

Islam and professional identity: Exploring the influence of religion in shaping the English teacher professional identities in Indonesia and Thailand

Zulfi Zumala Dwi Andriani^{1*}, Naza Ilil Mubarakah², Siti Hawa Luemea³

¹Prodi Tadris Bahasa Inggris, Universitas KH Mukhtar Syafaat, Banyuwangi, Indonesia; email: zumalazumala@iaida.ac.id

²Prodi Tadris Bahasa Inggris, Universitas KH Mukhtar Syafaat, Banyuwangi, Indonesia; email: nazalanazailiz@gmail.com

³Bukit Islamiah School, Narathiwat, Thailand; email: sitihawa0801086784@gmail.com

*Corresponding author:
zumalazumala@iaida.ac.id

Article history:

Received: 23 June 2025
Revised: 27 August 2025; 7
September 2025; 15 November
2025; 3 January 2026
Accepted: 12 January 2026
Published: 28 February 2026

Citation: Andriani, Z. Z. D.,
Mubarakah, N. I., & Luemea, S.
H. (2026). Islam and professional
identity; Exploring the influence
of religion in shaping the English
teacher professional identities in
Indonesia and Thailand. *English
Learning Innovation*, 7(1). 324-
340.
<https://doi.org/10.22219/englie.v7i1.42811>

Copyright © 2026: Andriani et al.
This is an open access article
under the CC-BY-SA license



P-ISSN 2723-7400

E-ISSN 2723-7419

ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of Islamic values on the professional identity of muslim english teachers in indonesia and thailand. while existing literature on teacher identity often emphasizes gender, race, and christian contexts, the role of islam remains underexamined. employing a narrative inquiry approach, this research draws on in-depth interviews and classroom observations of two english teachers—one from a pesantren in Indonesia and another from an islamic private school in southern Thailand. Thematic analysis reveals three key dimensions through which islam shapes teacher identity: as a motivational force in choosing the profession, as integrated content within english teaching materials, and as a guiding framework for upholding students' religious values. The findings suggest that religious identity significantly informs pedagogical practices and teacher-student interactions. However, the prioritization of moral and religious instruction may at times overshadow the development of students' English language proficiency. The study recommends that school stakeholders critically evaluate curriculum design to ensure a balanced integration of religious values and language competency.

Keywords: Islam, Teacher, Teacher's Professional Identity, Indonesia, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Teacher professional identity pertains to the professional identity of educators, as [Gee \(2000\)](#), [Kim and Uysal \(2025\)](#), and [Yazan \(2022\)](#) asserts that identity encompasses how individuals are perceived by others and how they comprehend themselves. Teacher professional identity encompasses more than only the cognitive dimension,

which pertains to the teacher's educational background and experiences. It is also intimately linked to teachers' beliefs and feelings regarding their teaching. Teacher professional identity encompasses both previous and future identities, which influence their pedagogical approaches (Barkhuizen & Mendieta, 2020; Wahyudi, 2026).

Indeed, religion as part of identity is also constructing and influencing teacher professional identity. Ball and Goodson (1985), Karimpour et al. (2024), and Nazari (2024) argue that the relationship between religion and teacher professional identity is not just more practical, but it is impossible to separate one's personal and professional identities including religion. As it supported by the empirical research that within the last three decade that religious worldview and religious beliefs are influencing teacher's pedagogical practice teacher's identity (James et al., 2014; Mansour, 2008; White, 2009). But the research related to English professional identity and religion are still focusing to Christian and westerner's context (Johnston & Varghese, 2006; Pennycook & Makoni, 2005). The relationship between other belief system (Islam) is under- examined. Moreover, it is needed to have more inclusive research which covers other than Christianity and Western context (Wong, 2014).

Teacher professional identity is described as a teacher's sense of their professional (Tajeddin & Yazan, 2024; Yazan, 2022). Miller et al. (2017) describe teacher professional identity as the self-transformation involved in being and becoming a teacher through the process of teaching. Barkhuizen and Mendieta (2020) asserted that the role of a teacher constitutes a form of identity labor, encompassing both their historical and envisioned future identities, which influence all facets of their educational practice. Teacher professional identity is connected to the affirmation of values and beliefs, influenced by several environments, including national, regional, school contexts, and teacher-student interactions (Broadfoot et al., 1988; Verkuyten & De Wolf, 2002; Vu, 2023). Consequently, the teaching process of educators is perpetually transforming their identities and aspirations.

