

Shaping Professional Identity and Integrating Islamic Values in English Language Teaching: Evidence from a *Pesantren* Context

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Abstract

The professional identity of English teachers in Islamic educational contexts remains underexplored, particularly in *Pesantren*-based schools where academic education integrates with religious and moral development. English teachers in these settings face potential tensions between global language education and local cultural-religious values, yet limited attention has been given to how institutional, cultural-religious, and personal factors jointly shape their professional identity and how this identity is enacted through pedagogical decisions. This research investigates the factors shaping the professional identity of high school English teachers at *Pondok Pesantren* Nurul Jadid and examines how they balance English instruction with Islamic educational values. Employing a qualitative multiple case study design, the study involved six English teachers from three educational institutions within the *Pesantren*. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, post-observation interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings show that teachers' professional identity is shaped through the interaction of institutional expectations, cultural-religious values, and personal beliefs, with teachers perceiving their roles as both language instructors and moral educators. Teachers balanced English instruction with Islamic values by integrating these values into classroom interaction, adapting materials to the *Pesantren* context, and embedding them across lesson planning, implementation, assessment, and reflection, while maintaining English as the primary instructional objective. This study contributes empirical evidence from the *Pesantren* context, demonstrating that professional identity in faith-based settings is reflected in teachers' pedagogical decisions, with implications for teacher development programs and further research across similar educational contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher professional identity has become an important area of inquiry in education because it concerns how teachers understand, define, and enact their professional roles within particular educational contexts. Professional identity encompasses teachers' beliefs, values, self-perceptions, and professional practices and is continuously shaped through their experiences, interactions, institutional expectations, and socio-cultural environments (Casanova-Fernández et al., 2022; Deniz, 2022; Aliakbari & Sadeghi, 2022). Rather than being a fixed attribute, professional identity develops dynamically as teachers respond to the demands and conditions of their professional settings. For English teachers, this process is particularly relevant because English language education involves not only pedagogical and curricular

considerations but also cultural meanings associated with English as an international language. Consequently, teachers' instructional decisions and professional roles may be influenced by the relationship between global English language education and the values of their local educational contexts.

This issue becomes particularly significant in *Pesantren*-based schools, where general academic education is integrated with religious and moral education. *Pesantren* is a distinctive Islamic educational environment in Indonesia that emphasizes not only academic learning but also moral development, religious commitment, discipline, communal life, and the formation of students' character (Wekke, 2016; Maulana et al., 2023; Malisi & SulaSMAn, 2024; Saepudin et al., 2025). Within this environment, teachers are expected to fulfill their instructional responsibilities while also participating in the broader educational mission of developing students' moral and religious character. English teachers therefore work within a context in which language teaching is situated alongside institutional expectations and cultural-religious values.

For English teachers, the context may create particular pedagogical considerations. English language teaching commonly involves materials, examples, and cultural representations originating from diverse social and cultural settings, some of which may not fully correspond with the values upheld in *Pesantren* education. Previous studies have noted that teachers in faith-based educational settings may need to negotiate between language-learning objectives and religious or cultural expectations (Mulu et al., 2022; Thompson, 2022). In *Pesantren*-based senior high schools, this negotiation can influence how teachers understand their professional roles, select and adapt teaching materials, design classroom activities, interact with students, and integrate moral values into instruction. Thus, professional identity in this context cannot be separated from the institutional and cultural environment in which English teaching takes place.

Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid provides a relevant context for examining this issue. At the senior high school level, the *Pesantren* operates three educational units Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Nurul Jadid, Senior High School (SMA) Nurul Jadid, and Vocational High School (SMK) Nurul Jadid which share the broader educational philosophy and institutional values of the *Pesantren* while maintaining different educational orientations. English is taught across these institutions as part of general education, while teachers are simultaneously expected to operate within an educational environment shaped by Islamic values. The institutional vision, educational regulations, and *Pesantren* philosophy, including the *SMKTrilogi Santri and Panca Kesadaran Santri*, establish expectations concerning religious commitment, moral conduct, character formation, professional responsibility, and educational participation. These conditions create a context in which teachers' professional identity is shaped through the interaction of personal beliefs, institutional expectations, and cultural-religious values.

