BARRIERS AND STRATEGIES IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING: A CASE OF INDONESIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Current educational theories and studies emphasize the need to use innovative and collaborative approaches to improve student's learning experience, including in English Language Teaching (ELT). This study aims to explore the obstacles and strategies for using these teaching approaches in the Indonesian ELT context. The research used mixed methods with a convergent parallel design. The questionnaires were used to gather data from 42 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, while semi-structured interviews were done with six teachers to explore their perspectives and experiences. The research was conducted in one district in West Sulawesi, Indonesia. The findings emphasize the critical impact of innovative and collaborative learning on improving students' learning outcomes. The results also found some obstacles that impede innovative and collaborative actual use, such as inadequate resources, teacher reluctance, and lack of appropriate teacher professional development. This research suggests the importance of providing teachers with continuous professional development to enhance their understanding of innovative and collaborative approaches to teaching. In addition, policymakers and school administrators need to encourage a culture that supports teachers' collaboration and continuous learning. By focusing on these actionable strategies, educators can better support innovative and collaborative learning environments, ultimately improving student outcomes in EFL settings.

Key Words: collaboration, English language teaching, innovation, student's learning

ABSTRAK

Teori dan studi pendidikan terkini menunjukan akan pentingnya menggunakan pendekatan inovatif dan kolaboratif guna meningkatkan pengalaman belajar, khususnya dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggris. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi hambatan dan strategi dalam menggunakan pendekatan pengajaran inovasi dan kolaborasi dalam konteks pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran dengan desain paralel konvergen. Kuesioner digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data dari 42 guru Bahasa Inggris, sementara wawancara semi-struktur dilakukan terhadap 6 responden untuk mengeksplorasi perspektif dan pengalaman mereka. Penelitian ini dilakukan di salah satu Kabupaten di Sulawesi Barat, Indonesia. Temuan studi menunjukkan dampak signifikan dari pembelajaran inovatif dan kolaboratif dalam meningkatkan hasil belajar siswa. Hasil penelitian juga menemukan beberapa kendala yang menghambat penggunaan pendekatan inovatif dan kolaboratif secara aktual, seperti sumber daya yang tidak memadai, resistensi guru, dan kurangnya kegiatan pengembangan profesionalisme guru yang efektif. Penelitian ini mengusulkan pentingnya memberikan pengembangan profesional berkelanjutan kepada guru untuk meningkatkan pemahaman mereka tentang pendekatan inovatif dan kolaboratif dalam pengajaran. Selain itu, para pembuat kebijakan dan administrator sekolah perlu mendorong budaya yang

mendukung kolaborasi dan pembelajaran berkelanjutan bagi para guru. Dengan memfokuskan pada strategi-strategi yang dapat diimplementasikan ini, para pendidik dapat lebih mendukung lingkungan belajar yang inovatif dan kolaboratif, yang pada akhirnya akan meningkatkan hasil belajar siswa dalam pengaturan EFL
Kata kunci: *Kolaborasi, pengajaran Bahasa Inggrsi, inovasi, luaran pembelajaran siswa*

INTRODUCTION

English language instruction is crucial in promoting cross-cultural communication and improving employment opportunities for students globally in the changing global education environment. The importance of English Language Teaching (ELT) can be emphasized as it not only opens doors to worldwide opportunities but also acts as a bridge linking disparate cultures. English proficiency is now a crucial skill for learners in the 21st century due to its widespread use on the internet, in science, and global business. Consequently, educational systems worldwide are updating their teaching methods to meet this requirement (Al-Ansi, 2022; Wang, 2021).

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia faces unique challenges due to the country's extensive archipelago, diverse cultures, and unequal access to educational resources (Poedjiastutie et al., 2021). Traditional methods of teaching English in Indonesia, often criticized for their excessive use of memorization and emphasis on grammar, may not adequately equip students for practical language application (Bachtiar, 2021). This calls for innovative teaching methods that honor regional languages and cultures while effectively providing English language instruction.

The inequality in educational resource access across regions necessitates creative solutions like digital learning platforms and community-based teaching initiatives to close the gap and provide fair educational opportunities for all Indonesian students (Malik et al., 2021). Recognizing the significance of English proficiency for its youth, Indonesia is striving to equip them with essential skills to succeed in the global economy. However, the implementation of these innovative and collaborative learning methods poses distinct obstacles and possibilities, especially in varied educational settings ranging from technologically advanced metropolitan districts to resource-limited rural regions.

