

From Burnout to Flourishing: Understanding the Role of Professional Development in English Teachers' Wellbeing

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Abstract. Improvements in understanding teacher wellness and its importance in education have evolved recently. Specifically, with how it impacts teacher's motivation and engagement and the quality of teaching. Professional Development (PD) opportunities have been known to enhance the pedagogical skills of teachers. The connection of PD opportunities and the well-being of teachers have been less explored, especially in the context of the English language teaching profession. Based upon a qualitative case study approach, this study intends to investigate the role of PD opportunities and teacher well-being of English language teachers. Data were collected through surveys completed by sixteen English teachers from elementary, junior and senior high schools in South Kalimantan, Indonesia, as well as through semi-structured interviews with five of the teachers. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. The teachers in this study expressed that meaningful and relevant PD skills positively impacted their skills and motivational well-being, collegial relationships, and psychological health. This approach to teacher well-being must be included in the PD framework for English teachers to improve their psychological well-being.

Keywords: teacher well-being; professional development; English teacher; teacher experience

1 Introduction

The phenomenon of burnout among teachers, particularly English teachers, has become an issue that has gained increasing attention in recent years. Many teachers experience psychological stress due to heavy workloads, administrative demands, and ever-increasing expectations from schools, parents, and students. This situation not only affects teachers' professional performance but also their overall psychological well-being (Dreer, 2023). In the field of English language teaching (ELT) in particular, burnout can be intensified when

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teachers operate in resource-limited environments or face high administrative expectations with inadequate institutional support, contributing to a reduction in teaching quality and student learning outcomes (Bing et al., 2022; Utami et al., 2024). In the education field, especially in Indonesia, the challenges that English teachers face are becoming increasingly complex, given their pivotal role in preparing students to meet global competencies. However, despite these challenges, a number of teachers have managed to persevere, and even thrive, reaching a state of flourishing, a state in which individuals are not only psychologically free from problems but are also able to develop to their full potential in both their professional and personal lives.

Previous studies have shown that teachers' well-being is significantly influenced by various factors, one of which is continuous professional development. Professional development serves not only as a way to improve pedagogical and methodological competencies, but also as a platform for building professional networks, sharing experiences, and gaining emotional support from colleagues. Liu (2023) argues that a holistic approach integrating wellbeing into professional practice is more urgently needed than ever, particularly in the wake of educational disruptions caused by the pandemic. Similarly, Wang and Wang & Chen (2022) found that a structured professional development program significantly enhanced English teachers' professional meaning, engagement, and sense of achievement even in resource-scarce environments. In this regard, professional development is one of the key factors in helping teachers overcome burnout and reach a state of flourishing. Understanding the process required to go from burnout to flourishing is not simple, as the challenges teachers face extend beyond the surface level of their daily professional lives.

A study conducted by Demir et al. (2025) highlights the importance of well-being, mindfulness, life satisfaction, and subjective happiness in the professional development of language teachers. They found that these psychological factors play a significant role in supporting the professional development process, which eventually has a positive impact on the quality of teaching provided by teachers. The study showed that teachers with a high level of well-being tend to be better at dealing with work challenges, more open to innovation, and more enthusiastic about participating in professional development programs. On the contrary, teachers experiencing burnout tend to experience a loss of motivation, be less productive, and be more vulnerable to work-related stress. Therefore, efforts to improve teachers' well-being through positive psychological approaches are highly relevant in the context of professional development. This view is reinforced by Zhang et al. (2023), who found that EFL teachers' perceived school climate, self-efficacy, and psychological wellbeing at work significantly predicted their teaching enjoyment, underscoring the interplay between psychological factors and professional practice.

In addition, a study conducted by Nadlifah et al. (2023) specifically highlights the perspective of English teachers in Indonesia regarding the application of positive psychology in supporting their professional well-being. The findings of the study indicate that teachers who apply the principles of positivity, such as gratitude, optimism, and self-compassion, tend to be better able to manage stress, build harmonious relationships with colleagues, and possess a high level of intrinsic motivation to continue growing professionally. These results support that professional development is not just about cognitive and technical skills, but is also about psychological aspects related to individual well-being. In this sense, understanding the burnout to flourishing pathway is substantial, as it allows for developing precise and targeted interventions aimed at achieving improvements in teachers' well-being.

