

Indonesian Teachers' Professional Development Practices and Needs in Post Pandemic Education

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Abstract

COVID19 pandemic has affected the education sector in multiple ways, particularly in how teachers and students interact in formal schooling. While virtual teaching has been widely expected as the new normal in this unprecedented time, little is known about how teachers grapple with the realities of this new mode of teaching and learning and what their professional development needs are in this context. This article explores teachers' perspectives on their professional development needs in the post-pandemic era through a qualitative survey conducted with 265 Indonesian teachers who taught English at the elementary school, middle school, high school, and college level. The findings of this study showed that teachers used various online platforms to facilitate online learning. However, less than half of the teachers in this study considered their teaching online effective. The teachers' main concerns regarding online learning include their students' inability to participate in online learning and that their online learning was not as effective as their face-to-face learning. The teachers relied on attending webinars as one of the ways to do professional development. They also joined the learning communities to discuss innovation in English language teaching, to get teaching materials, to collaborate with other English teachers, and to share ideas about teaching English. The implication of the study includes the need for creating a virtual space for teachers to learn and exchange ideas with other teachers as a form of continuing professional development.

Keywords: teachers' professional development, EFL, online learning

INTRODUCTION

Covid19 has not just altered our everyday life; it also upends the normal face to face interaction at schools. In order to curb the spread of the deadly coronavirus, governments around the world decided to close schools temporarily and move to virtual learning. In Indonesia, the government issued mandatory school closure in the second week of March

2020. Without a specific plan in place, many schools were vacuumed for more than two weeks. Students and teachers were disconnected because schools were unsure how to proceed in this situation.

After weeks of closure, some school resumes teaching by using different modes. A temporary shift of face-to-face instruction to an alternate delivery model due to crisis circumstances is described as emergency remote teaching (Hodges, 2020). This type of teaching delivery functions to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional support in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available. The various types of remote learning reflected the unique condition of each school. Schools in the high-income school districts, particularly in the wealthy countries which had already equipped their students with devices such as iPad and laptops before the pandemic, could shift to online learning with relative ease. Their facilities had allowed a smooth transition. The ideal condition of transitioning to remote teaching did not occur in many schools located in lower-income neighbourhoods. Thus, creating inequality in access to education in the society (Azubuike et al., 2021; Sahlberg, 2021; Williamson et al., 2020).

In addition to the issue of access inequality, remote online learning poses challenges for the teachers as online learning requires different pedagogical and instructional knowledge and strategies. Insufficient preparation to teach online classes has negatively impacted the learning process during the pandemic (Daumiller et al., 2021). The sudden shift to online teaching left many Indonesian teachers overwhelmed, especially teachers in rural areas (Aditya, 2021; Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Fuad et al., 2020).

Research has shown that Indonesian teachers were not ready to manage online classes. Research conducted by (Churiyah et al., 2020) showed that teachers in rural areas could not deliver online teaching. They relied on providing assignments without sufficient guidance and explanation. Furthermore, (Rasmitadila et al., 2020) found that school from home has posed challenges in terms of technical obstacles, students' participation, and teachers' lack of experience dealing with online tools.

The shift in teaching and learning mode becomes one of the factors in teachers' burnout. (Sokal et al., 2020) suggested that teachers' level of burnout was associated with their attitudes towards technology, attitudes toward change, and efficacy. Since online teaching is relatively new for primary and secondary teachers in Indonesia, the sudden shift to emergency remote learning with an online platform has posed a significant challenge to many teachers. Teachers had little room to make an adjustment to the new mode of teaching and for familiarizing themselves with digital tools for learning. In addition to these challenges, teachers also faced criticism from parents regarding the instructional process on the online platform. This situation has become a new stressor for teachers who are overwhelmed by the demand of their profession (Allen et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020). Teachers need institutional support to cope with the challenges associated with the current demand for online teaching. This support is more readily available for educators who teach

at the college level (Junus et al., 2021). Unfortunately, teachers of the early childhood, primary, and secondary level have limited access to professional development programs for online teaching. It seems that there is an article usage problem here.

