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Investigating professional identity construction of EFL teachers in informal language institution through the lens of critical incidents

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Abstract

The professional identity of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in formal education has been widely studied, but research in informal education remains limited. This study explores the context of critical incidents (CIs) identified by informal language institution EFL teachers and how EFL teachers in informal language institution (ILI) negotiate and construct their professional identities using the critical incident technique (CIT). Ten EFL teachers from an informal English course in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, participated through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Data analysis identified key themes in critical incidents (CIs) affecting teachers' professional identity. Results show that within informal language institution, CIs for teachers occurred in the context of teacher's professional development, students, and direct work environment. The positive CIs, such as student progression and collaborative support, significantly boosted teachers' confidence, and teaching effectiveness, whereas, negative CIs, such as absenteeism and perceived inequities, posed challenges to their professional growth. Despite its limitations, including a small sample size and reliance on self-reported data, the study provides valuable

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