The news from the deputy head of curriculum about the implementation

of the Kurikulum Merdeka in our school caught me by surprise. Throughout my undergraduate study, I had never been exposed to this curriculum, which made me feel somewhat unprepared. Although I attended seminars on the curriculum during my time in the SMK PK program, I still experience uncertainty when it comes to developing lesson plans that align effectively with it.

In contrast to Miss B, Miss A did not encounter the same difficulties. However, she did mention that when she first started teaching English at her school, the vice curriculum instructed her to teach the students as if she were teaching at a private institution. Miss A openly admitted that this posed a challenge for her. Nonetheless, she made efforts to collaborate with the school and adapted the teaching materials to cater to the specific needs of students in different majors; ensuring that the content was not overly demanding for her students.

At the request of the school, I had to learn new vocabulary related to fields that were previously unfamiliar to me. While the existing materials were designed for general conversation topics such as "having conversations with friends," I had to modify these materials to suit the needs of my nursing major students by replacing "friends" with "patients" in certain scenarios.

Furthermore, Miss A encounters various instructional challenges, particularly in utilizing learning media. Throughout the interview, she consistently expressed the difficulties she faces with class projectors, such as compatibility issues with HDMI cables and other uncontrollable technical glitches. Consequently, Miss A often resorts to her previous teaching style, relying on traditional methods such as writing on the blackboard and emphasizing textbook-based instruction.

Social Status and Identity Challenges

The findings from the interviews indicate that both novice English teachers are unsatisfied with the rights of their employees. Miss B said she needed to work elsewhere to support her financial needs.

Beside my regular teaching hours at school, I dedicate my free time to offering private English lessons. By doing so, I am able to earn additional income that adequately covers my daily expenses. Depending solely on my salary from the school would not be sufficient to meet these financial needs.

This response echoed the sentiments expressed by Miss A, who mentioned that some teachers at her workplace have multiple classes at other schools and may have to leave early when they have schedules at that school. As a result, due to the increased workload, Miss A finds herself shouldering responsibility for a larger number of classes compared to her two senior English teachers. This situation placed additional demands on her time and energy as she attempted to fulfill her teaching duties effectively.

Discussion

Novice English teachers' perception about professional development

The findings from the interview provide valuable insights into the novice teachers' understanding of professional development and the competencies necessary for effective teaching. Both teachers displayed a comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical competencies outlined in the Act of Teacher and Lecturer No. 14/2005, emphasizing the importance of continuous development in their academic skills, teaching approaches, and subject mastery. This understanding aligns with Gender's perspective (as cited in Mahmoudi & Özkan, 2015), which recognizes professional development as a combination of formal experiences like attending workshops, participating in professional meetings, and receiving mentorship, as well as informal experiences related to their academic discipline. Professional development encompasses an ongoing journey of learning, a mindset of continuous improvement, and a perspective that shapes one's approach to practice (Nazari et al., 2019, p. 5). Hence, it is crucial to ensure that teachers stay updated with evolving comprehensive student performance standards, acquire knowledge of innovative instructional methods in various subject areas, learn to effectively utilize new instructional technologies for teaching and learning, and adapt their teaching approaches to accommodate changing school environments and the diverse needs of students (Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007, p. 580).

Furthermore, the novice teachers emphasized the significance of social and personal competencies in their professional teaching journey. Personal competence emerged as a vital factor, encompassing individual skills and positive personal traits that position teachers as rolemodels for their students. This was proven by the research findings of Geier (2020) which indicate that students' perception of the importance of teacher behaviors plays a significant role in influencing their level of effort. The results of the mediation analysis demonstrated a positive association between students' perceived importance of teacher behaviors and their actual perception of teacher behaviors. Moreover, it was revealed that the importance of teacher behaviors indirectly impacts students' efforts through the manifestation of those behaviors.

To enhance her social competence and fostering stronger relationships with students and their families, Miss B actively participated in the home visit program. This program provided her with an opportunity to establish open lines of communication and forge connections with students and their families outside of the traditional classroom setting. This finding resonates with the findings of Gedik (2021) which emphasize the significance of educators' leadership and their values, attitudes, and practices in fostering positive relationships with parents. The study revealed that prior negative experiences hindered parents from engaging in home-school partnerships. However, one teacher's proactive leadership was successful in transforming approximately 75% of the parents' negative perceptions. By leveraging the parents' care for their children, teachers need to take the initiative to establish a positive partnership and actively challenged parents' negative preconceptions about schools and educators.