Previous studies have highlighted the potential of innovative learning methods using digital technology, interactive techniques, and student-centred teaching styles (Carvalho & Yeoman, 2018) that potentially improve language acquisition. These strategies emphasize the importance of critical thinking, creativity, and cooperation among students, which is essential for success in the 21st century (Bachtiar et al., 2024). However, there are significant gaps in understanding how these methods can be effectively integrated into the diverse educational landscape of Indonesia. The conventional teacher-centred culture in Indonesian classrooms often hinders the implementation of learner-centred initiatives (Nur, 2016; Sminar et al., 2019). In addition, the successful integration of these digital and interactive techniques into Indonesia's educational landscape requires addressing systemic barriers such as infrastructure limitations and teacher training deficits to ensure that all students benefit from these advancements (Park et al., 2021).

Although several studies, such as those by Kim (2019) on digital technology and interactive techniques and Murthy et al. (2017) on teachers' attitudes toward technology integration, have examined some elements of innovation in education, there is a need for a thorough study that focuses on the problems and potential of using innovative methods in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Despite existing research on innovative and collaborative learning techniques in education, there is a notable gap in understanding how these methods can be effectively implemented in the unique context of Indonesian EFL classrooms. This study aims to fill this gap by identifying specific barriers and successful strategies for promoting innovative and collaborative learning in Indonesian EFL environments. By examining current practices, challenges, and potential solutions, this research seeks to provide practical insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in Indonesia's EFL education system. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive approach to addressing the distinctive obstacles faced in Indonesia, such as cultural diversity, geographical disparities, and resource limitations, while also highlighting effective methods that can be adapted to similar contexts globally. The next three research questions guided the current study: (1) What are the EFL teachers' perceptions of the importance of implementing innovative and collaborative learning in EFL classrooms? (2) What are the perceived benefits and challenges of these innovative and collaborative approaches from the perspective of Indonesian EFL teachers and students? Moreover, (3) How can educators in Indonesia overcome these barriers to promote a more interactive and student-centered learning environment?

This study investigates the implementation of innovative and collaborative learning strategies in Indonesian EFL classrooms, focusing on the unique challenges and opportunities within this context. By exploring teachers' perceptions, identifying benefits and challenges, and proposing solutions to overcome barriers, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these methods can enhance EFL education in Indonesia. The findings of this study are intended to inform educators, policymakers, and stakeholders, contributing to the development of more effective and inclusive educational practices that address the diverse needs of students across Indonesia.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods approach with a convergent parallel design to explore the strategies and barriers to implementing innovative and collaborative learning among EFL junior high school teachers in one district in West Sulawesi, Indonesia. The mixed-methods design was chosen for its strength in combining the breadth of quantitative data with the depth of qualitative insights, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of complex research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). By employing both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) instruments, the study aimed to validate findings across different data sources, enhancing the reliability and robustness of the results. This approach facilitated an in-depth understanding of the teachers' perceptions, experiences, and practices while also enabling the quantification of patterns and trends within the broader teaching community. The convergent parallel design was particularly suited for this study as it allowed for the simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring that neither method was prioritized over the other and enabling a multifaceted exploration of the research topic.

Participants

The research was conducted in one district in the West Sulawesi Province of Indonesia. The district was chosen for its diverse mix of urban and rural junior high schools, which are at various stages of implementing innovative and collaborative learning strategies in English language teaching. A total of 42 EFL junior high school teachers were involved in the questionnaire, and six of them participated in the semi-structured interviews. The selected teachers represented a broad spectrum of schools, teaching experiences, and backgrounds, thus providing a wide variety of perspectives on the implementation of innovative and collaborative learning methods. The purposeful selection of participants and the research site was instrumental in exploring the specific educational context of Indonesian EFL teaching, facilitating the collection of relevant and meaningful data for addressing the study's objectives.

Data Collection & Analysis

Data were collected using two primary instruments: the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on teachers' perceptions, practices, and perceived barriers to implementing innovative and collaborative learning approaches. It consisted of a series of closed-ended questions, which allowed for the collection of data that could be analyzed statistically to identify patterns and trends. Following the completion of the questionnaires, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with six participants to gain deeper insights into the qualitative aspects of the study. The combination of these instruments enabled a comprehensive data collection process, capturing both the general landscape and the nuanced experiences of EFL teachers in West Sulawesi.

The quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify frequencies, patterns, and trends among the participants' responses. Concurrently, qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. This process involved coding the data to identify themes and patterns, such as the lack of digital resources, the necessity for professional development, and the impact of cultural diversity on teaching methods, which emerged from the teachers' narratives. By integrating the findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study was able to paint a comprehensive picture of the current state of innovative and collaborative learning practices among junior high school EFL teachers in West Sulawesi. The convergent analysis not only validated the findings across both sets of data but also provided a richer, more nuanced understanding of the barriers and strategies in the context of Indonesian EFL teaching. This integrated approach to data analysis was crucial for drawing meaningful conclusions and recommendations relevant to policymakers, educators, and researchers interested in enhancing the quality of English language education in Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to investigate the impact of innovative and collaborative learning techniques in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Additionally, it seeks to identify specific barriers and successful strategies within this context, providing practical insights for effective English language teaching in Indonesian EFL settings. This section presents the key themes that emerged from the findings, which are based on the guiding research questions.