Moreover, research on professional learning communities emphasizes that building a collaborative and supportive work environment contributes to helping teachers develop their skills and enjoy their profession more, while also enhancing their general well-being (Khasawneh et al., 2023). During Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions, teachers participate in collaborative facilitation to provide peer support and receive social

and emotional assistance that helps alleviate work pressure. Creating a collaborative and innovative environment at work has a positive effect on the work fulfillment and enthusiasm of all teachers. Khasawneh et al. (2023) further highlighted that collaborative teaching practices foster the exchange of innovative instructional strategies and help teachers develop autonomy and professional competence within a shared learning environment. This is reinforced by Antinluoma et al. (2021), who found that structured PLC practices create conditions for sustained professional learning and collective inquiry among teachers.

In addition to teaching skills, English teachers in Indonesia grapple with social and cultural challenges and the frequently changing landscape of Indonesian educational policy (Rahmi & Rassanjani, 2025). Teachers are expected to adapt to a rapidly evolving curriculum, integrate technological advancements, and address the increasingly diverse needs of their students. This leaves some teachers feeling unsupported, isolated, and ultimately burnt out, a pattern documented in recent studies of Indonesian EFL teachers facing curriculum change uncertainty (Hadziq et al., 2025). Despite that, some teachers are capable of capitalizing on stakeholder-provided opportunities intended to develop their competencies, build professional networks, and improve their mental health. The journey from burnout to professional flourishing is therefore a fascinating area of inquiry, as it broadens understanding of the processes and conditions that enable teachers to thrive.

Research on professional identity also suggests that teachers who have a strong sense of professional purpose and identity tend to experience higher well-being and lower rates of burnout (Zhao, 2022). While prior research has examined teacher burnout and professional development separately, the intersection of these two areas, particularly in the context of Indonesian English language teaching, remains underexplored. Specifically, there is a gap in the literature concerning how engagement in PD activities mediates the transition from burnout to flourishing, and what psychological, social, and institutional factors facilitate or hinder this process. Addressing this gap is important, as it can inform the design of more holistic PD programs and enable policymakers and school administrators to better support teacher well-being in Indonesia.

This study seeks to understand the significance of professional development activities on the continuum of burnout to flourishing for English teachers well-being. Taking a qualitative approach, the study examines data on the positive experiences of teachers, their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of professional development, the strategies they employed to overcome professional difficulties, and their overall sense of flourishing. The study findings are intended to inform the creation of programs that support teacher well-being and promote a positive professional flourishing state.

2 Method

2.1 Research Design

A qualitative descriptive design was adopted in this study, as it is considered a fitting approach for examining teachers' wellbeing in the context of professional development (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). A qualitative method is a good fit for examining the specific experience of English teachers about the phenomenon of burnout and the flourishing of professional development. Creswell & Creswell (2023) argue that the qualitative method is a good fit for evaluation of definable complexity in social and human research. This method provides the advantage of allowing researchers to get first-hand accounts of research participants' experience and their perception and sense of meaning that they give in a practical context. It enables clarification of the interplay of related variables for researchers' interest that concern the wellbeing of teachers and the phenomenon of burnout and

flourishing in professional development. This research is focused on phenomenology to capture the perception of teachers and their interaction of experience by means of interviews, observational studies, and surveys.

2.2 Place and Participants

This research involved 16 English teachers from Elementary, Junior Secondary, and Senior Secondary schools in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia, all of whom completed the structured survey questionnaire. From this group, five teachers were purposely selected to participate in semi-structured interviews, based on the diversity of their teaching backgrounds and the depth of their professional development experiences. The sample selection was conducted carefully to fulfill purposive sampling criteria, namely, the teachers' length of teaching experience, their participation in professional training, and their active engagement in English language teaching. The sample selection aimed to capture participants with distinct backgrounds in terms of teaching experience and perspectives regarding teacher wellbeing and professional development. This research employs purposive sampling to achieve data richness and depth, in accordance with qualitative research principles. It is expected that this two-phase sampling strategy ensured comprehensive coverage of the relevant aspects of English teachers' professional development, particularly those associated with teacher wellbeing, burnout, and flourishing.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

2.3.1 Survey

In this study, data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent via Google Forms. By doing this, the data collection process can be completed quicker and feedback can be provided quicker from each respondent. A survey was taken by English teachers from a number of education levels. This follows the claim of Creswell & Creswell (2023) who argued that with minimal monetary and time expenditure, a survey can be utilized and primary data can be collected from a wide audience of people. This survey was focused on collecting information on teacher's experiences with teacher burnout, professional development and their level of wellbeing.