Although previous research has examined teacher professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Pennington & Richards, 2016), English language teaching in religious settings (Mulu et al., 2022; Thompson, 2022; Nazari, 2024), and the integration of cultural or religious values into education (Gay, 2018; Efrizal, 2022), limited attention has been given to how these dimensions interact within *Pesantren*-based English language teaching. Studies by Hidayati (2016) and Skourdoumbis & Madkur (2020) have explored English language teaching in Indonesian *Pesantren*, yet they did not specifically examine how institutional, cultural-

religious, and personal factors jointly shape English teachers' professional identity. Madkur et al. (2024) investigated context-responsive pedagogy in *Pesantren* English teaching, while Muhalim (2023) examined religious discourses in English language teaching, but neither study captured how professional identity is reflected in teachers' pedagogical decisions that balance language instruction with Islamic values. There is also limited understanding of how teachers reconcile English language learning objectives with the religious-cultural expectations of *Pesantren* education, particularly through the adaptation of learning materials, classroom interaction, and instructional planning (Almayez, 2022; Rambe, 2022). Examining these processes is important because it provides a more contextualized understanding of professional identity as something that is shaped not only by teachers' individual beliefs but also enacted through pedagogical decisions within a specific institutional and cultural environment (Barkhuizen, 2017; Yuan & Lee, 2014).

Therefore, this study investigates the professional identity of high school English teachers at *Pondok Pesantren* Nurul Jadid and examines how their professional identity is reflected in the integration of English language instruction with Islamic educational values. Specifically, this study explores the institutional, cultural, and personal factors that shape the professional identity of English teachers within the Islamic boarding school context. Furthermore, it examines how these teachers balance the demands of English language instruction with the integration and preservation of Islamic educational values in their teaching practices. By addressing these aspects, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how English teachers construct, negotiate, and enact their professional identities within the distinctive educational and cultural environment of *Pondok Pesantren* Nurul Jadid. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the literature on teacher professional identity in faith-based educational contexts by offering empirical evidence from an underexplored *Pesantren* setting. Practically, the results can inform the development of teacher education and professional development programs that support English teachers in navigating the intersection of language instruction and religious-cultural expectations, as well as provide insights for *Pesantren* policymakers and curriculum developers in designing context-responsive language teaching frameworks

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple case study design to investigate the factors shaping English teachers' professional identity and how teachers balance English language instruction with Islamic educational values within the *Pesantren* context. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study focused on teachers' experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and practices within their natural educational settings. The multiple case study design enabled the researcher to examine the same phenomenon across three educational units operating within *Pondok Pesantren* Nurul Jadid while maintaining attention to the contextual characteristics of each institution.

The cases consisted of English teachers from Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Nurul Jadid, Senior High School (SMA) Nurul Jadid, and Vocational High School (SMK) Nurul Jadid. These institutions share the broader educational philosophy, institutional regulations, and Islamic values of the *Pesantren* but differ in their educational orientations and learning contexts. The

multiple case design therefore enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns as well as contextual variations in teachers' professional identity and classroom practices. The study did not aim to compare the three institutions as separate educational systems; rather, they were examined as interconnected contexts within the same *Pesantren* environment.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at *Pondok Pesantren* Nurul Jadid in East Java, Indonesia. At the senior high school level, the *Pesantren* operates three educational units: MA Nurul Jadid, *SMA* Nurul Jadid, and *SMK* Nurul Jadid. English is taught as part of the academic curriculum across the three institutions within the broader educational environment shaped by Islamic values and *Pesantren* culture.

Six English teachers participated in the study, with two teachers selected from each educational unit. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research questions. The participants were English teachers who had experience teaching within the *Pesantren* environment and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Formal permission was obtained from the relevant institutional authorities, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection.

Table 1. Participants and Research Setting

Educational Unit	Number of Teachers	Participant Codes
MA Nurul Jadid	2	P1, P2
<i>SMA</i> Nurul Jadid	2	P3, P4
<i>SMK</i> Nurul Jadid	2	P5, P6
Total	6	P1–P6

Source: Primary Data, Processed (2026)

The use of participant codes was intended to maintain confidentiality throughout the presentation and analysis of the data.

Data Collection

Four complementary data collection methods were employed: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, post-observation interviews, and document analysis. The combination of these sources enabled methodological triangulation and provided evidence from teachers' perspectives, classroom practices, pedagogical planning, and institutional contexts.

For the first research question, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all six participants to explore their educational backgrounds, teaching experiences, personal beliefs, perceptions of professional roles, institutional responsibilities, and experiences of working within the *Pesantren* environment. The semi-structured format provided consistency across participants while allowing follow-up questions when participants provided information requiring clarification or further exploration. Interviews were conducted individually in Indonesian to facilitate participants' comfort and detailed responses. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes, was audio-recorded with participants' consent, and was subsequently transcribed for analysis.