The discussion about the relationship between religion especially Islam and English teaching remains under explored. The growing body of research is also still focusing on analyzing multiple identity of English teacher such as race, ethnicity, nationality and gender (Nabukeera, 2020; Gracia et al., 2022). Among many possible reasons, the first is the narrow conceptualization of language, learner, and teaching and learning in the field of applied linguistics (Han, 2018). Language teachers is viewed as a technician who must apply right methodology in the class, things like religion that influence the construction of teacher identity are still rarely discussed. The second reason is the value of separation between church and state, which implied the discussion of religion in the public schools is silenced (White, 2009). Furthermore, Vaccino-Salvadore (2024) added the discussion about English language teaching has focused on a Christian religious identity and how this plays out in the teaching English. If the teacher whole identity should be examined, then the religious aspect should be examined as the part of teacher's professional identity. since, religion influences teacher's professional identity and practice consciously and unconsciously. Consequently, it is no surprise that "classroom decision-making, relationships with students, professional identity and development, and overall pedagogy" might be

influenced by a teacher's faith and spirituality spirituality (Baurain, 2013; Muhalim, 2023; Olshefski, 2021).

The influence of religion in the professional identity construction was discussed by Knowles et al. (1992) and his formation of an "image of self-as- teacher". The first major components include childhood experience, teacher role models and teaching experiences. The components draw the conclusion that people's biographical experience and early experience influence teacher's professional identity. therefore, religious experiences in relation to belief, purpose, prayer, and practice will interplay with how teachers view their role as professionals (White, 2009; Jarvis, 2021).

The research finding of Baurain (2013) who discussed about 11 Christian overseas English teacher in relation to professional identity found that there are three ways of religion influenced professional identity, namely professionalism, relationality and witness. In a similar, Ding and De Costa (2018) examined the lived experience of a veteran English lecturer in China and found that Buddhism helped "transform her professional identity from an English instructor who cared only about language points, to an English teacher who emphasized the meaning of using language and who cultivated and educated students". Furthermore, in the context of Hinduism, Sharma (2024) argues that religious values and beliefs is the very foundation of what is means to teach and learn. While in the context of Islam, Almayez (2022) which investigated of religion within professional identity among English language teachers in Saudi Arabia found that Islam was the central of English teacher's professional identity in three ways; supporting wellbeing, shaping relationship with the students and providing safeguard for student's religious value. Vaccino-Salvadore (2024) also examined about religious identities of English teachers in Kuwait which resulted that Islam is closely engaging to teacher's professional practice. Such studies are pointing out that the relation to the intersectionality of language teachers' religions and their professional identities. However, the study which focusing to the influence of Islam in shaping the professional identity of Muslim English teachers in Indonesia and Thailand remains under explored.

English plays a complex role in Asia, particularly in Southeast Asian nations, shaped by past imperialism, trade, and globalization. The historical introduction of English in numerous Asian nations was primarily a consequence of British and American colonialism and imperialism, resulting in a persistent linguistic (Juwariyah, 2021; Kobayashi, 2017). In modern Asia, English serves as a crucial lingua franca that enables contact among many language populations. Asia possesses the highest population of English speakers globally, establishing English as the working language among the member states of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), which includes Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (Hamid, 2023; Zein et al., 2020).

Furthermore, The Indonesian government designated English as the mandatory foreign language, supplanting Dutch. English was officially introduced as a subject in junior and senior high schools in 1991 and is currently a primary foreign language frequently taught from primary school levels, as well as extensively utilized in higher education and professional environments. English is imparted not just in formal

educational institutions but also in Islamic religious schools, such as Pesantren. The widespread use of English as an international language affects the pesantren community's viewpoint on integrating English into pesantren (Irham, 2023; Pramesti, 2018; Sari, 2023). Pesantren, first established for religious instruction, has begun to adapt and evolve in the realm of English language education. English is taught as a foreign language in Pesantren alongside Arabic, with various adaptations and adjustments to the curriculum, methodologies, and instructional materials. To ensure that English language acquisition in Pesantren aligns with the Islamic ideals imparted in Pesantren (Andriani, 2024).

While In Thailand, English is considered a foreign language, and the majority of Thais acknowledge its significance for international communication. Nonetheless, the Thai language predominates among the Thai populace, resulting in a very limited percentage of Thais possessing proficiency in English (Bolton, 2008). Like Indonesia, English was mandated as a compulsory subject in schools from Grade 1 to Grade 12 (Trakulkasemsuk, 2018). In contrast to other regions in Thailand, the Deep South is distinctive due to its predominantly Muslim student population and the prevalence of Islamic culture. In the Deep South, the populace mostly employs Malay for daily communication, while Thai and English serve as secondary and tertiary languages, respectively. The Deep South region of Thailand is predominantly Muslim, comprising three provinces: Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. These three locations host the majority of private Islamic schools, and most Muslim parents permit their children to attend these institutions. Private Islamic schools provide a curriculum that integrates Islamic and secular subjects, including English (Assalihee & Boonsuk, 2022). In the realm of English Language Teaching, pupils in Islamic private schools achieve worse scores on the annual exams compared to their counterparts in other regions of Thailand (National Institute of Educational Testing Service, 2017). The study revealed that most students in the Deep South did not consider English to be a vital language for their everyday existence (Srisueb & Wasanasomsithi, 2010).