The survey instrument was developed drawing on established theoretical frameworks. For wellbeing, items were adapted from the PERMA model (Seligman, as cited in (Golab et al., 2024)), which encompasses emotional, psychological, social, and professional dimensions. For professional development, items were informed by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan & Deci (2020), addressing dimensions of relevance, quality, and institutional support in professional development, supplemented by Khasawneh et al. (2023) work on teacher collaboration in professional learning communities. The integration of these frameworks allowed for a systematic exploration of how various aspects of professional development relate to teacher well-being.

2.3.2 Interview

Selected teachers are allowed to conduct interviews as a part of this study. Since teachers can employ their own judgement, teacher-centric interviews can provide us a personalized, strengthened knowledge of their experiences. According to Ary et al. (2010), there are three category types for interviews: unstructured, structured, and semi-structured interviews. Semi-

structured interviews are in between both types of interviews. In semi-structured interviews, researchers are allowed to prepare questions before the interview, but they are also given the latitude to alter their questions and ask different, related questions should the opportunity arise.

The goal of this study is to learn more about all the variables regarding teachers' wellbeing, and that is why this study uses semi-structured interviews. A total of 25 Questions are created and divided into seven sections. The first section asks about the participants' background. The second section asks about their experiences with burnout. The third section asks about their engagement in professional development activities. The fourth section asks about the perceived benefits of professional development. The fifth section asks participants to identify barriers and challenges encountered as teachers. The sixth section asks teachers about their views and attitudes toward their wellbeing. The seventh section is for participants to offer recommendations concerning professional development and teacher wellbeing and to express their expectations for the future.

The conceptual framework for the interviews drew upon the PERMA model (Golab et al., 2024) to examine dimensions of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) was also applied to explore how professional development influences wellbeing in terms of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In addition, Maslach & Leiter (2016) conceptual framework of burnout was incorporated to address dimensions of exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Together, these frameworks guided the exploration of how professional development helps teachers transition from burnout toward professional flourishing.

2.4 Data Analysis

Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun & Clarke (2021) and operationalized by Byrne (2022), which involves familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Interview recordings are first converted into text to document all participants' responses. The researchers did multiple readings to get better acquainted with the data and develop a sense of the participants' perspectives. This is referred to as data familiarization.

Initial codes were generated from participants' statements describing their experiences in professional development programs. For example, the statement "After learning the strategies and seeing how they worked, I became more confident in my teaching" (Speaker 2) was coded as confidence through observational learning, and "Through the training programs, we can share experiences with other teachers" (Speaker 1) was coded as peer experience sharing. These codes were then consolidated into broader categories based on shared conceptual properties. The categories were subsequently organized into dominant themes reflecting the importance of professional development for English teachers' pedagogical competence and psychological well-being. The themes were critically evaluated for accuracy in addressing the research questions and objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Byrne, 2022).

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

To study the kind of training offered to teachers, the data from the interviews was thematically analyzed. This was done by identifying the most important comments from the interviews and giving them codes. These codes were then organized into categories. Based on this, many similar things could be seen from what the participants answered.