As the pandemic, online learning stays longer than expected, and online learning has become a necessity, teacher professional development needs to accommodate the demand of the current situation. A survey conducted by (Trust & Whalen, 2020) with 325 K-12 teachers from Massachusetts, USA, indicated that teachers felt unprepared for the sudden shift to online learning. Over half of the respondents had never tried online or blended learning. These teachers had to rely on informal, self-directed learning to run their remote classrooms.

To overcome the challenge of online learning, (Rice & Deschaine, 2021) proposed two solutions: preparing preservice teachers to advocate for online learning and introducing teachers to effective online communication and relationship building. The first one is a sustainable program related to preparing 21st-century teachers in the teacher education program. The second solution can be realized through teacher professional development programs.

A growing number of studies have paid attention to how social media mediated and reinforced professional learning among teachers at various levels of education. At the higher education level, social media have been utilized to enhance professional learning. The use of social media for faculty professional development highlights the strength of these platforms as the spaces that support participants to become both the producers and the consumers of the information (Krutka et al., 2017; Sullivan et al., 2018). Unlike learning management systems (LMSs), which are often associated with participants' passive role in learning, social media based-professional development programs offer more active participation due to the nature of the social media platforms that allow flexible sharing of information.

Social media platform-supported professional development programs have provided the network communities of learning. Two studies on customized social media platform-based professional development have shown that participants gained professional skills through collaborative learning with peers in the community. In the first study, Sullivan Neu and Yang (2018) investigated the effectiveness of *the Tools of Engagement Project (TOEP)*, a professional development model, in facilitating the faculty and instructional support staff's learning of emerging technologies. Findings showed three effects of the professional development program. The first one is the participants' eagerness to implement the instructional tools immediately after learning about them in the program. The second effect is the vicarious learning that occurred among the participants. The participants considered online community discussions the most valuable part of their experience. The discussion board serves as the space for the participants to share the ways to implement technological tools, thus, allowing the participants to learn from each other's experiences. Finally, the participants were interested in exploring more tools even after their program concluded.

This indicates the willingness of the participants to continue a lifelong learning practice (Sullivan et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Bedford's research (Bedford, 2019) provides insights into faculty's experiences and perceptions of the professional development mediated by social media designed for collaboration and networking. The social media platform was specifically designed to resemble Facebook but with more features that support academic professional development, such as tools for virtual meetings with audio and video components, a shared calendar, a polling and survey feature, email and text capabilities, and a document-sharing file manager. The structured and intensive digital platform-mediated virtual professional development has supported the development of professional networks and interpersonal skills and facilitated collaboration that enhanced the online faculty's ability to facilitate their students.

Social media has also functioned as a medium of discussion outside of face-to-face meeting. (Greenhow et al., 2019) investigated how Twitter was used as a conference backchannel to facilitate participation and further professional learning. Social media have also supported teachers' development of practices, such as described by (Goodyear et al., 2014) in their research report on emerging teachers' community of practice formed in the social media. They found that social media leveraged teacher professional learning by providing the space for mutual engagement, shared repertoire of practice (such as doing things related to innovations in teaching and education) and joint enterprise of achieving the common goal of being an effective teacher.

As our society continues to adjust with the prolonged effect of the Covid 19 pandemic in our education, we need to ensure teachers have the support to learn to use technology for blended learning. (Saboowala & Mishra, 2021) proposed the integration of blended learning in teacher education as a sustainable pedagogy. Similarly, Hakim's study on Saudi Arabian teachers of English showed that techno-led online classes provided engaged EFL learning (Hakim, 2020). Both studies necessitate the preservice and in-service teachers' familiarity with digital technology. This implicates the need to provide professional development, particularly in technology integration in the learning process.