Moreover, certain Islamic schools including Pesantren in Indonesia prioritize Islamic religious content over secular subjects, including English. English is being integrated into Pesantren, albeit with minimal allocation in both time and curriculum; consequently, certain Pesantren must modify and tailor English content to align with their local environment. Furthermore, English instruction in private Islamic schools in Deep South Thailand must be tailored to the local environment, as most residents are Malay Muslims with distinct linguistic and cultural identities that differ significantly from most learners throughout Thailand.

Furthermore, in this age of globalization, the necessity of mastering English is escalating, therefore it is crucial to comprehend the impact of religion on instructors' professional identity. Stirling (2025) indicates that the Muslim population in Indonesia is approximately 87%, however in Thailand, although being a minority, the Muslim community wields considerable influence in several locations. This research seeks to examine the impact of Islamic religion on the formation of English professional identity by analyzing the lived experiences of an English teacher from Indonesia and one from Thailand. This study will concentrate on analyzing English teachers who inside Islamic institution. at Indonesia, it will be sourced by English teachers

instructing at Pesantren. Simultaneously, research will concentrate on English teachers at Islamic schools located in Thailand's Deep South, particularly in Narathiwat Province, which has a predominantly Muslim population, alongside Pattani and Yala provinces. Deep South Thailand is distinctive due to its predominantly Muslim student population, who engage with Islamic culture and utilize Malay as their major language for daily communication (Assalihee & Boonsuk, 2022).

This study seeks to address critical inquiries concerning the impact of Islam on the professional identity of Muslim English educators in Indonesia and Thailand. This research specifically examines the impact of Islamic religious principles on pedagogical methods, teacher student interactions, and teacher professional development. This research aims to ascertain the influence of Islamic religion on the professional identity of English instructors and the consequent implications for teaching practices in both nations. Additionally, the findings of this research provide recommendations to school stakeholders especially in Islamic schools to enhance the professional development of Muslim English educators in Indonesia and Thailand. detailed literature survey or a summary of the result.

METHODS

Research design

The present study was a narrative inquiry, it is defined as the narrative or stories used in qualitative research to describe human action and experience (Polkinghorne, 1995). Based on applied linguistics theory, narrative inquiry has four main conceptions: canonical stories, life histories, grand narratives, and narratives in interaction (Downey & Clandinin, 2019). The narrative story of two English teachers became the primary data for the research. The participant in this study were two English language teachers at two private Islamic school in Indonesia and Thailand. The research question guiding this study was regarding the influence of the Islamic religion on the professional identity of Muslim English teachers in Indonesia and Thailand. The criteria in choosing the participant had to be (1) English teachers, (2) Muslims, (3) teaching within the Indonesia and Thailand Education system specifically teaching in Islamic school at least more than five years.

Participant

This study involves two English teachers from Islamic educational settings in Southeast Asia, whose personal, educational, and professional backgrounds are closely connected to Pesantren and Islamic-affiliated schools. Lala, an Indonesian English teacher, was born and reared in a devout family. She has been residing in the Pesantren commune and instructing at a school affiliated with it. Lala's schooling predominantly occurred at Pesantren, spanning from secondary school to university level. Now, Lala is being an English teacher in Islamic private school belonged to Pesantren community at the morning, while at afternoon she is a teacher for kids around Pesantren to learn Al Qur'an. At the school, Lala is also Mandarin language

teacher and most of her students are students of Pesantren.

Jasmine, is Thailand English teacher, exactly in Islamic private school in Narathiwat Province. She began her education in Islamic private school and took English teaching education in Islamic private University in Indonesia.

Data collection

The narrative story of the participants was collected through in-depth interview serves as the primary data source for this study (Polkinghorne, 1995; Downey & Clandinin, 2019). The crucial aspect of utilizing interviews is to comprehend the lived experiences of the participants. During the interview process, the researcher may reveal participants' emotions, motivations, beliefs, perceptions, views, thoughts, and interpretations of their surroundings (Tripp, 1994). Particularly the viewpoint concerning their expertise as an English educator. The interview was conducted during two meetings. The initial interview lasts around one hour, focusing on the participant's background, including familial and educational aspects. The second interview lasted one hour and focused on the role of religion in the English classroom, the contact with students, and the resources utilized in the classroom. The interview procedure commenced with an introduction of myself and the objective of the interview. The researchers recorded the entire conversation throughout the interview using my phone, with the participant's consent.

The second data collection involved classroom observation. The observation aimed to enhance awareness of participants' teaching practices and their interactions with the students inside the classroom (O'Leary, 2020; Owen-Smith & Coast, 2017). The observation occurred over two sessions at the end of December and the beginning of December 2024-January 2025. As a researcher, I served as the observer while actively participating in the class during the observation.

Data was gathered using voice recordings for interviews and notes taken during observations. The voice recording is subsequently transcribed manually and verified by the informants. The verification process by informants was conducted to validate the interview outcomes (Azevedo et al., 2017; Butler, 2015).