The interview data were complemented by institutional document analysis. The documents included the vision and mission statements of MA, *SMA*, and *SMK* Nurul Jadid and institutional regulations of *Pondok Pesantren* Nurul Jadid. These documents were examined to identify institutional values, educational orientations, organizational expectations, and the

cultural-religious principles that provided the context for teachers' professional roles. The documents therefore served as supporting and triangulating evidence for the first research question.

For the second research question, classroom observations were conducted during the participants' regular English lessons. The observations focused on instructional practices, classroom interaction, learning materials, classroom management, the integration of Islamic educational values, and teachers' pedagogical adaptations. Field notes were used to record relevant classroom events, teaching strategies, and interactions.

Following each classroom observation, a post-observation interview was conducted with the respective teacher. These interviews explored the rationale behind observed instructional decisions, including the selection or adaptation of learning materials, classroom management strategies, and the integration of Islamic values into English instruction. Comparing observation evidence with teachers' explanations provided insight into the intentions underlying their pedagogical practices.

Teachers' lesson plans (RPP/Teaching Modules) were also analyzed as pedagogical documents. The analysis focused on learning objectives, instructional activities, learning materials, assessment strategies, and the planned integration of Islamic educational values. Lesson plans were compared with classroom observations and post-observation interviews to examine the relationship between planned instruction, enacted classroom practice, and teachers' pedagogical reflections.

Thus, the data sources were distributed across the two research questions as follows:

Table 2. Data Sources and Research Questions

Research Question	Primary Data Sources	Purpose
RQ1	Semi-structured interviews; institutional documents	To identify institutional, cultural-religious, and personal factors shaping professional identity
RQ2	Classroom observations; post-observation interviews; lesson plans	To examine how teachers balance English instruction with Islamic educational values

Source: Authors' research design and data collection framework (2026)

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2021) approach. The analysis was selected because it provided a systematic and flexible way to identify and interpret recurring patterns across the multiple qualitative data sources.

The analysis proceeded through six stages. First, the researcher became familiar with the data by repeatedly reading the interview and post-observation interview transcripts, classroom observation field notes, and institutional and pedagogical documents. Second, relevant statements, classroom events, and documentary evidence were assigned initial codes. Third, related codes were grouped into potential themes. For RQ1, the coding process focused on factors related to institutional expectations, cultural-religious values, and personal beliefs. For RQ2, the analysis focused on patterns related to classroom interaction, material adaptation, and the integration of Islamic values across instructional planning and implementation.

Fourth, the emerging themes were reviewed against the original data to ensure that they were coherent and adequately supported by evidence from different data sources. Fifth, the themes were defined and named according to their central meanings and their relevance to the research questions. Finally, representative evidence from interviews, observations, post-observation interviews, and documents was selected and organized into a coherent analytical account.

The analysis was conducted across participants and data sources rather than treating each teacher as an isolated case. This cross-case analysis allowed recurring patterns to be identified while retaining contextual differences among the three educational units.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the findings was supported primarily through methodological triangulation and the use of multiple data sources. For RQ1, teachers' interview accounts were compared with institutional documents, including school vision and mission statements and *Pesantren* regulations. For RQ2, classroom observations were compared with teachers' post-observation explanations and lesson plans. This comparison enabled the researcher to examine whether teachers' stated beliefs and intentions were consistent with their planned and enacted pedagogical practices.

The use of six participants across three educational units also enabled cross-case examination of recurring patterns and contextual variations. In addition, representative evidence from different sources was used when presenting the findings so that interpretations remained grounded in participants' accounts, observed classroom practices, and documentary evidence. These procedures strengthened the credibility and contextual depth of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the two research questions. The findings are organized into two major sections. The first section presents the institutional, cultural-religious, and personal factors that shaped the participants' professional identity. The second section describes how the teachers balanced English language instruction with Islamic educational values through classroom interaction, material adaptation, and the integration of values across instructional planning and classroom implementation. The findings were derived from the triangulation of interview data, classroom observations, post-observation interviews, and institutional and pedagogical documents.