There are five key themes determined by the analysis on the effects of professional development programs on teacher’s pedagogical positives in the realm of English instruction, professional growth, skills development of colleagues, and emotional stability and balance. An overview of the themes and their supporting instances found in the interview data are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

Theme	Codes	Supporting Evidence	Interpretation
1. Professional Development as a Source of Pedagogical Improvement	Teaching strategies, classroom activities, lesson planning skills, curriculum understanding	“During the training, we not only listened to explanations but also practiced teaching techniques.” (Speaker 1)	Professional development equips teachers with practical teaching strategies that can improve classroom instruction.
	Teaching writing strategies, classroom management, use of teaching media	“The program taught us how to teach writing effectively and choose appropriate teaching methods.” (Speaker 2) “The soft skills I’ve gained... like creating and developing good lesson plans... and then there’s the idea of using technology.” (Speaker 5)	Training programs help teachers improve pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills.
	Practical teaching activities and instructional strategies	“From the training, I got many ideas for classroom activities and strategies to use in teaching.” (Speaker 3) “We should explore local culture in more depth.” (Speaker 4)	Professional development provides practical ideas that teachers can directly implement in their classrooms.
2. Professional Development Enhances Teachers’ Sense of Competence	Teaching confidence, problem-solving ability, classroom management	“It made me more confident because I learned how to handle students with different characteristics.” (Speaker 1)	Participation in professional development increases teachers’ confidence in teaching.

	Self-efficacy through learning from others	“After learning the strategies and seeing how they worked, I became more confident in my teaching.” (Speaker 2) “I just feel more confident when I’m with the students...” (speaker 4)	Exposure to new strategies strengthens teachers’ professional competence.
	Confidence through practical classroom implementation	“Because I learned many activities from training, I became more confident in teaching.” (Speaker 3) “It makes me better at teaching English... maybe I just wasn’t aware of it myself.” (Speaker 5)	Practical experiences gained from training improve teachers’ confidence and teaching effectiveness.
3. Professional Development Builds Professional Collaboration	Peer learning, sharing teaching experiences	“Through the training programs, we can share experiences with other teachers.” (Speaker 1) “I’ve made a lot of acquaintances here and there... building relationships.” (Speaker 4)	Professional development facilitates knowledge sharing among teachers.
	Professional networking across regions	“Teachers from different regions joined the same training and shared their experiences.” (Speaker 2)	Training programs build professional learning communities.
	Collaboration and communication with colleagues	“After joining the program, we kept in touch and shared teaching materials and lesson plans.” (Speaker 3) “we can also discuss learning... what it’s like to solve the problems we face.” (Speaker 5)	Professional development encourages continuous collaboration among teachers.
4. Professional Development Builds Professional Collaboration	Increased motivation, professional encouragement	“After completing the program, I realized that it was very beneficial.” (Speaker 2) “It becomes material to share with friends... gaining knowledge.” (Speaker 4)	Professional development contributes to teachers’ motivation and professional satisfaction.
	Practical training reduces anxiety	“Programs with practical activities are more helpful for teachers.” (Speaker 1)	Experiential training increases positive engagement and reduces professional stress.

	Emotional support through interaction with colleagues	“Meeting other teachers and practicing together makes the training more enjoyable.” (Speaker 3) “we can also discuss learning... what it’s like to solve the problems we face.” (Speaker 5)	Interaction with colleagues during professional development improves emotional well-being.
5. Professional Development Fosters Meaning and Professional Growth	Meaningful teaching experience, student engagement	“Teaching is not only about transferring knowledge but also guiding students.” (Speaker 1) “We have something new to show to our students.” (Speaker 4)	Professional development reshapes teachers’ understanding of their professional role.
	Reflection on teaching practices	“Professional development helps teachers reflect on their teaching.” (Speaker 2) “My insight has become broader.” (Speaker 5)	Training supports teachers’ professional reflection and continuous learning.
	Teaching satisfaction through student feedback	“Students enjoyed the activities after I applied what I learned from the training.” (Speaker 3)	Professional development strengthens teachers’ sense of achievement and professional fulfillment.

Analyzing the interviews revealed five themes related to the importance of professional development to an English teacher’s competence and well-being. These themes include: (1) the role of development in pedagogical advancement, (2) the increase of teacher’s self-competence, (3) pedagogical collaboration of teachers, (4) care of teacher’s psychological well-being, and (5) the development of significance and professional advancement in teaching.