The importance of implementing innovative and collaborative learning in Indonesian EFL classrooms

Implementing innovative and collaborative learning strategies in EFL classrooms has proven to be highly effective. The study aimed to gauge these educational approaches' perceived importance and impact on enhancing student engagement, language proficiency, and the overall learning environment. The findings, derived from quantitative data, offer insightful reflections on the participants' experiences and observations.

Table1. Positive Impact of Innovative and Collaborative Learning

Impact Area	Participants' Positive Responses
Student Engagement	92%
Improvement in Language Proficiency	88%
Enhancement of the Learning Environment	94%

Table 1 shows that 92% of participants saw a significant rise in engagement among students when their EFL learning used more creative and collaborative learning approaches. This agreement level above 90% seems to closely correlate with the use of interactive activities and group work in classes. Almost all participants reported that the involvement aspects, apart from making classes more fun, increased interaction and general student participation. The interactive nature of the tasks likely results in a lively classroom where the students are always willing to learn and engage with the material and their peers.

The qualitative data from the interviews generally reaffirms the quantitative findings. The interviewees seemed to agree that the methods increased student involvement overwhelmingly. For instance, some of the teachers reported cases where previously uninterested students became very active in class owing to the methods. They seemed to agree that the students' general interest perked up following the introduction of such tasks. The participants also informed that there was a generally high reduction in distraction, another scenario that heavily favored the discussion. Most importantly, such a responsive learning environment would enhance the overall student experience. The teachers' interviews appeared to acknowledge the methods' role in ensuring an overall successful pupil experience.

Another result is a significant improvement in students' language skills (88%), attributing it to the use of communicative and interactive teaching methods. Some of the participants mentioned that innovative and collaborative techniques significantly enhance the student's ability in speaking and listening abilities. This is rational because the strategies facilitate the establishment of an atmosphere that actively motivates students to engage with the language in different situations, hence enhancing the effectiveness of language learning. They noted that innovative methods have made the use of language more natural and frequent, enabling students to acquire new vocabulary and grammatical structures through increased and more meaningful exposure.

The most striking result is that 94% of respondents agreed that these modern learning strategies create a more dynamic and enjoyable learning climate. This overwhelming consensus supports the argument that such methodologies undoubtedly contribute to a learner-centred classroom. By encouraging creativity, independent thinking, and decision-making, innovative learning technologies create an environment in which students feel motivated and empowered to explore new approaches and ideas. One participant, for example, said that "*these methods change not only the ways the learning process was conducted, but also the general understanding of the process among students. …. it*

is not passive knowledge received but an active search for the truth (Int. Teacher 4)". Thus, the findings of the examined interviews support the conclusions drawn from the broader survey.

Barriers to implementing innovative and collaborative learning

There are four key aspects in relation to barriers to implementing innovative and collaborative learning: traditional teaching mindset, limited resources, large class sizes, and lack of professional development. The percentage of these four aspects is presented in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1. Percentage of the four barriers
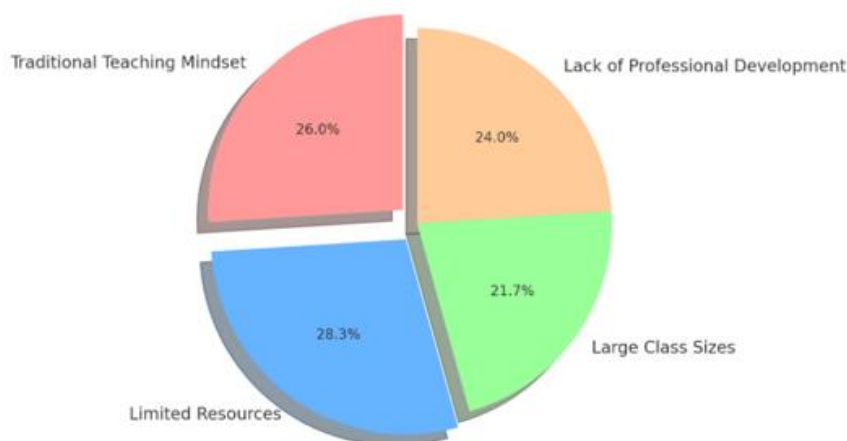
Limited Resources

The issue of resources was frequently cited as a significant challenge. One of the participants said, "*We are working with limited books, limited technology. How can we implement these innovative strategies effectively?* (Int. Teacher 2)". This indicates that the scarcity of materials and access to technology places a constraint on the potential for innovative teaching methods.