Data Analysis

This study applied a thematic analysis approach to analyse the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Forbes, 2022; Terry et al., 2017). The collected data was in Bahasa Indonesia and Malay for Thailand teacher and translated into English. To familiarize myself with the data, it is read many times actively and critically. Then, all data from interview transcript were coded and looked for the pattern theme among the data. The second stage, the data was compared and grouped in the sub themes. In the last stage, the coded data was classified from step two into general themes; (1) participants' motivation being English teacher (2) the materials taught in the classroom (3) teachers- students interaction.

RESULTS

The findings are delivered based on the result of the analysis. The first section will discuss Islam as the intention or motivation as an English teacher, the second is integrating of Islam in English teaching materials and the last is upholding students' religious values and understanding.

The Intention or motivation as an English Teacher

There are several motivations for someone to become an English teacher, such as the motivation to get to know more about international culture [Farid et al. \(2023\)](#) or to make English language skills a way of preaching ([Farid & Lamb, 2020](#)). Based on the interview with one of the informants, one of the reasons for becoming an English teacher is following her mother's advice or to seek her mother's approval.

My mother's insisted me to continue my study in Pesantren Blokagung (Lala)

The interview sample indicates that Lala values her mother's choice over her own in her work as an English teacher. Lala's narrative elucidates her educational journey and her eventual decision to pursue the English Education Department. Lala's selection of a department subsequently resulted in her becoming an English teacher at a private school affiliated with a Pesantren. Lala had expressed her desire to pursue studies in journalism in order to become a journalist. Upon completing her studies at senior high school outside the city, Lala's family's financial situation became precarious, prompting her mother to request that she come home and pursue her education at a campus-based Pesantren near their residence.

In expressing the intention of following the mother's choice for pursuing the education near the home, Lala used the word "Ridlo". In Islamic tradition, "Ridlo" denotes an attitude of acceptance and sincerity towards all of God's provisions, whether favorable or unfavorable ([Azhar, 2022](#)). In Islam, parental consent is regarded as a manifestation of divine approval ([Zailany, 2024](#)). This conviction subsequently influenced Lala's decision to adhere to her mother's wishes, resulting in her current role as an English teacher.

My intention to be English teacher is dedicating myself to Pesantren (Lala)

Lala's decision for coming home for the sake of following her mother's intention, she then continued her study in English department in campus of STAIDA near her home. STAIDA was the university based on pesantren in which most of students are santri living in Pesantren. Lala ensured that her family respecting the value of pesantren including being a teacher in pesantren.

Additionally, Lala has two motivations for becoming an English teacher: the first is to gain her mother's favor, and the second is to commit herself to the Pesantren. Lala seeks to dedicate herself as an English teacher, as the Pesantren offers numerous

blessings to her and her family. For her, service at Pesantren encompasses not only imparting religious knowledge but also fulfilling the role of an English instructor for the students.

Integration of Islamic value in Materials

The impact of religion on a teacher's professional identity is seen in the deliberate and inadvertent incorporation of religious content into English materials. Lala acknowledged that she deliberately incorporated elements beyond English content to provide her students with insights on contemporary challenges, particularly those pertaining to student development, including Islamic topics.

If men and women are different *mahrms*, it's like this. from there I will introduce the way of shaking hands in Islam (Lala)

Most of Lala's students are santri (students of pesantren) living in pesantren they are explicitly forbidden from bringing cell phones, so severely restricting access to the outside world. Lala believes that it is crucial to recall and advise her students about interaction, particularly within the context of Islam. Lala proactively incorporates Islamic materials into her English instruction in the classroom. During her interview, Lala articulated her objective in elucidating the concept of mahrom, namely the delineations between men and women in Islam, which are integrated into the introductory material. Lala instructs on the limitations of which body parts may be touched by non-mahram.

Jasmine, an English teacher in a junior high school in Southern Thailand, incorporates Islamic values into her teaching. In her teaching, Jasmine resembles Lala, who does not adhere strictly to the English curriculum but proactively incorporates Islamic content into the English classroom.

Americans wake up at this time. ASEAN people wake up at this time. Muslims have to wake up earlier to be able to pray sunnah before dawn. So, they can compare with other religions (Jasmine)

In her interview, Yasmin elucidated the distinction between awakening Americans and ASEAN (Thai) or Muslim individuals. Muslims arise early in the morning due to the duty of doing the dawn prayer and the recommendation to engage in the sunnah prayer of tahajud during the last third of the night. Yasmin incorporates Islamic beliefs into her English study. Jasmine stated in her interview that Islamic content can engage pupils' interest in learning English. During class, Yasmin would recount narratives about the prophets prior to commencing the lesson. Furthermore, the children exhibit greater enthusiasm for listening to the prophet's stories than for English teachings. Consequently, Jasmine took the initiative to engage her students in English lessons for a few minutes before narrating the stories about the prophets. Jasmine asserts that this is highly potent and effective in capturing students' attention on the lesson for a brief period.