3.1.1 Professional Development as a Source of Pedagogical Improvement

The results suggest that professional development programs lead to the enhancement of teachers’ pedagogical practices. The programs are said to have equipped participants with different strategies, activities, and approaches that could be implemented in middle school. This is reflected in the following excerpts from the interview data:

“During the training, we not only listened to explanations but also practiced teaching techniques. So, we could directly try out the skills in front of the other participants. (Speaker 1)”

“The program taught us how to teach writing effectively and choose appropriate teaching methods. (Speaker 2)”

“From the training, I got many ideas for classroom activities and strategies to use in teaching. It made my lessons more varied and interesting. (Speaker 3)”

These excerpts illustrate that professional development equipped teachers with both practical pedagogical tools and the confidence to diversify their instructional approaches. Survey data further corroborated these qualitative findings, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Survey Data – Theme 1: Professional Development as a Source of Pedagogical Improvement

Survey Statement	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
The PD activities included specific and practical strategies applicable to the classroom.	37.5%	50.0%
PD activities directly improved my teaching practice.	50.0%	25.0%
The training introduced new instructional methods I could apply immediately.	43.8%	43.8%

The survey data show 87.5% of teachers agree that the training they went to included specific and practical strategies to implement and use in the classroom. 75% of teachers say that professional development activities directly help them in the improvement of their teaching.

3.1.2 Professional Development Enhances Teachers' Sense of Competence

Another key discovery is that certain teacher training relates to enhanced self-efficacy. Some of the teachers even indicated that the professional development programs had the effect of raising their self-efficacy to teach English. Teachers acquired enhanced skills, and in some cases, the ability to educate or assist students of varying strengths and weaknesses and various levels of difficulties in the classroom. This is reflected in the following participant statements:

"It made me more confident because I learned how to handle students with different characteristics. Before, I used to feel overwhelmed, but now I feel more prepared. (Speaker 1)"

"After learning the strategies and seeing how they worked, I became more confident in my teaching. I feel like I know what to do now. (Speaker 2)"

"Because I learned many activities from the training, I became more confident in teaching. (Speaker 3)"

One participant shared that gaining knowledge from veteran teachers and witnessing how effective teaching strategies are implemented during the training process subsequently bolstered her confidence in using those teaching strategies in her own classroom. Another participant stressed that the confidence she had in implementing classroom teaching was enhanced by the experiential activities she was exposed to during the training. These results indicate that professional development enhances teachers' professional self-efficacy and teaches competence.

According to the interviews, professional development helps teachers' self-confidence. Survey data reinforced these findings, as shown in Table 3. As shown in Table 3, 75% of teachers reported confidence in their ability to teach English, and 68.8% found that the programs they attended were most applicable to their professional needs. When applicable programs are integrated with relevant and contextual training, professional development is substantially advanced.

Table 3. Survey Data – Theme 2: Professional Development Enhances Teachers’ Sense of Competence

Survey Statement	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
I feel confident in my ability to teach English after participating in PD.	43.8%	31.3%
The PD programs I attended were most applicable to my professional needs.	43.8%	25.0%
Participating in PD has improved my ability to manage diverse learners.	50.0%	18.8%

3.1.3 Professional Development Builds Professional Collaboration

Professional development also strengthens collaboration among teachers. Participants noted that training programs let them engage with fellow teachers from other schools and even other areas. This encourages teachers to talk about their experiences, solve challenges together, and trade teaching resources with one another. The following excerpts illustrate this theme:

“Through the training programs, we can share experiences with other teachers. I learned a lot from what they shared about how they teach in their own schools. (Speaker 1)”

“Teachers from different regions joined the same training and shared their experiences. I had never thought about some of the challenges they face – it really opened my eyes. (Speaker 2)”

“After joining the program, we kept in touch and shared teaching materials and lesson plans through a WhatsApp group. (Speaker 3)”

“I’ve made a lot of acquaintances here and there... building relationships with teachers from other schools is one of the best things I gained from the training. (Speaker 4)”

“We can also discuss learning... what it’s like to solve the problems we face in the classroom. It’s helpful to know you are not alone. (Speaker 5)”

These excerpts demonstrate that professional development extends beyond the training room, fostering ongoing collegial networks and collaborative professional learning. Survey data further supported this theme, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Survey Data – Theme 3: Professional Development Builds Professional Collaboration

Survey Statement	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
PD activities provided experiences that I could share with colleagues.	43.8%	50.0%
The trainers/facilitators were knowledgeable and provided the needed support.	50.0%	50.0%
PD helped me build a professional network with teachers from other schools or regions.	37.5%	43.8%

As shown in Table 4, 93.8% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that professional development activities provided experiences that could be shared with colleagues, and all respondents (100%) reported that trainers and facilitators were knowledgeable and provided

the necessary support. These findings confirm that well-facilitated professional development creates conditions for sustained professional collaboration.

