

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter presents four sections: conclusions, implications of the study, limitations, and suggestions. The first section elaborates on the conclusion of the study. Then, the second section presents some implications of the study. The third section elucidates the study's limitations and recommendations for future researchers. Lastly, the fourth section provides suggestions for teachers, teacher educators, and educational institutions.

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

As stated in Chapter I, this study strived to figure out the social, cultural, political, and historical factors that construct novice teachers' professional identity and how the factors affected their teaching practices. Two novice teachers in Bandung, Dita and Tania, participated in this study. All factors shaped Tania into a more observant, affectionate, collaborative, communicative, and stricter teacher. Likewise, the factors had contributed to Dita's teacher identity as she became a stricter, more patient, flexible, and supportive teacher.

Being involved with the school context made the teachers part of the school community. As they became a member of the community, they were required to sustain some cultural elements of the schools. They were also involved in some political situations, as they became members of the school community. Interaction within the school community also allowed them to have more experiences as teachers and a better self-understanding of themselves and their profession. In other words, being involved in the school community had caused domino effects on both Dita and Tania's journey as a teacher.

Being involved with the school context and reflecting on themselves as teachers helped them become more formidable as both a teacher and a person. It also shaped some new traits for both Dita and Tania. Dita became a stricter, more patient, and supportive teacher who helped her students understand the materials by providing more assistance. Tania became an affectionate, communicative, and observant teacher who was eager to pay attention to the students' characteristics

and development, as well as to build an emotional connection and trust with the students and the parents.

It was found out that the school community contributed impressively to the teachers' teaching practice and development. A strong teacher community would encourage teachers to collaborate with other teachers and have joint teaching practice. In comparison, a weak teacher community did not force teachers to reflect and make innovations in their teaching (Fullan, 2007; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

Being involved in the school community allowed teachers to experience positive and negative emotions as they interacted with students, colleagues, leaders, staff, and parents. The emotions experienced by both of them were related to the vulnerability concept mentioned by Lasky (2005). The positive emotions were associated with open vulnerability, which also led teachers to invest themselves in doing their job willingly. In contrast, negative emotions were associated with protective vulnerability, making teachers passive or taking risks that may harm themselves or others. It was figured out that both Dita and Tania experienced open and protective vulnerability. However, both of them experienced different dominant vulnerabilities. Dita experienced protective vulnerability more often than the open vulnerability. On the other hand, Tania experienced open vulnerability more often than protective vulnerability. These differences were closely related to the school context, for they encountered many different situations.

The vulnerability they experienced also affected their teaching practice. Experiencing protective vulnerability caused Dita to be more static in her teaching, especially during online teaching. Protective vulnerability also led to emotional burnout, which caused Dita to consider quitting teaching a couple of times. While open vulnerability let Tania put so much of herself in her practice. She transferred her personal values to her students and built an emotional connection (Lasky, 2005; O'Connor, 2008).

All in all, all factors that construct teacher identity were interrelated. Many factors in the school context contributed significantly to the teaching practice of Dita and Tania. One of the factors was support from the community practice, which

is essential in constructing novice teachers' professional identity (Fullan, 2007; Graham, 1999; Izadinia, 2014; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

## 5.2 Implications of the Study

This study figured out that social, cultural, political, and historical factors were influential in the process of teacher identity construction. It was found out that each factor had several aspects that constituted it. In social factors, teachers' relationships with other school community members in the professional context had contributed to the teachers' process of identity construction, be it good or bad (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Block, 2007; Danielewicz, 2001; Lam, 2019; Pennington & Richards, 2016; van Lankveld et al., 2017; Wenger, 1998). In Tania's case, her teacher identity was strengthened due to students, colleagues, and parents' support and cooperation. The support also contributed significantly to her positive emotions. In Dita's case, she felt out of place and lonely in her induction period. It hindered her process of identity construction and contributed to negative emotions (Izadinia, 2014; van Lankveld et al., 2017).

In cultural factors, the school culture was presumably shaped the teacher community at the school. Positive energy in the strong teacher community, such as supportive and collaborative teacher community, could positively affect the process of identity construction (Fullan, 2007; Izadinia, 2014; van Lankveld et al., 2017). In contrast, negative energy in the weak teacher community could inhibit teachers' development and identity construction (Berkowitz et al., 2016; Flores & Day, 2006; Izadinia, 2014; van Lankveld et al., 2017).

In political factors, government policy, school leaders' authority, and teachers' authority had influenced the process of teacher identity construction. This factor had to do with policies and power relations, be it between school leaders-teachers or teachers-students. The government's policies and school leaders' authority could affect teachers' attitudes and actions as they adjust themselves in the political situations of teaching (Flores & Day, 2006; Jiang & Zhang, 2021). Regarding teachers' authority, teachers' goals and morals of teaching could contribute significantly to their decisions in teaching their students (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Kelchtermans, 2013).