Institutional, Cultural-Religious, and Personal Factors

The findings indicate that the professional identity of the six English teachers was shaped through the interaction of three interconnected dimensions: institutional expectations, cultural-religious values, and personal beliefs. The interview data showed that participants generally understood their roles as extending beyond English language instruction to include moral guidance, character development, and responsibility for students' broader development. Institutional documents further supported these perceptions by demonstrating that academic competence, religious commitment, character formation, and social responsibility were embedded in the educational orientations of the three institutions.

Theme 1: Institutional Expectations

Institutional expectations emerged as an important factor shaping how participants understood their professional roles. Across the interviews, teachers acknowledged that the

expectations of their schools and the broader *Pesantren* influenced how they approached teaching and interacted with students. P2 stated, “Institutional values influence classroom practice,” while P4 explained, “The school's expectations shape how we teach.” P6 similarly remarked, “The institutional culture strengthens my professional commitment.” These accounts indicate that teachers perceived their professional responsibilities as closely connected to the expectations and educational culture of their institutions.

The institutional documents provided further evidence of these expectations. The vision and mission statements of *MA*, *SMA*, and *SMK Nurul Jadid* consistently combined academic development with religious values, character formation, and broader educational responsibilities. *MA Nurul Jadid* explicitly positioned the *SMK Trilogi Santri and Panca Kesadaran Santri* as foundations of its educational vision. *SMA Nurul Jadid* emphasized the development of students who are faithful, accomplished, and globally competitive, while *SMK Nurul Jadid* combined professional and vocational competence with religious character, environmental awareness, achievement, and entrepreneurship. At the broader *Pesantren* level, the institutional vision also emphasized education, cadre development, *dakwah*, and community empowerment.

The institutional regulations provided additional evidence that teachers’ professional responsibilities were embedded within an organized educational system. The Bureau of Education was responsible for curriculum development, teacher competency, educational supervision, institutional coordination, and quality assurance. These arrangements positioned professionalism as part of institutional responsibility rather than solely an individual teacher obligation.

Taken together, the interview and document evidence indicates that institutional expectations shaped teachers’ understanding of professionalism by extending their responsibilities beyond language instruction. Teachers were expected to maintain pedagogical competence while also contributing to character development, institutional goals, and the broader educational mission of the *Pesantren*.

Theme 2: Cultural-Religious Values

Cultural-religious values constituted a second major dimension of teachers’ professional identity. Participants consistently described Islamic values as an important foundation for their teaching and professional conduct. P1 stated, “Islamic values become the foundation of my teaching.” P2 emphasized, “Respect and discipline always come first,” while P6 stated, “English learning must remain consistent with *Pesantren* values.” These statements demonstrate that participants did not regard Islamic values as separate from their professional responsibilities. Instead, they understood such values as principles that guided their instructional decisions and classroom interactions.

The cultural-religious dimension was also reflected in the institutional philosophy of *Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid*. The *Trilogi Santri* emphasizes religious obligations, self-awareness through avoiding major sins, and noble conduct toward God and other people. The *Panca Kesadaran Santri* further encompasses religious awareness, intellectual awareness, social awareness, national and civic awareness, and organizational awareness. These principles provide a broader framework for understanding teachers’ responsibilities within the *Pesantren* community. The document analysis therefore indicates that professional expectations were

connected not only to teaching competence but also to religious commitment, moral conduct, social responsibility, and participation in the institutional community.

The participants' perceptions were consistent with these institutional principles. Their descriptions of teaching emphasized respect, discipline, moral guidance, and character education alongside English language instruction. Consequently, the cultural-religious environment of the *Pesantren* provided a shared set of values through which teachers interpreted their professional responsibilities.

Theme 3: Personal Beliefs

Personal beliefs and experiences represented the third dimension shaping teachers' professional identity. Participants described teaching in ways that reflected personal understandings of moral responsibility, religious commitment, and the purpose of education. P1 explained, "Teaching means transferring knowledge, while educating means shaping students' character." P3 stated, "A teacher must become a role model, not merely a language instructor," while P6 emphasized, "Teaching English also means preserving Islamic values." These responses show that teachers understood their professional identity as extending beyond the transmission of English language knowledge.

Other participants expressed similar personal orientations. P2 stated, "Teaching is part of worship," P3 emphasized the importance of patience in educating students, and P5 stated that teachers should educate with sincerity. These beliefs influenced how participants understood their relationships with students and their responsibilities as educators. Teaching was therefore described not simply as an occupational activity but as an educational and moral responsibility.

The findings further indicate that personal beliefs did not operate independently of the institutional and cultural-religious environment. Instead, participants interpreted institutional expectations through their own beliefs and experiences. The similarity of participants' understandings across the three educational units suggests that their personal orientations were reinforced by the shared educational environment of the *Pesantren*.