3.1.4 Professional Development Supports Teachers' Psychological Well-being

The findings also show that professional development can help teachers maintain their mental health. While participants thought the training programs would add to their workload, in the long run, they saw the value in being involved in such initiatives. Rejuvenation came through learning new teaching skills/tools and to add those to an ongoing fresh style to keep their teaching exciting. The following participant excerpts illustrate this theme:

"Programs with practical activities are more helpful for teachers. When we actually do things, instead of just listening, it feels less stressful and more energizing. (Speaker 1)"

"After completing the program, I realized that it was very beneficial. I came in feeling a bit reluctant, but I left feeling motivated again. (Speaker 2)"

"Meeting other teachers and practicing together makes the training more enjoyable. You feel supported, not alone. (Speaker 3)"

"It becomes material to share with friends... gaining knowledge and sharing it – that's what keeps me going. (Speaker 4)"

"We can also discuss learning... what it's like to solve the problems we face. Just knowing others deal with the same issues makes me feel better about my own struggles. (Speaker 5)"

These excerpts highlight that professional development fosters positive affect, reduces feelings of professional isolation, and rejuvenates teachers' enthusiasm for their work. Survey data substantiated these findings, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Survey Data – Theme 4: Professional Development Supports Teachers' Psychological Well-being

Survey Statement	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
I feel enthusiastic about teaching after participating in PD activities.	37.5%	31.3%
I feel emotionally supported within my professional environment.	43.8%	18.8%
PD activities reduced my feelings of professional stress or isolation.	50.0%	12.5%

As shown in Table 5, 68.8% of teachers reported high levels of enthusiasm for teaching after participating in professional development, and 62.5% indicated that they feel emotionally supported within their professional environment. These findings suggest that engagement in well-structured PD programs not only builds skills but also contributes meaningfully to teachers' psychological health.

3.1.5 Professional Development Fosters Meaning and Professional Growth

Lastly, professional development programs were found to promote a stronger sense of meaning and professional growth of teachers. Participants said the programs were successful since they were able to reflect on their role as teachers and that teaching goes beyond the act of conveying information to the learners. This is illustrated in the following excerpts:

“Teaching is not only about transferring knowledge but also guiding students. The training helped me see that more clearly. (Speaker 1)”

“Professional development helps teachers reflect on their teaching. I started looking back at what I did in the classroom and asking myself how I could do it better. (Speaker 2)”

“Students enjoyed the activities after I applied what I learned from the training. That was really satisfying – it reminded me why I became a teacher. (Speaker 3)”

“We have something new to show to our students. That feeling of excitement when you bring something fresh to the classroom – it makes teaching meaningful again. (Speaker 4)”

“My insight has become broader. I no longer see teaching just as a job; I see it as a way to grow and contribute something worthwhile. (Speaker 5)”

These accounts reflect a renewed sense of professional purpose and commitment among the participants, reinforcing that professional development extends its impact beyond skills acquisition into deeper dimensions of professional identity and meaning-making. Survey data reflected these outcomes, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Survey Data – Theme 5: Professional Development Fosters Meaning and Professional Growth

Survey Statement	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
My work as a teacher is meaningful.	56.3%	43.8%
I am motivated to advance my teaching skills.	56.3%	43.8%
My institution supports my engagement in professional development.	50.0%	50.0%
I feel a sense of professional growth as a result of participating in PD.	43.8%	25.0%

As shown in Table 6, all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their work is meaningful and that they are motivated to advance their teaching skills, reflecting a high degree of professional commitment. All respondents also confirmed institutional support for professional development, and the 68.8% satisfaction rate aligns with the qualitative evidence of professional growth observed in the thematic analysis.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study reveal five interconnected themes through which professional development contributes to English teachers’ well-being: pedagogical improvement, enhanced sense of competence, professional collaboration, psychological well-being, and meaning and professional growth.