Teacher professional development is a structured program designed to enable teachers to keep updating their knowledge and skills. Despite the obvious need for training related to digital technology for learning (Silvhiany et al., 2022), it is necessary to find out teachers' perspectives regarding their professional development needs in the context of the changing world. This article is aimed to explore Indonesian English language teachers' practices in order to acclimate to the online learning context and to know their professional development needs post-pandemic era by focusing on how teachers managed the emergency remote learning and their expectations for future professional development in post-pandemic education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative survey to garner teachers' opinion about some aspects of online teaching and their professional development needs in the context of emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey consisted of questions on demographic information, teaching experience, mode of teaching during the pandemic, technology use, teachers' perception of their teaching effectiveness, teachers' feelings about transitioning to online instruction, teachers' effort in upgrading their knowledge and skills during the pandemic, the number of hours the teachers spent on upgrading their knowledge and skill, teachers' concerns regarding their teaching, teachers' involvement in learning communities, teachers' reasons of joining the learning communities, and the kinds of teacher professional development program the teacher wished to have.

The survey was voluntary, and consent was provided. The survey was distributed online with the provision to the Qualtrics™ link. Qualtrics™ was the platform the researcher used to create the survey questions and organize the data. The survey was distributed to the email lists of teacher professional organizations, personal contacts, and the mailing list of webinar participants. The contact strategies have allowed the researcher to reach teachers and lecturers from all over Indonesia. As table 1 shows, the survey responses represented all provincial areas in Indonesia, albeit with disproportionate numbers of teachers in each province.

Data analysis includes frequency analysis and thematic analysis. The frequency analysis was used to tabulate the quantitative data. Meanwhile, the open-ended responses were coded and analyzed using thematic analysis (Săldana, 2016).

Participants' Demographic Information

Two hundred and seventy-three (273) teachers from all the provinces in Indonesia filled out the survey. However, only 265 responses were processed because the remaining eight responses were incomplete. Despite having represented all the provinces in Indonesia, the survey responses were not equal in the number of teacher representations. The largest number of respondents came from South Sumatra (87 respondents). The researcher's geographical location might influence the outreach of the participants from South Sumatra. Since the researcher is affiliated with the teacher professional organizations in this province, she had access to the prospective participants through these organizations.

Table 1. The number of participants based on location

No.	Province	Number of Participants
1.	Aceh	2
2.	North Sumatra	8
3.	West Sumatra	6
4.	Jambi	4
5.	Riau	4
6.	Kepulauan Riau	2

7.	Bengkulu	2
8.	South Sumatra	87
9.	Bangka Belitung	12
10.	Lampung	5
11.	Banten	5
12.	West Java	10
13.	DKI Jakarta	5
14.	Central Java	20
15.	DI Yogyakarta	8
16.	East Java	30
17.	Bali	2
18.	East Nusa Tenggara	2
19.	West Nusa Tenggara	1
20.	West Kalimantan	1
21.	Central Kalimantan	3
22.	East Kalimantan	7
23.	North Kalimantan	2
24.	South Kalimantan	6
25.	South Sulawesi	18
26.	South East Sulawesi	2
27.	Central Sulawesi	2
28.	West Sulawesi	2
29.	East Sulawesi	1
30.	Gorontalo	1
31.	Maluku	1
32.	North Maluku	1
33.	Papua	2
34.	West Papua	1
	Total	265

The teachers' level of education was pretty high (table 2). Over 50% of the respondents had a Master degree, and almost 11% were currently attending a Master's program. Many of them are also experienced teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience (39.08%), and over 22% had taught more between 4-6 years. There were 15.33% who can be categorized as novice teachers with 1-3 years of teaching experience.

Table 2. Teachers' educational level

No.	Educational background	Percentage
1.	Graduated with a Bachelor degree (S1)	27.17
2.	Graduated with a Master degree (S2)	50.19

3.	Currently doing a Master program	10.94
4.	Currently doing a doctoral program	4.53
5.	Graduated with a Doctoral degree (S3)	7.17
	Total	100

The majority of the respondents taught in higher education institutions (52.12%). While the number of teachers who taught in junior high schools and high schools comprised of 20.85% and 20.46%, respectively. Teachers who taught at the lower levels of education (elementary school and kindergarten level) represented the least percentage of the respondents.