Overall, the three dimensions were interconnected rather than isolated. Institutional expectations provided formal structures and professional responsibilities, cultural-religious values provided shared moral and educational orientations, and personal beliefs influenced how teachers interpreted and enacted these expectations. The resulting professional identity was therefore characterized by an understanding of the English teacher as both a language instructor and an educator with moral and character-building responsibilities.

Table 3. Summary of Factors Shaping Teachers' Professional Identity

Theme	Main Evidence	Key Finding
Institutional Expectations	School visions and missions; organizational regulations; curriculum responsibilities; educational supervision; teacher interviews	Institutional expectations positioned teachers as responsible for academic competence, character formation, and broader educational responsibilities.
Cultural-Religious Values	<i>Trilogi Santri</i> ; <i>Panca Kesadaran Santri</i> ; teachers' statements about respect, discipline, and Islamic values	Islamic values provided shared moral and ethical orientations for teachers' professional roles and practices.
Personal Beliefs	Teachers' beliefs about teaching, sincerity, patience, worship, and role modelling	Personal beliefs shaped teachers' understanding of teaching as an academic, moral, and religious responsibility.

Source: Authors' thematic analysis of interview and document data (2026)

Balancing English Teaching and Islamic Values

The findings related to the second research question show that the six teachers balanced English language instruction with Islamic educational values through interconnected classroom and pedagogical practices. Across the observations, English language learning remained the primary instructional objective. Islamic values were integrated mainly through classroom interaction, material and contextual adaptation, classroom routines, learning activities, and teacher modelling rather than being introduced as separate religious content. Post-observation interviews and lesson plan analysis further indicated that these practices were intentionally planned and reflected on by the teachers.

Theme 1: Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction was one of the most consistent ways in which teachers integrated Islamic educational values into English language teaching. Across the observed classrooms, teachers maintained English language learning activities while simultaneously reinforcing respect, discipline, cooperation, responsibility, politeness, and appropriate behaviour.

P1, for example, conducted structured reading and discussion activities while beginning and ending the lesson with prayer and reinforcing respectful communication and politeness. P2 combined grammar instruction with reminders concerning discipline, responsibility, and respectful behaviour, while P3 encouraged active English communication through pair and group activities while reinforcing cooperation, honesty, mutual respect, and responsibility. P4 created a supportive learning environment through motivational feedback and the reinforcement of respect, discipline, and empathy.

P5 and P6 demonstrated similar patterns. P5 used communicative speaking activities connected to students' *Pesantren* experiences while reinforcing Islamic greetings, classroom etiquette, respectful discussion, and appropriate language use. P6 maintained interactive English activities while modelling modest communication, respectful interaction, discipline, and positive encouragement. Across these practices, Islamic values functioned primarily as part of classroom culture and interpersonal interaction rather than replacing the English learning objectives.

The observations therefore showed a consistent pattern: teachers did not reduce English language activities in order to accommodate Islamic values. Instead, they incorporated values into the way classroom activities were organized, how teachers interacted with students, and how students were expected to participate. English remained the central instructional focus while Islamic values shaped the social and moral conditions of learning.

Theme 2: Material Adaptation

Material adaptation represented another important strategy through which teachers balanced English instruction with the cultural-religious expectations of the *Pesantren*. Post-observation interviews showed that participants generally adapted materials at the contextual level rather than changing the intended linguistic objectives. Teachers replaced or modified examples, topics, and situations that were unfamiliar or potentially inconsistent with students' *Pesantren* environment while maintaining the intended English competencies.

P1 adapted examples and textbook topics by incorporating *Pesantren*-related contexts into classroom activities. P2 generally followed the existing module but adjusted classroom implementation according to students' needs. P3 modified speaking topics and classroom

situations by using students' daily boarding-school experiences. P4 connected language practice with students' religious experiences, while P5 and P6 similarly selected examples and situations that were familiar to students' *Pesantren* lives. Across the participants, the main purpose of adaptation was therefore contextualization rather than reducing the linguistic demands of the lesson.

Cultural sensitivity was also evident in teachers' responses to potentially inappropriate or culturally unfamiliar content. The post-observation interviews indicated that topics involving social relationships, interactions, or cultural practices that were considered inconsistent with *Pesantren* norms could be modified or reframed. Teachers did not necessarily remove the language-learning component; instead, they replaced or reconstructed examples using situations that were more appropriate to students' religious and social environment. This indicates that cultural sensitivity functioned as a pedagogical consideration in the selection and presentation of English learning materials.