Like this now there is flood in Thailand. We can integrate it with the story of

Prophet Noah, and his disobedient son. Look at it. History repeats itself. People who disbelieve, who reject what Allah wants, he rejects. Look at our place. If there is no mistake in faith, Allah forgives sins and increases our faith (Jasmine)

Furthermore, while engaging students in English lessons, Jasmine utilizes the prophet's narrative to impart guidance, particularly aimed at enhancing their comprehension and religious values. In the interview extract, Jasmine discussed the insights derived from the narrative of the prophet Noah, which is linked to the deluge that affected the southern region of Thailand. Incorporating the narratives of the prophets into English lesson demonstrates the teacher's aim to support students' religious values within the classroom. This demonstrates that Lala and Jasmine steadfastly maintain their religious identity both within and beyond the classroom, as evidenced by their teaching approach, which routinely incorporates Islamic content into English classes.

Upholding students' religious value

The next finding is the safeguarding of students' religious value, and this is the part where Jasmine and Lala tell in detail through the interview. Lala, who has lived in pesantren environment since she was a child until she became a teacher, feels obliged to remind her students about adolescent problems by strengthening her students' religious value through English lessons. In addition, Lala's background as a guidance and counseling teacher further strengthens her role to always remind and advise her students both in and out of class.

Your boyfriend asks for touching your hand, but you don't want it, and then in the end your boyfriend says this to you, if you don't want it, it's okay, but we're breaking up. Then you're afraid, hey, be a smart girl (Lala)

Lala said that in English class, she also included religious advice that was not only related to English. Such as discussing the relationship between men and women, which body parts can be touched, and which parts cannot be touched when close to the opposite sex who are not mahram. Lala tries to strengthen the understanding of religion in students through learning English in class.

If he commits *zina* with this person, then he cannot eat his wealth, cannot be a marriage guardian. So, there is another example coming in. Join with the word that he only asked one. So that they can develop and know more widely than just one word (Jasmine).

Likewise, Jasmine also strengthens the understanding of Islam through learning English. In the context of educational institutions in Southern Thailand which have a majority Muslim population, the characteristics of teachers and students are almost the same as the context of educational institutions where Lala teaches in Indonesia. In her interview, Yasmin talked about a question from one of her students in English class about *zina* (sexual intercourse outside marriage) which is forbidden in Islam. Yasmin then answered her student's question by explaining further about the law of

committing zina while teaching her students new vocabulary.

The mission of Islamic schools is cultivating Islamic value and teaching it to the students. Lala and Yasmin consider developing students' religious competency as their professional priority, so both are consistently inserting religious materials in English learning. The goal is to strengthen the students' religious values.

DISCUSSION

Likewise, Jasmine also strengthens the understanding of Islam through learning English. In the context of educational institutions in Southern Thailand which have a majority Muslim population, the characteristics of teachers and students are almost the same as the context of educational institutions where Lala teaches in Indonesia. In her interview, Yasmin talked about a question from one of her students in English class about *zina* (sexual intercourse outside marriage) which is forbidden in Islam. Yasmin then answered her student's question by explaining further about the law of committing zina while teaching her students new vocabulary.

The mission of Islamic schools is cultivating Islamic value and teaching it to the students. Lala and Yasmin consider developing students' religious competency as their professional priority, so both are consistently inserting religious materials in English learning. The goal is to strengthen the students' religious values.

The research is based on interviews and observational data collected from two informants: Lala from Indonesia and Yasmin from Thailand. It demonstrated that religion has impacted professional identity in three ways; firstly, religion serves as the aim or motive for becoming an English teacher. The motivation to become an English teacher is shaped by various factors, including culture, gender, color, ethnicity, class, religion, and the workplace (Markus, 2016). This indicates that religion specifically influences teachers' motivation in the classroom, as mentioned by Sarwari et al. (2024), who highlighting the crucial relationship between spiritual motivation, confidence, and the classroom atmosphere.

Secondly, the investigation indicated that religion serves as integrative content in the English classroom. According to White (2009), professional identity is shaped by external factors, including religion, which instructors indirectly incorporate into the classroom by infusing religious content into the English curriculum. According to Wong and Mahboob (2018), discussing religion in the classroom can have a beneficial role in connecting students with their surrounding culture and religion. Furthermore, Rohmah (2012) and Umam (2014) affirmed that to preserve Islamic identity, particularly in English classrooms, the contents must be aligned with Islamic values. The incorporation of Islamic content in the classroom can be executed by an English teacher possessing a robust Islamic identity and a comprehensive understanding of Islam.