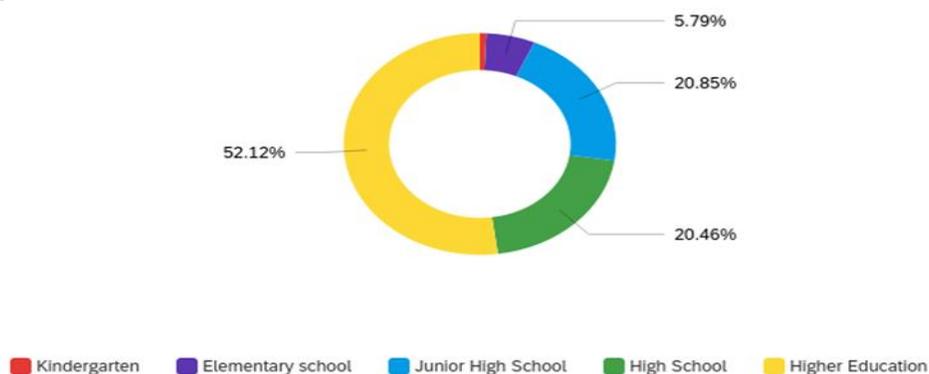


Figure 1. Teachers' Educational Setting

Based on the context of the teaching, more than half of the respondents (53.48%) taught in the urban setting. This is not surprising considering that many respondents were educators at higher education institutions, which are commonly located in urban areas. Meanwhile, 15.38% of the participants taught in suburban areas, and 30.77% were teachers at rural schools. The inclusion of teachers from rural areas will inform us about how online teaching is managed in the context of low access to digital technological tools.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented into two majors sections related to the research questions with some categories under each section. The categories include mode of teaching during the pandemic, the online platforms the teachers used, teachers' perception of their teaching effectiveness, feeling about transitioning to online instruction, ways to upgrade knowledge and skills amid the pandemic school closure, time spent on upgrading knowledge and skills, their concerns regarding online learning, their involvement in learning communities, their reasons of joining the learning communities, and the kinds of professional development the teachers wished to have.

Teachers' Practice in Managing the Emergency Remote Learning

Mode of teaching during the pandemic

This survey was distributed between July 2020 to the beginning of September 2020. The timeline marked the 5th month of the pandemic school closure and the beginning of the new academic year of 2020-2021. Teachers had experienced the transition period from the previous academic year and the new academic year but were still reeling from the sudden shift to remote learning. Since many cities in Indonesia experienced a spike in Covid19 cases, the government issued the "study from home" policy to curb the spread of infections. The responses shown in figure 4 shows that 72.9% of the teachers operated in online teaching by utilizing online media. 15.79 percent of the teachers combined the online teaching with the face-to-face meeting by following the health protocols to minimize the exposure to the virus.