The material adaptation findings therefore demonstrate that teachers maintained the curriculum objectives while exercising flexibility in the cultural framing of English instruction. This allowed teachers to preserve the language-learning purpose of the materials while making them more compatible with the students' everyday experiences and the educational expectations of the *Pesantren*.

Theme 3: Planning–Implementation–Reflection

The integration of Islamic educational values was also evident across the broader instructional process rather than being limited to classroom interaction. Analysis of the six lesson plans showed that Islamic values were incorporated into instructional planning before classroom implementation. The lesson plans generally followed a sequence of opening activities, learning objectives, core learning activities, assessment, and lesson closure, with Islamic values embedded throughout these stages.

At the beginning of lessons, the lesson plans consistently included greetings, prayer, classroom conditioning, attendance checking, and motivational activities. During the core learning activities, teachers used different instructional approaches including collaborative learning, discussion, presentation, questioning, reflection, and student-centred activities while incorporating values such as responsibility, cooperation, discipline, respect, honesty, confidence, and *adab santri*. Assessment procedures also considered language learning alongside attitudes, participation, or character-related indicators.

Although the six teachers used different instructional approaches, the lesson plans demonstrated a common pattern of integrating English language objectives with Islamic educational values. P1's plan combined English learning activities with responsibility, cooperation, discipline, and respect. P2 incorporated discipline, cooperation, honesty, and participation into grammar and language-function activities. P3 used contextualized communicative activities while emphasizing confidence, respect, and responsibility. P4 integrated character values into student-centred activities and assessment, while P5 incorporated responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and *adab santri* into project-based English learning. P6 similarly incorporated respectful communication, cooperation, confidence, and responsibility into interactive English activities and assessment. The comparison between lesson plans, classroom observations, and post-observation interviews showed consistency between planned and enacted practices. The teachers' explanations of their

instructional decisions corresponded with the practices observed in their classrooms, particularly regarding material adaptation, contextualization, classroom interaction, and the integration of Islamic values. This triangulation indicates that the balance between English language instruction and Islamic educational values was not merely an incidental feature of classroom interaction but formed part of teachers' planned and reflective pedagogical practice.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that teachers balanced English language instruction and Islamic educational values through three interconnected processes: maintaining value-oriented classroom interaction, adapting English materials to the *Pesantren* context, and integrating Islamic values throughout instructional planning, classroom implementation, assessment, and reflection. Across these processes, English language learning remained the primary instructional objective, while Islamic values were embedded as part of the broader educational practice.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that English teachers' professional identity in the *Pesantren* context is shaped through the interaction of contextual influences and personal orientations and is reflected in their pedagogical decisions. The two research questions are closely connected: the institutional, cultural-religious, and personal factors shaping teachers' identities also influence how they interpret curriculum requirements and make decisions about English language instruction. Accordingly, this discussion is organized around the two research questions.

Institutional, Cultural-Religious, and Personal Factors Shaping Teachers' Professional Identity

The first research question examined the institutional, cultural-religious, and personal factors that shaped the professional identity of high school English teachers at Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. The findings demonstrate that these three dimensions were interconnected rather than operating independently. Institutional expectations established professional responsibilities, cultural-religious values provided shared moral and educational orientations, and teachers' personal beliefs influenced how they understood and interpreted these expectations. Professional identity in this context can therefore be understood as a contextually negotiated process.

This finding is consistent with Beijaard et al.'s (2004) conceptualization of professional identity as dynamic rather than fixed. Their framework emphasizes the relationship among teachers' subject-matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, and personal-professional beliefs, all of which develop through professional experiences and contextual interaction. In the present study, teachers' identities as English educators were similarly connected to their pedagogical responsibilities and personal-professional beliefs about education. However, their understanding of these responsibilities was further shaped by the religious and institutional context of the *Pesantren*. The participants' descriptions of teaching as involving both language instruction and moral education therefore illustrate how professional identity develops through the interaction between personal understandings and the context in which teaching takes place.

The reciprocal relationship between personal and contextual influences is also reflected in Pennington and Richards' (2016) perspective. The findings show that teachers' educational backgrounds, professional experiences, religious beliefs, and personal values influenced how

they interpreted their roles. At the same time, institutional expectations concerning discipline, character education, religious responsibility, and professional conduct provided a shared context that shaped those interpretations. The similarity of teachers' understandings across MA, SMA, and SMK Nurul Jadid, despite differences in their individual backgrounds and teaching experiences, indicates that personal orientations were continuously informed by the common educational environment of the *Pesantren*.