The third result indicated that the impact of religion on English teachers' professional identity is evident in the relationship between teachers and students, wherein teachers aim to support students' religious values in the English classroom. The research of

Qoyyimah et al. (2023) indicate that English teachers in Indonesia's private Islamic schools perceive their professional identity as facilitators of students' religiosity, often at the detriment of their obligation to enhance students' English as an International Language (EIL) competence. The research findings highlighted that, in theory, religion has significantly influenced the professional identity of teachers in both Indonesia and Thailand. This outcome aligns with prior research demonstrating the impact of dominant religion and religious ideology on teachers' behaviors and collegial relationships (Baurain, 2013). It suggests that English instruction is not solely connected to culture and communication skills, but also to the religious ideologies that teachers impart in the classroom.

This study presents two contrasting implications: firstly, there is a transition in English instruction, which has historically centered on native speakers and Christian perspectives, now shifting towards a specific cultural and religious setting, namely Islam. This study presents compelling evidence that Islam merits investigation, as it can influence the identity and practices of language educators (Almayez, 2022). The second consequence pertains to teacher professional identity, which, connected with religion, suggests that teachers prioritize sustaining students' religious values over enhancing their knowledge and English proficiency (Lee & Jang, 2023; Vitanova, 2018). It suggested that the emphasis of teaching and learning is on discussing moral issues rather than enhancing students' proficiency in English. However, this research implied to the policy maker especially government and stakeholders of the schools, they should construct and develop English materials which accommodate the religious values both teacher and students especially in the context of Islamic institution and supervised by the schools. Otherwise, school stakeholders must evaluate and pay more attention to the material taught by teachers. so that English language competency is unbeatable with moral and religious teaching in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic religious identity plays a formative role in shaping the professional identity of Muslim English teachers in Indonesia and Thailand. Through narrative inquiry, three keys influences emerged: religion as a motivational factor in becoming an English teacher, religion as integrated content in English instruction, and religion as a guiding force in upholding students' moral and spiritual values. These findings underscore the significance of personal faith in shaping pedagogical decisions and teacher-student relationships as well as the other influences such as gender, race and nationality.

While the integration of religious values enriches the educational experience, it also raises concerns about the potential imbalance between moral instruction and language proficiency. Therefore, it is essential for school stakeholders-particularly in Islamic institutions-to develop curricula that harmonize religious values with English language competency. The research limits to two English teacher from two school, it is hoped that in the future research should expand this inquiry to more diverse educational settings, including schools with multi-faith student populations, to further explore how religious identity interacts with professional practice across contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

None

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

Andriani, Z. Z. D: Conceptualization (lead), methodology (lead), formal analysis (lead), investigation (lead), data curation (lead), writing – original draft (lead), writing – review & editing (supporting), visualization (lead). Mubarokah, N. I., & Luemea, S. H. Conceptualization (supporting), methodology (lead), data collection (lead).

REFERENCES

- Almayez, M. (2022). Investigating the place of religion within the professional identity construction of two Muslim English language teachers in Saudi Arabia. *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2091632>
- Andriani, Z. Z. D. (2024). Adjustment and adaptation: English curriculum development in pesantren. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 11(2), 249–266. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v11i2.19862>
- Assalihee, M., & Boonsuk, Y. (2022). Factors obstructing English teaching effectiveness: teacher voices from Thailand’s deep south. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 10(1), 155–172. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.10.1.08>
- Azevedo, V., Carvalho, M., Fernandes-Costa, F., Mesquita, S., Soares, J., Teixeira, F., & Maia, Â. (2017). Interview transcription: Conceptual issues, practical guidelines, and challenges. *Revista de Enfermagem Referência*, 4(14), 159–167. <https://doi.org/10.12707/RIV17018>
- Azhar, M. (2022). Attitude relation, online news, appraisal theory. *Pendalas: Jurnal Penelitian Tindakan Kelas Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 2(2), 103–109. <https://doi.org/10.47006/pendalas.v2i2.103>
- Ball, S. J., & Goodson, I. F. (1985). *Understanding teachers: Concepts and contexts. Teachers’ Lives and Careers* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Barkhuizen, G., & Mendieta, J. (2020). Teacher identity and good language teachers. In C. Griffiths & Z. Tajeddin (Eds.), *Lessons from Good Language Teachers* (pp. 3–15), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108774390.004>
- Baurain, B. (2013). *Religious faith, teacher knowledge, and overseas Christian ESOL teachers*. (Publication No. AAI3604617.) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln]. Digital Commons University of Nebraska-Lincoln <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dissertations/AAI3604617>.