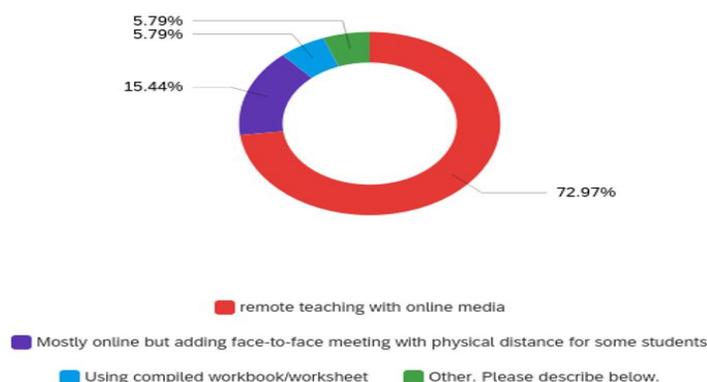


Figure 2. The teaching mode

Online Platform

Teachers considered several factors in choosing the platform they used during emergency remote teaching. First and foremost, the teachers were concerned about access. They wanted the tool that most, if not all, students and parents could access. The second consideration was the tool that could operate in low bandwidth and did not take a lot of data. The third consideration was simple and easy-to-use digital tools. These three aspects were paramount in the teachers' decision, regardless of their school setting. Because WhatsApp met all three aspects, almost all teachers used this tool to facilitate their emergency remote teaching. WhatsApp was pretty reliable even in the areas with spotty internet connections. It did not require a lot of data usage, so it helped to reduce the cost of operating in online learning. Moreover, WhatsApp has already become a reliable tool for everyday communication. Teacher naturally considered WhatsApp to also mediate online teaching and learning. Studies show that WhatsApp was a preferred platform to mediate online classroom (Ramdhani & Nandiyanto, 2021; Suryana et al., 2021).

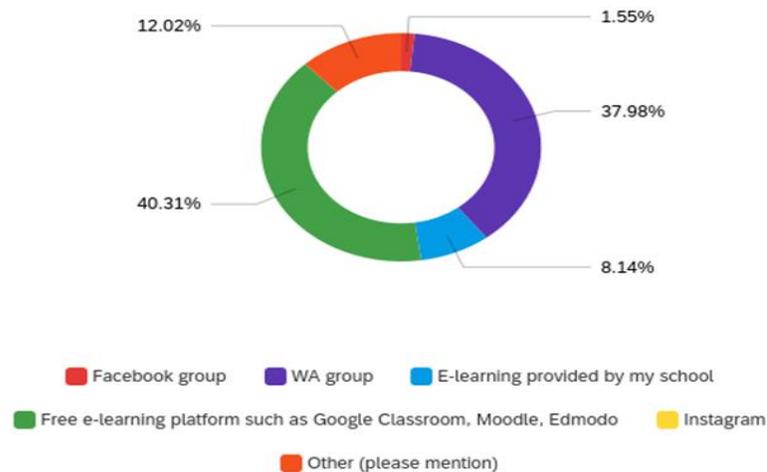


Figure 3. Teachers' use of online learning platform

Despite the flexibility and the affordances offered by WhatsApp, the teachers found it lacking in organizing their online teaching. WhatsApp is great for communication and sharing of resources. However, it does not have an organized structure to manage the virtual classroom. Furthermore, since WhatsApp is used for a wide range of communicative purposes, it is prone to a context collapse, a condition in which a social media platform blurs the personal, the political, the academic, and the work-related functions (Brandtzaeg & Lüders, 2018). The need to better organize the virtual classroom has inspired teachers to seek for other platforms that offer this function. Teachers used open-source learning management systems (LMS) such as Google Classroom and Schoology, as well as institutional LMS, such as SPADA and SIPADI (e-learning platform of State Polytechnic of Medan). Other types of teaching platforms the teachers said they used include teachers who also used other tools, such as Zoom meeting, Skype, Discord, Schoology, and YouTube.

Despite the availability of these digital platforms, some rural teachers could not rely solely on these platforms and tools. For students who did not have any devices to use for their online learning, teachers initiated face-to-face small group learning. Some teachers created worksheets that the school distributed to all students though through the door to door delivery.

Teachers' Perception of the Effectiveness of their Teaching

One of the concerns regarding the impact of COVID-19 school closure is the effectiveness of this teaching and learning mode. Scholars, educators, and education advocates had been openly concerned about the “pandemic slide”. This is the condition, an adaptive notion of “summer slide”, in which the lack of educational engagement might contribute to cause the decrease in students' academic performance. Estimation of academic growth trajectory conducted by the researchers at Northwest Evaluation Association (NEWA) showed the potential decline of the extended pause of the academic instruction

during the Covid-19 school closure on the mathematic and reading scores of the students were quite significant (Kuhfeld, 2020).