3.2.1 Professional Development as a Source of Pedagogical Improvement

The first theme reveals that teachers perceived professional development as a meaningful source of practical pedagogical knowledge. Participants reported gaining concrete teaching strategies, lesson planning skills, classroom management techniques, and the integration of technology and local cultural content into their instruction. Notably, 87.5% of surveys agreed that training provided practical classroom strategies, and 75% reported direct improvement in their teaching skills.

This finding aligns with established literature arguing that for professional development to be effective, it must prioritize the application of practical classroom skills and collaborative professional learning (Khasawneh et al., 2023). When training is contextually relevant and supported by experiential practice, teachers are more motivated and better prepared to apply new strategies. This finding also strengthens the results of (Rahmi & Rasanjani, 2025), who similarly found that teacher professional development programs in Indonesia led to measurable improvements in teaching methods, confidence, and student engagement. However, the current study adds a dimension that Rahmi & Rasanjani (2025) work did not foreground: teachers in this study explicitly connected pedagogical improvement to their sense of professional renewal, suggesting that the acquisition of new strategies is not merely a technical gain but also a source of psychological strength. This link between instructional growth and emotional recovery from burnout represents a meaningful contribution to understanding how pedagogical PD functions beyond skill acquisition.

3.2.2 Professional Development Enhances Teachers' Sense of Competence

The second theme shows that participation in professional development strengthened teachers' confidence and self-efficacy. Teachers described feeling more capable of handling diverse student needs, managing classrooms effectively, and delivering lessons with greater assurance. Survey data corroborate: 75% reported confidence in their English teaching ability, and 68.8% found training relevant to their actual teaching context.

This finding is most directly explained through Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), specifically the need for competence - one of three basic psychological needs whose satisfaction is argued to be essential for intrinsic motivation and well-being. When professional development activities allowed teachers to acquire and practice new strategies, they experienced strengthened sense of competence, which in turn enhanced their motivation and engagement with their work. The finding aligns with Demir et al. (2025), who found that perceived professional competence is positively associated with well-being, life satisfaction, and subjective happiness among language teachers. The current study extends this finding by demonstrating that competence gains are experienced not only through formal achievement but also through peer observation and learning from more experienced colleagues, highlighting a social dimension of competence-building not examined by Demir et al. This suggests that the process through which competence develops during PD matters, not just outcomes.

3.2.3 Professional Development Builds Professional Collaboration

The third theme demonstrates that professional development serves as a motivating factor in building and maintaining colleague relationships. Participants valued opportunities to share experience, exchange teaching materials, and engage collaborative problem-solving with teachers from different schools and regions. Importantly, 93.8% of survey respondents agreed that PD enabled experience-sharing with colleagues, and several participants

described ongoing communication through online groups even after formal training had ended.

Within Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), this theme is directly related to the need for relatedness - the sense of being connected to and cared for by others. When professional development creates genuine opportunities for meaningful interaction, it satisfies this fundamental psychological need, thereby contributing to teachers' overall wellbeing. The sustained collaboration observed here - extending beyond the training itself - shows that PD can generate sustainable social resources, rather than merely temporary professional relationships.

This finding is consistent with Owen (2016), who emphasized that professional learning communities that foster collaboration, shared problem-solving, and a culture of innovation are strongly associated with teacher wellbeing and flourishing. It also aligns with Cojorn & Sonsupap (2024), who found that collaborative professional development contributes to both professional and personal growth. The current study adds a contextually specific insight: in the Indonesian setting, where teachers across different school levels and regions often feel professionally isolated, the cross-institutional networking facilitated by PD programs plays a particularly significant role in counteracting this isolation. Prior studies did not specifically examine this isolation-reduction function of PD-based collaboration in the Indonesian ELT context, making this a distinctive contribution of the present study.

3.2.4 Professional Development Supports Teachers' Psychological Well-being

The fourth theme reveals that professional development contributed positively to teachers' psychological wellbeing, including increased motivation, reduced anxiety, and a greater sense of emotional support. Although some participants initially experienced PD as an additional burden, a response consistent with existing burnout - their perspectives shifted following participation. Survey results showed that 68.8% of teachers felt enthusiastic about their work, and 62.5% reported feeling emotionally supported in their professional environment.