- Bolton, K. (2008). English in Asia, Asian Englishes, and the issue of proficiency. *English Today*, 24(2), 3–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S026607840800014X>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publication India.
- Broadfoot, P., Osborn, M., Gilly, M., & Paillet, A. (1988). What professional responsibility means to teachers: National contexts and classroom constants. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 9(3), 265–287.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1392793>
- Butler, C. (2015). Making interview transcripts real: The reader's response. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(1), 166–176.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017014523482>
- Ding, X., & De Costa, P. I. (2018). Faith-Based teacher emotional experiences: A case study of a veteran English lecturer in China. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 41(4), 532–551. <https://doi.org/10.1515/CJAL-2018-0037>
- Downey, C. A., & Clandinin, D. J. (2019). *Narrative inquiry as reflective practice: Tensions and possibilities*. In *Journeys in Narrative Inquiry* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Farid, A., & Lamb, M. (2020). English for Da'wah? L2 motivation in Indonesian pesantren schools. *System*, 94, 102310.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102310>
- Farid, A., Adara, R. A., & Ashar, S. (2023). The impacts of school on English learners' motivation in Indonesian Islamic schools. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 10(2), 1-19.
<https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v10i2.14656>
- Forbes, M. (2022). Thematic analysis: A practical guide. *Sage Journals*, 22(2), 132–135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035719X211058251>
- Gee, J. P. (2000). Chapter 3: Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Sage Journals*, 25(1), 99–125. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X0250010>
- Gracia, E. P., Rodríguez, R. S., & Pedrajas, A. P. (2022). Teachers' professional identity construction: A review of the literature. *Profesorado, Revista de Currículum y Formación Del Profesorado*, 26(1), 371–393.
<https://doi.org/10.30827/profesorado.v26i1.13211>
- Hamid, M. O. (2023). English as a Southern language. *Language in Society*, 52(3), 409–432. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0047404522000069>
- Han, H. (2018). Studying religion and language teaching and learning: Building a subfield. *The Modern Language Journal*, 102(2), 432–445.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12486>
- Irham, I. (2023). English language teaching in bilingual pesantren in Indonesia. In P. Chamness lida, E., Mikulec, & M. F. Agnello (Eds.), *English Language Education in Rural Contexts* (pp. 203–219). Leiden: BRILL.
https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004549647_012
- James, J. H., Schweber, S., Kunzman, R., Barton, K. C., & Logan, K. (2014). *Religion in the classroom* (1st ed.). Taylor & Francis.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203507445>
- Jarvis, J. (2021). Teacher identity and religion education in life orientation. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, 17(1), 1-6.
<https://doi.org/10.4102/td.v17i1.1076>

- Johnston, B., & Varghese, M. M. (2006). *Neo-imperialism, evangelism, and ELT: Modernist missions and a postmodern profession*. In J. Edge (ed), *(Re-) locating TESOL in an age of empire*. (195–207). London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-0-230-50223-9_11
- Juwariyah, S. (2021). *World Englishes and the teaching of English as an international language: Indonesian teachers' perspectives. and professional development experiences*. [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Arizona] The University of Arizona ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. <http://hdl.handle.net/10150/660783>
- Karimpour, S., Jafari, R., & Nazari, M. (2024). Exploring the role of religious ideology in English Language Teachers' identity construction: A community of practice perspective. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 33(1), 83–92. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-022-00710-0>
- Kim, H. J., & Uysal, H. (2025). *Criticality, agency, and language teacher identities: research and praxis from global teacher education* (1st ed.). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Knowles, J. G., Marlow, S. E., & Muchmore, J. A. (1992). From pedagogy to ideology: Origins and phases of home education in the United States, 1970–1990. *American Journal of Education*, 100(2), 195–235. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1085568>
- Kobayashi, Y. (2017). ASEAN English teachers as a model for international English learners: Modified teaching principles. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 27(3), 682–696. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12173>
- Lee, H., & Jang, G. (2023). Native English teachers' construction and negotiation of professional identities in the context of Korea: An analysis of multilayered nature of identities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 122, 103981. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103981>
- Mansour, N. (2008). The experiences and personal religious beliefs of Egyptian science teachers as a framework for understanding the shaping and reshaping of their beliefs and practices about science-technology-society (STS). *International Journal of Science Education*, 30(12), 1605–1634. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500690701463303>
- Markus, H. R. (2016). What moves people to action? Culture and motivation. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 8, 161–166. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.10.028>
- Miller, E. R., Morgan, B., & Medina, A. L. (2017). Exploring language teacher identity work as ethical self-formation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(S1), 91–105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12371>
- Muhalim, M. (2023). Negotiating religious discourses in English language teaching: Reorienting and reframing dominant English ideologies. *Changing English*, 30(3), 209–222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2023.2217424>
- Nabukeera, O. P. (2020). The positioning of black esl educators in the United States: a narrative study on race, language and identity. *The CATESOL Journal*. 33 (1). 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.5070/b5.35906>
- National Institute of Educational Testing Service. (2017). National educational test reporting system (o-net). Bangkok: National Institute of Educational Testing Service.