While the estimation of learning loss is important and informative, teachers' perception about their teaching effectiveness is also an important source of evaluation. Figure 4 shows that teachers were pretty confident in regard to the effectiveness of their teaching instructional activities amid the pandemic emergency remote teaching. 42.49% stated that their teaching is effective, and 34.43% considered their teaching adequate.

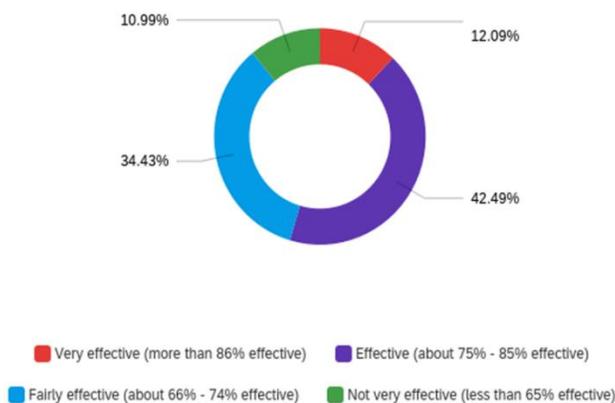


Figure 4. Teachers' perception of the effectiveness of their teaching

The positive perception regarding the effectiveness of their teaching might be related to teachers' willingness to learn new tools to support their online teaching. Previous studies suggest that teachers' prior experience of learning and using ICT contribute to the ease of transition to online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. A study conducted by (van der Spoel et al., 2020) with Dutch teachers has shown that teachers who had medium experience with ICT perceived pandemic online learning more positively. Similarly, König's study with early career teachers in Cologne, Germany, points out teachers' digital competence and the educational opportunities to learn digital technologies in learning are instrumental in helping the teacher to be adaptive to online learning (König et al., 2020).

Feeling about Transitioning to the Online Teaching

When the survey was distributed, teachers had experienced the transition phase to emergency remote learning. Consistent with their perceived teaching effectiveness, the respondents seemed to be experiencing quite largely smooth transition to online teaching. 38.75% felt okay during the transition period. 30.63% of the respondents were even excited to try the online methods of teaching mode. Only 8.12% of the respondents felt overwhelmed with the new mode of teaching online teaching, and 11.81% felt unprepared. There was also 10.70% of the respondents felt unsupported during this challenging time.

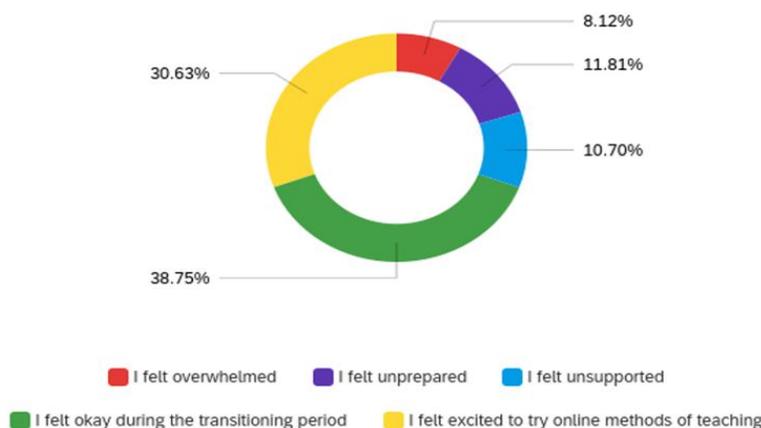


Figure 5. Teachers' feeling about online teaching transition

This finding is in contrast with the previous study, which highlighted the struggle the teachers experienced at the beginning of the emergency remote learning (Aditya, 2021; Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Fuad et al., 2020). The participating teachers' confidence in transitioning to emergency online learning might be related to their educational background. Half of the participants had graduated with a master's degree, indicating that they had the capacity to learn new things to support their teaching.