This contextual negotiation is further supported by Yuan and Lee (2014), who view teacher identity as continuously negotiated through interactions with institutional expectations and sociocultural contexts. The present findings demonstrate how the *Pesantren*'s cultural-religious framework becomes an important part of the context in which English teacher identity is negotiated. The *SMKTrilogi Santri and Panca Kesadaran Santri*, for example, provide normative orientations concerning religious commitment, moral conduct, knowledge, social responsibility, and participation in the *Pesantren* community. Consequently, teachers' professional roles are understood within a broader cultural-religious framework in which being a teacher involves responsibilities beyond subject-matter instruction.

Barkhuizen's (2017) perspective further helps explain the relationship between teachers' individual understandings and their professional environments. The participants' accounts demonstrate that their personal beliefs about teaching including sincerity, patience, responsibility, and the understanding of teaching as worship were not detached from their professional environment. Instead, these beliefs were reinforced and given meaning through the *Pesantren*'s educational culture. Professional identity can therefore be understood as developing through an ongoing relationship between teachers' personal-professional narratives and the institutional environment in which they work.

The findings also suggest that teachers were not passive recipients of institutional and cultural expectations. Rather, they interpreted these expectations through their own professional beliefs and experiences. This dimension can be understood through Priestley et al.'s (2015) concept of teacher agency. Agency helps explain why institutional expectations did not result in identical or mechanically prescribed practices. Teachers actively interpreted the *Pesantren*'s educational philosophy and incorporated its values into their own understanding of teaching. In this sense, institutional and cultural-religious expectations became part of teachers' professional identities through interpretation and enactment rather than through simple compliance.

Taken together, the findings indicate that professional identity in the *Pesantren* context is shaped through a continuous interaction between institutional expectations, cultural-religious values, and personal beliefs. Institutional structures establish expectations, cultural-religious values provide shared meanings and normative orientations, and teachers' personal beliefs shape how these expectations are interpreted. The distinctive contribution of the present study lies in showing how these dimensions converge within English language teaching in a *Pesantren* environment. Professional identity is therefore not simply a personal perception of being an English teacher; it is an evolving understanding of what it means to be an English teacher within a particular moral, cultural, and institutional community.

Balancing English Language Instruction with Islamic Educational Values

The second research question examined how English teachers balanced English language instruction with Islamic educational values. The findings demonstrate that teachers maintained English language learning as the primary instructional objective while embedding

Islamic values into classroom interaction, material adaptation, instructional activities, assessment, and reflection. This suggests that professional identity was not only expressed through how teachers understood their roles but also enacted through their pedagogical decisions.

The classroom findings are consistent with the view that professional identity is expressed through professional practice. Teachers' understanding of themselves as both English instructors and moral educators became visible in their pedagogical choices. Classroom routines emphasizing respect, discipline, cooperation, and responsibility allowed teachers to reinforce Islamic educational values without replacing English learning activities. Similarly, the use of *Pesantren*-related contexts in English materials demonstrated that teachers' understanding of students' cultural and religious environment influenced the way they translated curriculum content into classroom practice.

The adaptation of learning materials can be particularly understood through Gay's (2018) concept of Culturally Responsive Teaching. CRT emphasizes the use of students' cultural knowledge, experiences, and values as resources for making instruction meaningful and relevant. The teachers in this study did not simply reproduce textbook materials without considering their context. Instead, they modified examples, topics, and classroom situations when necessary and incorporated contexts familiar to students' lives in the *Pesantren*. Importantly, these adaptations generally occurred at the level of implementation rather than by changing the fundamental English learning objectives. The finding therefore demonstrates a form of contextualization in which cultural and religious relevance is used to support rather than replace language learning.

The findings concerning classroom interaction also support Richards' (2023) view that language teaching is closely connected to teachers' beliefs and instructional decisions. The participants' classroom practices reflected their understanding that teaching English also involves educating students within the moral and cultural framework of the *Pesantren*. Greetings, prayers, respectful communication, classroom discipline, collaborative learning, and teacher modelling were integrated into English lessons as part of the broader educational process. Islamic values therefore functioned primarily as an ethical foundation for classroom interaction rather than as additional religious content added to the English curriculum.

