

RISE PROGRAMME IN INDONESIA

Becoming a Teacher: How Policy Shapes Novice Teacher Professional Identity Formation in Indonesia

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Why study the early years of a teacher's career trajectory?

Novice teachers are in the phase of figuring out what matters in teaching and the teaching profession. **These years are critical for reconciling the personal attributes of teachers and demands from the profession** (Pillen et al., 2013; Akkerman and Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004).



Documenting teachers' experiences as they navigate their early career will **provide us a better understanding of how to support novice teachers overcome the challenges they encounter early on.**

Why is it important to understand how policy shapes teacher experience?

The subjective experience of teachers is often overlooked in the international education literature.



Previous studies tend to focus on quantitative evaluations of the impact of teacher policies on teachers' behavior as employees (Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2021; Ingersoll, Merrill & May, 2016; Adnot, Dee, Katz & Wyckoff, 2017) **rather than on their understanding of the teaching profession or their interactions with students as teachers.**

Why is it important to understand how policy shapes teacher experience, especially in Indonesia?

Despite repeated attempts to reform teacher **performance in recent decades, poor teaching quality persists** (Beatty et al, 2021; Chang et al., 2014; De Ree et al., 2017).



To explain how teacher policies influence teacher quality, **it is important to understand how these policies affect teacher's perspective and experience.**

Teacher Professional Identity in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

In low- and middle-income countries, teacher policies and working conditions influence teacher identity formation more than a teacher's personal aspects

(Ruohotie-Lyhty et al., 2021; Ávalos and Valenzuela, 2016; Barrett, 2008; Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007; Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002).

Ghanaian case - Akyeampong and Stephens (2002)



- **Nearly 80%** of novice teachers in their study cited **poor service conditions as a major disincentive of teaching.**
- Ghanaian novice teachers with higher socio-economic backgrounds expressed little desire to teach in primary schools, mainly because **the job did not elevate their status and insufficient fringe benefits.**

Tanzanian case - Barret (2008)



- Younger Tanzanian teachers often identified themselves as **self-improvers and demanded a model of professionalism that could protect them from low-pay working conditions.**
- Teacher policies and the low pay made young teachers often identified as fretful hard-workers, especially when they worked in a stifling environment.
- Better employment policies for teachers, such as the **performance model of professionalism, strengthened teacher accountability,** leading to positive work culture in Tanzania's public school system.

Chilean case - Ávalos and Valenzuela (2016)



- A high percentage (**40% or more**) of novice teachers **leave the profession within five years of being on the job.**
- The high attrition rate was due to **teachers' dissatisfaction with the school context and working conditions.** These included sub-standard remuneration, lack of complementary benefits, and inadequate resources and school facilities.
- **Changes in professional satisfaction during the early years largely determined a teacher's decision to leave**—even when their self-efficacy had improved.

The Present Study – Lesson from Indonesian Novice Teachers

This study collected data from **sixteen novice primary school teachers** using **narrative analytical approach**.



Teachers were required to **write a reflective journal entry every other month**.

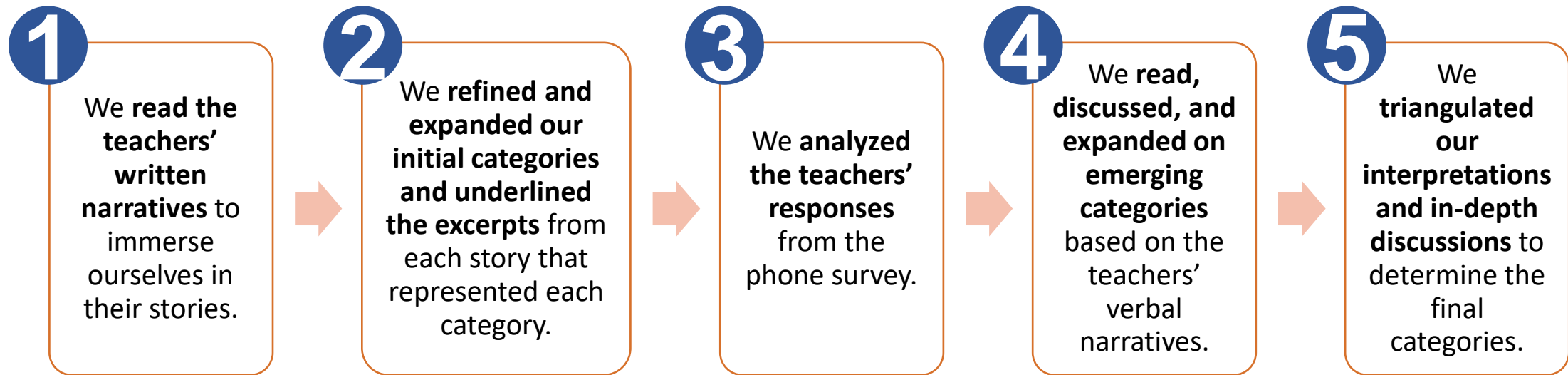


In between journal entries, **we interviewed the teachers by phone** to elaborate on or clarify information they wrote in their journals.



Analysis in the paper aims **to identify key themes in the professional identify development of these novice teachers and highlights the strong influence—and ongoing shortcomings—of teacher policy on these early-career lived experiences**.

We followed the methods that relied on Polkinghorne’s paradigmatic analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995; Macías Villegas et al., 2020) through the following five steps:



The stories related to the identity development shared by the novice teachers revolve around five themes:

- 1** Initial motivation to enter the profession
- 2** Beliefs about teaching and the teaching profession
- 3** Satisfaction with working conditions (incl. recruitment, remuneration, workload)
- 4** Commitment to the teaching profession and career aspiration

Key Results (Cont'd)

The key difficulty teachers face is the lack of support.

- Their initial education and training are disconnected from classroom realities, and it is difficult to establish supportive relations with more experienced colleagues and parents.
- This is compounded by inadequate resources and policies that do not prioritize learning/teacher professional and personal well-being.

Some key results that offer an interesting contrast to those in the existing literature:

- **Teachers emphasized their relationship with students as central to their ideal of teaching.** They focus on shaping students' characters and transmitting values rather than maximizing test scores.
- **Most teachers in the sample had a long-term motivation to become teachers** and were committed to pursuing a full career as teachers.
- **Civil servant status is seen as central to teachers' professional integrity** and their commitment to staying in the profession.
 - **This may suggest the need to separate the recruitment, deployment, and management of teachers from the rest of the civil servant.**

Thank You



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