Teachers' Participation in Professional Learning

Efforts to Upgrade Knowledge and Skills amid the Pandemic School Closure

Teacher professional development is an integral part of teachers' professional life. For many Indonesian civil servant teachers, continuing professional development (CPD) has run on a regular basis been frequently available to support teachers' work and improve their quality. It becomes the exosystem regulated by the government and a tool for promotion (Widayati et al., 2021). At the beginning of the pandemic, the regular continuing professional development programs had no longer available. Consequently, teachers not only disengaged with their support community but also lacked the necessary support to tackle the challenges of online learning.

Teachers participating in this study took the initiative to find the resources to help them with the new mode of teaching. As shown in figure 9, over half of the teachers (54.41%) relied on the webinars. During the lockdown and pandemic emergency remote learning, webinars have become the prominent space for teachers' professional development programs. The online professional learning done by the teachers in this study showed a similar trend line with the findings from the previous studies that showed showing the rise of webinars as the media facilitating professional development and the exchange of resources and ideas (Magdaminkhodjaevna, 2020; Poce, 2021; Tanucan & Uytico, 2021).

In addition to attending the webinars, 34.93% of the teachers turned to various websites to find resources for teaching ideas and teaching materials they could use during the remote learning. While WhatsApp had been used as one of the medium media in online

teaching, this mobile app was not dominantly used by the teachers for their professional development. Only 6.6 of the participants relied on this communication tool.

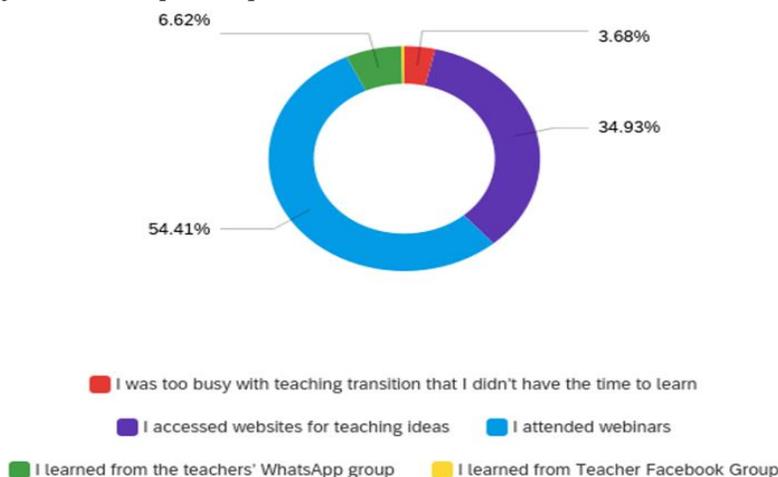


Figure 6. Teachers' efforts in professional development

The survey shed light on how much time teachers devoted on upgrading their knowledge and skills. 37.5% of the teachers spent between 3-4 hours per week and 30.5% spent between 1-2 hours per week. Teachers participated in various professional communities to get the resources they needed during the online learning. Some learning communities have been part of the organized institution supported by the government, such as the MGMP (Teacher Working Group) and Grup Dosen (Lecturers' Group). Teachers also joined professional organization, such as iTELL (Indonesia Technology-Enhanced Language Learning), TEFLIN (Teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia), and other ELT communities. In addition to these learning communities, educational institutions, such as the British Council, and the educational publisher, such as Cambridge Press, have also offered a learning community and resources for English language teachers.

Teachers' Reasons of Joining the Learning Communities

The increased use of social media sites has expanded to education and learning. Social media networks have increasingly turned into the space for teachers to learn and engage with other teachers. Networked professional learning communities facilitate teachers' collaboration (Prenger et al., 2019) and increase their self-efficacy (Zheng et al., 2019).

When pandemic online learning became the norm, teachers have turned to their social networks to get supports in this trial time. One of the questions in the survey inquired the reasons teachers participated in the learning community. As shown in figure 7, most teachers (45.38%) joined the learning communities to discuss new innovations for English language teaching. The second most chosen reason that teachers wanted to get teaching materials they could use for their class (25.30%).