Teacher agency provides a further explanation for how teachers managed the relationship between curriculum requirements and institutional values. Priestley et al. (2015) conceptualize agency as teachers' capacity to act through the interaction of their personal resources, experiences, and contextual conditions. The participants' practices illustrate this process: they did not perceive the national English curriculum and the *Pesantren*'s educational philosophy as mutually exclusive requirements. Instead, they exercised professional judgment by selecting appropriate examples, adapting materials, organizing learning activities, and embedding values while maintaining English language objectives. The balance was therefore achieved through pedagogical decision-making rather than through choosing one set of expectations over the other.

The lesson plan findings add an important dimension to this interpretation. The integration of Islamic values was not merely an incidental outcome of classroom interaction but was visible in instructional planning before lessons were implemented. Values such as responsibility, cooperation, discipline, respect, honesty, confidence, and *adab santri* were

incorporated into learning activities and, in various cases, into assessment and lesson closure. The consistency among lesson plans, classroom observations, and post-observation interviews suggests that teachers' pedagogical decisions formed a coherent process extending from planning to implementation and reflection.

This finding contributes to previous discussions of English language teaching in faith-based educational settings by highlighting the systematic nature of the balancing process. Rather than treating Islamic values as supplementary content or as a limitation on English instruction, the participants integrated them into the pedagogical process while maintaining language-learning objectives. The study therefore provides a more specific account of how this integration operates within the *Pesantren* context, where the *SMKTrilogi Santri and Panca Kesadaran Santri* provide distinctive cultural-religious orientations for teachers' pedagogical decisions.

The two research questions are consequently connected through the concept of professional identity. The factors shaping teachers' identities institutional expectations, cultural-religious values, and personal beliefs provided the contextual and personal foundations for their pedagogical decisions. Teacher agency enabled them to interpret these conditions and make purposeful instructional choices, while culturally responsive teaching helps explain how those choices were translated into contextualized English language instruction. Professional identity was therefore not merely something teachers possessed or described; it was enacted through pedagogical action.

Overall, the findings indicate that English language teaching and Islamic education were perceived by the participants as complementary rather than competing educational objectives. Teachers maintained the central purpose of English language learning while adapting its implementation to the cultural-religious environment of the *Pesantren*. This suggests that professional identity in this context is characterized by the integration of pedagogical competence, contextual responsiveness, and institutional commitment.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the professional identity of high school English teachers at *Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid* by addressing two research questions concerning the factors shaping their professional identity and how they balance English language instruction with Islamic educational values. The findings demonstrate that teachers' professional identity is shaped through the interaction of institutional expectations, cultural-religious values, and personal beliefs. Institutional expectations positioned teachers as responsible not only for English language instruction but also for students' character development and broader educational responsibilities. Meanwhile, the *Pesantren's* cultural-religious values provided shared orientations concerning religious commitment, discipline, respect, responsibility, and moral conduct. These institutional and cultural influences interacted with teachers' personal beliefs and experiences, leading them to understand teaching as both a professional and moral responsibility. Regarding the second research question, the findings show that teachers balanced English language instruction with Islamic educational values by integrating these values into classroom interaction, adapting learning materials to the *Pesantren* context, and incorporating them across instructional planning, implementation, assessment, and reflection. Importantly, English language learning remained the primary instructional objective. Islamic

values were not treated as separate content that replaced English instruction but were embedded within the broader process of teaching and learning. Teachers therefore maintained the linguistic goals of English education while contextualizing their pedagogical practices in ways that were consistent with the cultural-religious environment of the *Pesantren*. Thus, the study suggests that professional identity in the *Pesantren* context is both contextually shaped and pedagogically enacted. Teachers' institutional and cultural-religious environments influenced how they understood their professional roles, while their personal beliefs and professional agency enabled them to translate those understandings into classroom practices. The study consequently highlights that English teacher professionalism in a *Pesantren* setting involves more than subject-matter and pedagogical competence; it also involves the ability to respond appropriately to the moral, cultural, and institutional expectations of the educational context. The findings have practical implications for teacher development in *Pesantren*-based education. Professional development programs may benefit from supporting teachers not only in English language and pedagogical competence but also in contextualizing instruction within students' cultural and religious environments. Future research could extend this study by examining similar processes across other *Pesantren* or faith-based educational contexts and by incorporating students' perspectives to provide a broader understanding of how the integration of English language learning and Islamic educational values is experienced in classroom practice.

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