In historical factors, teachers' experiences as students and teachers and their understanding of themselves significantly impacted how they composed their image as teachers. The imagined identity, which resulted from teachers' experience as students, was influential in shaping teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards teaching, especially in the induction period (Chong et al., 2011; Day et al., 2006; Day & Kington, 2008; Edwards & Edwards, 2016; Flores & Day, 2006; Olsen, 2013; Xu, 2012). Teachers' experience as teachers was also influential in constructing and developing teacher identity since they gained more knowledge on their profession over time (Day & Kington, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006; MacGregor, 2009; MacGregor & Cartwright, 2011; Olsen & Buchanan, 2017). Reflecting on experiences as students and teachers was found beneficial for teachers to have more knowledge about themselves. It turned out that after doing some reflections, teachers realized the values that they instilled had affected the way they acted and behaved as teachers (see Day et al., 2006; Farrel 2015a; Kelchtermans, 2013; Richards & Lockhart, 2007).

All factors found in this study had contributed to their teaching practice. Still, it should also be noted that teachers' practice was a part that contributed to teacher identity (Day & Kington, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006). In other words, teacher identity and teaching practice shaped each other simultaneously (Britzman, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001). As teachers became a part of a school community, they became agents of the school culture and adjusted their actions in the classroom with the school culture (Flores & Day, 2006). Being a community member made teachers interact with other school community members and develop some relationships with them. Positive and negative relationships contributed to the teachers' performance in the classroom (Hargreaves, 2001a, 2001b). For instance, Tania's good relationships with students, colleagues, and parents helped her conduct effective teaching since she had support from several parties.

In doing their practices, teachers could not disengage from political factors. Teachers must obey the government and school's policies in teaching practices. It did not mean that they had no power at all. As they stepped into the classroom, they could decide on some activities or rules to implement. Teachers could do some actions, which enabled them to achieve their goals (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002).

Their goals were usually had to do with the values that they had as a person, which could result from their past experiences as students and teachers (Edwards & Edwards, 2016; Flores & Day, 2006 Olsen, 2013; Xu, 2012).

To sum up, several factors that constructed teacher identity were found in this study. They were social, cultural, political, and historical aspects. The factors also contributed to shaping the teachers' teaching practices. However, it was also found that some factors that constructed teacher identity resulted from their teaching practices. Thus, teacher identity and teaching practice were interconnected (Britzman, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001; Day & Kington, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006). In short, teachers were shaping and being shaped by their profession (Britzman, 2003).

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on social, cultural, political, and historical factors that construct novice teacher identity and their effects on the teachers' teaching practices. This study has several limitations regarding the research framework and data instrument. This study did not follow a strong framework of teacher identity. It is recommended for future researchers to use a solid and clear framework of teacher identity to make the research process more organized. A strong framework could also help researchers in writing data analysis. The data in this study were collected from two individuals, which might not represent the majority of novice teachers' identity constructions. Collecting more rigorous data for future study is suggested if the researchers want to have a study that could be generalized on a big scale (see Day et al., 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

In terms of data instruments, this study still lacks observation data. It is recommended for future researchers to have data from observation to collect more information about their professional sides. Having a direct observation of the school context they are in can also be beneficial for study related to teacher identity. Future researchers are suggested to find fresher ideas in teacher identity, such as exploring the effect of teacher community on teachers' identity construction in the Indonesian context.

## 5.4 Suggestions

The findings and discussion had me formulate some suggestions for teachers, teacher educators, and educational institutions.

### *Teachers*

Teachers must reflect on themselves as teachers and teaching practice regularly. It helped teachers continuously evaluate themselves, their practices, and their surroundings, affecting their decision-making, identity construction, and professional development (see Farrell, 2015b; Kelchtermans, 2013; Richard & Lockhart, 2007). Having more awareness of oneself and their surroundings is crucial (Alsup, 2006). It is also essential for teachers to practice regulating their emotions to prevent emotional burnout, leading them to drop out of their profession. It also may help teachers perform better in the classroom (Hong, 2010; Sutton & Harper, 2009).

### *Teacher educators*

Teacher educators have a crucial role in preparing novice teachers for the world of teaching. Educating the student teachers in developing their professional identity in positive ways is as important as educating them on teaching methods, evaluations, and other topics on teaching practices. Giving them room to reflect on their personal biographies and their view on the teaching profession or the teaching world is essential to help them construct their initial identity as teachers (Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Trent, 2011). Addressing the difficulties in constructing and developing teacher identity is also vital to make such experience explicit (Alsup, 2006).

### *Educational institutions*

Educational institutions in this section refer to elementary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools. Educational institutions need to provide support for novice teachers since novice teachers might experience shock during their early teaching time (Chong et al., 2011; Izadinia, 2014; Xu, 2012). Having some guidance from mentor teachers or senior teachers in their early time of being a teacher has been said to be helpful for novice teachers to begin their professional journey (Doan, 2013; Spanorriga et al., 2018).