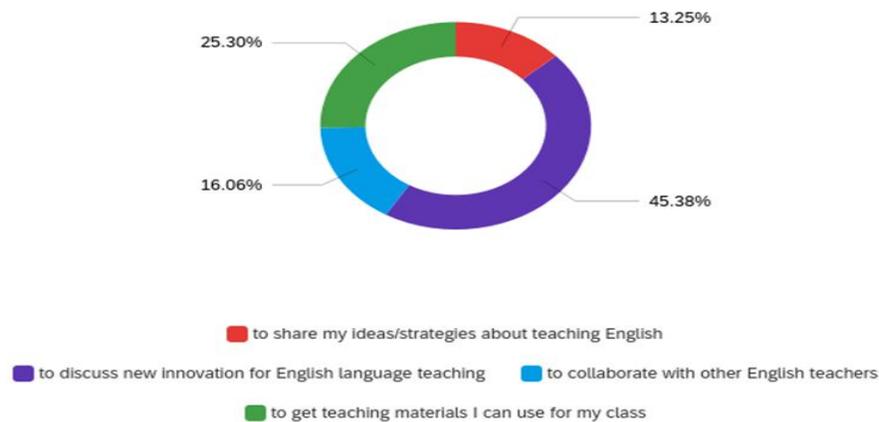


Figure 7. Reasons for joining the learning community

It is interesting to note that teachers were interested in discussing new innovation in English language teaching as the most common reason to join teacher community of learning. It implied that online learning as a new mode required innovative approaches and tools that they needed to learn in order to become effective teachers in the era of emergency remote learning. Teachers also considered learning communities as reliable sources to get various teaching materials to engage students during the emergency remote learning.

Teachers' Expectations of Professional Development Program

The survey further explored the teachers' opinions related to the topic of the professional development programs. Surprisingly, they did not seem to prioritize short-term technical training. As figure 8 shows, 37.22% of the teachers preferred to have a sustainable online professional community that allowed them to discuss issues in teaching. Meanwhile, 24.06% of them expected to get training on technological tools and online platforms, and 1.80% wished to get training on teaching strategies in the online environment.



Figure 8. The kinds of professional development teachers wished to have

The results shown in figures 7 & 8 suggest that the teachers have taken the initiative to take part in professional learning. Professional development programs were not equally available for all teachers. Therefore, teachers initiated their own professional learning to be prepared for the changing mode of learning. Professional learning is different from professional development program in terms of its formality and structure (Utami & Prestridge, 2018). It is self-initiated and may use informal channels such as social media and other networks to collaborate and share. As other researchers have suggested, for example (Atmojo, 2021; Nugroho & Haghegh, 2021), joining professional development programs was instrumental in helping teachers to cope with the unprecedented requirement of teaching in the global pandemic context.

CONCLUSION

The pandemic-disrupted education has expedited the adoption of online learning and digital tools in the teaching and learning process. In the early shift to emergency remote learning, teachers were left to themselves to figure out how to deal with the situation. The teachers participating in this study showed an enthusiasm to try the online learning, albeit feeling underprepared. They showed a willingness to learn through self-initiated professional learning afforded by various online platforms. As we see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, we continue to consider professional learning instrumental for supporting teachers to be resilient in any teaching situations. In the post pandemic education, teachers face the reality of shouldering a big responsibility to help students who experience learning loss. Teachers need a sustainable community to support them in this effort. In addition to the self-initiated learning, teachers also need more structured professional development programs. In this case, government-supported teachers' professional development programs will play a significant role in providing opportunities for teachers to learn pedagogical knowledge, content area knowledge, and technological tools relevant in the age of digitally mediated learning. The implication of the study also includes the need for creating a virtual space for teachers to learn and exchange ideas with other teachers as a form of continuing professional development.

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