- Nazari, M. (2024). Ecological Intersections of Religious Ideology, Agency, and Identity: Voices of Iranian English Language Teachers. *TESL-EJ*, 28(1), 1994-2012. <https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.28109s3>
- O’Leary, M. (2020). *Classroom observation: A guide to the effective observation of teaching and learning* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315630243>
- Olshefski, C. A. (2021). Anti-racist, anti-gay: A white Evangelical English teacher’s negotiations of her faith and critical inquiry. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 20(1), 108–123. <https://doi.org/10.1108/etpc-10-2019-0124>
- Owen-Smith, A., & Coast, J. (2017). Understanding data collection: interviews, focus groups and observation. In J. Coast (Ed.), *Qualitative methods for health economics* (pp. 59-91). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Pennycook, A., & Makoni, S. (2005). The modern mission: The language effects of Christianity. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 4(2), 137–155. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlle0402_5
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839950080103>
- Pramesti, D. (2018). *The teaching of English at pondok pesantren Nurul Falah*. [Master Thesis, UIN Jakarta] Repository UIN Jakarta <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/37702/1/Dwi%20pramesti-FITK>
- Qoyyimah, U., Singh, P., Exley, B., Doherty, C., & Agustiawan, Y. (2023). Professional identity and imagined student identity of EIL teachers in islamic schools. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 22(2), 121–136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2020.1833726>
- Rohmah, Z. (2012). Incorporating Islamic messages in the English teaching in the Indonesian context. *International J. Soc. Sci. & Education*, 2(2), 157–165.
- Sari, D. M. (2023). English language teaching in pesantren: Challenges and strategies. *At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 5(1), 110–123. <https://doi.org/10.51468/jpi.v5i2.174>
- Sarwari, K., Pishghadam, R., & Shayesteh, S. (2024). Examining the roles of spiritual motivation, religiosity, and L2 WTC in English. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 9(1), 58. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-024-00285-x>
- Sharma, V. (2024). Ethical Education: Integrating Buddhist Ethics into Pedagogical Practices. *The Academy of International Mutidiscipliry Research*. 2(12), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14713398>
- Srisueb, P., & Wasanasomsithi, P. (2010). A needs analysis of secondary school students learning English as a third language in Islamic religious schools in Narathiwat province. *Princess of Naradhiwas University Journal*, 2(3), 84–98. <https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.THE.2009.2182>
- Stirling, K. C. (2025). 5 facts about Muslims and Christians in Indonesia. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/03/28/5-facts-about-muslims-and-christians-in-indonesia/>
- Tajeddin, Z., & Yazan, B. (2024). *Language teacher identity tensions: Nexus of agency, emotion, and investment* (1st ed.). Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003402411>

- Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2(17–37), 25.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526405555>
- Trakulkasemsuk, W. (2018). English in Thailand: Looking back to the past, at the present and towards the future. *Asian Englishes*, 20(2), 96–105.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2017.1421602>
- Tripp, D. (1994). Teachers' lives, critical incidents, and professional practice. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 7(1), 65–76.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839940070105>
- Umam, C. (2014). Maintaining Islamic values in English language teaching in Indonesian pesantrens. *DIDAKTIKA Religia: Journal of Islamic Education*, 2(1), 227–242. <https://doi.org/10.30762/didaktika.v2i1.139>
- Vaccino-Salvadore, S. (2024). "My religion guides me, even as a teacher": Examining religious identities of English language teachers in Kuwait. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 23(1), 18–33.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2021.1955685>
- Verkuyten, M., & De Wolf, A. (2002). Ethnic minority identity and group context: Self-descriptions, acculturation attitudes and group evaluations in an intra- and intergroup situation. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 32(6), 781–800. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.121>
- Vitanova, G. (2018). "Just treat me as a teacher!" Mapping language teacher agency through gender, race, and professional discourses. 79, 28–37.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.05.013>
- Vu, N. T. (2023). Student engagement in intercultural competence: A study at Vietnamese colleges. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 47(4), 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.61871/mj.v47n4-4>
- Wahyudi, R. (2026). Criticality, agency, investment, tension, and vulnerability in my Global South teacher-scholar multiple identities: A critical auto-ethnographic account. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 1–14.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2026.2613125>
- White, K. R. (2009). Connecting religion and teacher identity: The unexplored relationship between teachers and religion in public schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(6), 857–866.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.01.004>
- Wong, M. S. (2014). The history, nature and future of faith-informed research in English language teaching. *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*, 1(1), 6-23 <https://jstor.org/stable/community.38865393>
- Wong, M. S., & Mahboob, A. (2018). *Spirituality and English language teaching: Religious explorations of teacher identity, pedagogy and context*. Multilingual Matters.
- Yazan, B. (2022). *Language teacher identity in TESOL. Teacher education and practice as identity work* (1st ed.). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429342875>
- Zailany, R. M. (2024). Pemahaman hadis tentang ridho allah pada ridho orang tua (studi ma'nil hadis). [Undergraduate Thesis, Uin Sunan Kalijogo] Digilib UIN Sunan Kalijogo <http://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/68324>

Zein, S., Sukyadi, D., Hamied, F. A., & Lengkanawati, N. S. (2020). English language education in Indonesia: A review of research (2011–2019). *Language Teaching*, 53(4), 491–523. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444820000208>