How novice teachers improve their professional development

The findings from the interviews and questionnaire results highlight the different approaches taken by novice teachers, Miss B and Miss A, in enhancing their professional development. Miss B's proactive engagement in the SMK PK program and attendance at relevant seminars aligns with the view that teachers should actively participate in workshops and training to continuously evolve their teaching profession. Miss B's approach to professional development aligns with the statement made by Mustofa (2007, p. 78) that the teaching profession is continuously evolving through the collaboration between Educational Institutions for Education Personnel (LPTK) and educational practices, which includes participating in seminars and training. This viewpoint is further supported by Anggraini et al., (2020, p. 239), who emphasizes that teachers' perspectives can expand through engagement in workshops, trainings, and further education. These insights highlight the importance of active participation in professional development activities to stay updated with evolving educational practices and enhance teaching effectiveness.

While Miss A may not have had the opportunity to attend seminars or training sessions, she is taking proactive steps to enhance her professional development. Currently pursuing a master's degree, she recognizes the value of further education in improving her teaching quality and expanding her knowledge base. This aligns with the findings of Duff (2001, in Anggraini et al., 2020), who emphasizes the advantages of conducting research and publishing papers. Engaging in a mini-research project allows Miss A to share her knowledge, showcase her expertise, and enhance her professional qualifications and career prospects. Furthermore, Mustofa (2007, p. 83) emphasizes that the effectiveness of professional development lies in fostering a creative mindset, as it enables teachers to enhance their professional competencies and adapt to evolving educational practices. Thus, both Miss B and Miss A exemplify the importance of continuous learning and growth in their professional journey as novice teachers.

The difficulties experienced by novice; the challenges and how they overcome the challenges

The combination of questionnaires and interviews provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by novice teachers in their professional development. As presented in Table 2, novice teachers encounter significant challenges in instructional aspects, social status, and identity. In terms of instructional challenges, Miss B faced difficulties in understanding and adapting to the curriculum, particularly the differences between Kurikulum Merdeka and Kurikulum 2013. The introduction of Kurikulum Merdeka came as a surprise to her, as it was not covered in her undergraduate studies. In order to demonstrate her commitment to enhancing her understanding in Kurikulum Merdeka, she actively attends SMK PK. However, despite these efforts, she still experienced uncertainty when it came to developing lesson plans that effectively aligned with the new curriculum.

Many teachers find themselves bewildered by the frequent changes in curriculum. The study of Mawati et al., (2023) sheds light on the reasons behind

teachers' struggles in fully adopting Kurikulum Merdeka. It is crucial for teachers to possess a deep comprehension of the new curriculum and its various components to ensure its successful implementation. Furthermore, insufficient resources and facilities also hinder teachers' preparedness to effectively implement the new curriculum. Moreover, the process of familiarizing teachers with the new curriculum takes time, resulting in an uneven adoption of the curriculum across different regions in Indonesia.

Miss A, although not encountering the same curriculum challenges as Miss B, faced her own obstacles when instructed to teach English as if she were in a private institution. This posed a challenge for her, but she made efforts to collaborate with the school and adapt the teaching materials to meet the specific needs of her students in different majors. She took on the task of learning new vocabulary related to unfamiliar fields and modifying existing materials to make them more relevant to all classes of different majors.

Additionally, both novice teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their employment rights. Miss B needed to work elsewhere to support her financial needs, offering private English lessons in her free time to supplement her income. Nearly the same, Miss A highlighted the issue of teachers having multiple classes in other schools, resulting in an increased workload for her and the responsibility of handling a larger number of classes compared to her senior colleagues. Teachers hold a strategic position in determining the direction of national education. However, when looking at the welfare of teachers in Indonesia, many of them still face challenges in attaining their well-being. Consequently, situations like those experienced by the two novice teachers are not uncommon. Dissatisfaction with salaries often compels teachers to seek other employment opportunities that can meet their financial needs. The wages of teachers and administrative staff should be fair and equitable, taking into account factors such as their qualifications, training, and responsibilities and there should be no salary disparities based on gender, subject taught, or grade level (Hughes, 2016). Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the future of our society, and their compensation should reflect the value of their contributions to education.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings discussed in this study shed light on the challenges faced by novice teachers in their professional development and how they overcome the challenges. The research highlighted the importance of personal development, scholarly publications, and innovative contributions for teachers' growth. Miss B exemplified a proactive approach to professional development, actively engaging in the SMK PK program and attending seminars to enhance her knowledge and skills. On the other hand, Miss A, despite not having attended seminars or workshops, pursued a master's degree and engaged in a mini-research project to improve her teaching quality.

The study also revealed the challenges novice teachers encounter, particularly in the areas of curriculum understanding, lesson planning, and instructional methods. Additionally, social status and identity challenges, such as

dissatisfaction with remuneration and increased workload, were identified. These challenges emphasize the need for ongoing support and professional development opportunities for novice teachers.

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