This finding is interpreted through Seligman's PERMA model (as operationalized by Kun et al., 2016), specifically the dimensions of positive emotion and engagement. When PD activities were perceived as practical, interactive, and collegial, they generated positive emotional experiences and increased teachers' engagement with their professional roles. Maslach & Leiter (2016) identify emotional exhaustion and depersonalization as core features of burnout; the shift teachers described, from reluctance to enthusiasm, suggests that meaningfully designed PD can function as a recovery mechanism that counteracts at least some dimensions of burnout.

This finding strengthens the conclusions of Shakimova et al. (2024), who found that professional development training can help teachers build resilience against work-related stress. However, the current study contributes a more nuanced insight: the psychological benefits are uneven and not immediately recognizable. Teachers first had to overcome the perception of PD as a burden, which implies that the framing and delivery of PD programs is a determinant of whether they support or further strain teachers' wellbeing. This change in attitude has not yet been emphasized in prior studies on PD and teacher wellbeing, and it points to an important practical and theoretical consideration. A systematic review by Berger et al. (2022) further confirmed that evidence-based wellbeing initiatives for school teachers yield significant positive outcomes for emotional functioning, professional engagement, and occupational health.

3.2.5 *Professional Development Foster Meaning and Professional Growth*

The fifth theme shows that professional development contributed to teachers' sense of meaning and accomplishment in their work. Participants reflected that training encouraged them to view teaching not merely as content delivery but as a process of guiding students and creating purposeful learning experiences. When the new strategies were implemented, they successfully increased the students' observed engagement and enthusiasm, and teachers reported a strong sense of professional fulfillment. All survey respondents agreed that their work is meaningful, and all expressed motivation to continue developing professionally.

This theme aligns most closely with two dimensions of Seligman's PERMA model: meaning (a sense of belonging to and serving something larger than oneself) and accomplishment (pursuing goals and experiencing mastery). Professional development, by equipping teachers with effective strategies and enabling them to witness positive student outcomes, strengthens both dimensions simultaneously. This dual reinforcement is theoretically significant because it suggests PD functions as a bridge between professional competence and existential engagement with teaching. This finding supports Ma (2022) argument that professional identity is continuously shaped through experience, reflection, and ongoing learning. The current study extends this by demonstrating that it is not reflection alone, but the application of PD-derived knowledge followed by observable student response, that triggers a deepened sense of meaning. Nadlifah et al. (2023), studying Indonesian English teachers specifically, found that positive psychological orientations such as gratitude and optimism support professional well-being - but their study focused on teachers' internal dispositions rather than on the external conditions that activate those dispositions. The present study complements their work by showing that well-designed PD can serve as that external condition, actively fostering the sense of meaning and growth that positive psychology frameworks describe.

4 Conclusion

This study shows just how important staff development can be for both teachers and their mental health. Going from utterly drained to actually thriving can be a challenge, but this development helps teachers boost their skills, and their own self-worth, makes them more social, and helps with their mental health. Peer-reviewed development that gives the staff a chance to be involved and work together, and that is actually relevant to their work, is really helpful to teachers. It can feel really heavy and like it promotes more work for teachers, but ultimately it increases motivation, how happy instructors are about their jobs, how far their interests in their work progress, and their skills. Also, it is key that teachers are internally motivated for professional development and the motivation for this comes from their managers. With both of these, professional development can help teachers grow the most. By maintaining a teacher's interest, refining their methods, and aiding educational development, a thoughtfully crafted program can work wonders. Proper instructor development should encompass both teaching skills and emotional state.

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, this study employed a qualitative case study design involving English teachers in a single region, namely Banjarmasin. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to teachers in different regions, educational settings, and cultural contexts. Second, the limited number of participants allowed for an in-depth exploration of the teachers' experiences but did not encompass diverse perspectives regarding professional development and well-being. Third, this study relies on self-reported data collected from interviews and questionnaires. Future researchers may address the limitations of this study by including a sample of English

teachers from different educational levels and schools with varying facilities. In addition, researchers may employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to examine changes in teachers' well-being over time.

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