The findings also highlight that addressing the scarcity of resources is fundamental for educational innovation, particularly in the EFL context, where diverse learning materials are paramount to student engagement and understanding. The participating teachers highlighted that innovation does not happen in a vacuum but needs tools, variety, and accessibility for both teachers and students. The implication here is that without adequate resources, the teacher's role transitions from facilitator of knowledge to gatekeeper, constrained by the limited means at their disposal. Moreover, when teachers are not equipped with the necessary tools (e.g., modern textbooks, multimedia resources, and digital platforms), their ability to bring creative and collaborative learning experiences into the classroom is significantly hampered. As such, it becomes clear that investment in educational resources is not just an investment in materials but an investment in the capacity for pedagogical change and student outcomes.

Large Class Sizes

Large class sizes were another critical concern, impeding the implementation of more personalized and collaborative learning approaches. One teacher said, "*When we have a class of 40 students, engaging each one individually and fostering collaboration is immensely challenging* (Int. Teachers 6)". This response encapsulates the logistical

difficulties of managing large groups within the confines of a classroom. Additionally, such settings often limit the teacher's ability to observe and respond to the individual learning needs of each student, further complicating effective instruction and student engagement.

The dilemma of large class sizes further complicates the resource issue, as it reduces the individual attention a teacher can provide and the effectiveness of any available resources. As another interviewee mentioned, "*Large classes force us into a one-size-fits-all approach, which runs counter to the very essence of innovative education* (Int. Teacher 1)". This statement highlights the clash between the need for personalized learning experiences and the reality of overcrowded classrooms. The nature of language learning, which often requires one-on-one interaction and immediate feedback, becomes compromised in such settings. To mitigate this, the development of group activities that encourage peer-to-peer learning and the use of technology to facilitate collaborative projects could be potential strategies. These approaches aim not only to maximize the resources but also to leverage the large number of students as a diverse pool of ideas and perspectives, thus transforming a potential barrier into an opportunity for collaborative learning.

Lack of Professional Development

Finally, the interviews illuminated a gap in professional development opportunities that are essential for facilitating innovative learning strategies. The participants highlighted a deficiency in quality professional development, with one teacher stating, "Even when training is available, it often feels disconnected from the realities we face in our classrooms (Int. Teacher 3)". This statement underscores a mismatch between the professional development provided and the practical needs of teachers, suggesting that not only is there a shortage of opportunities but also a misalignment with the actual pedagogical challenges teachers encounter. Another teacher elaborated:

> *It is like they are giving us tools for a different job, which does not consider the unique challenges we face daily in our classrooms. Teachers not only need a quantity of professional development, but the quality is more important* (Int. Teacher 4).

Diagram 2. Lack of Professional Development
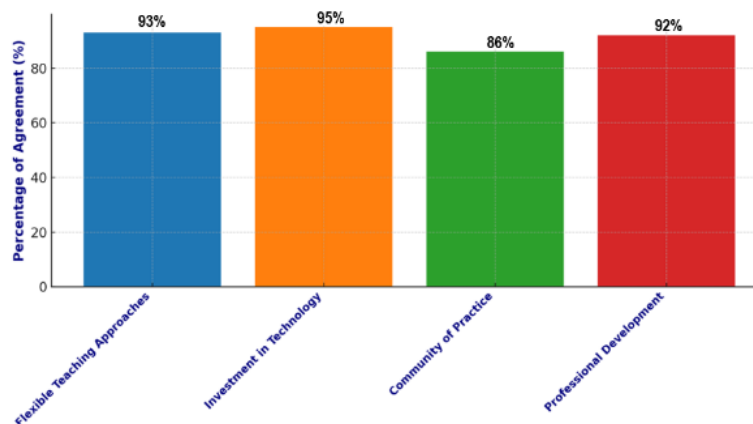
The findings imply a need for professional development initiatives to be closely tailored to the specific demands and conditions of EFL classrooms in Indonesia. Crafting these opportunities with direct input from educators could bridge the opportunity gap and ensure that professional development is relevant, practical, and directly translatable to their teaching practice.

Strategies to overcome barriers to implementing innovative and collaborative learning strategies

Four aspects were highlighted in relation to strategies to overcome barriers: flexible learning approach, investment in technology, community of practice, and professional development. The participants' views of the importance of implementing these four aspects (in percentage) are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Strategies to overcome barriers to implementing innovative and collaborative learning strategies.

Figure 2 shows the strong consensus among the participants on the importance of these four areas in enhancing the context being studied. All four areas have high levels of agreement, over 85%, with investment in technology receiving the highest level of agreement. Figure 2 indicates a recognition of the need for dynamic teaching methods, the integration of technology, the cultivation of professional communities, and continual professional growth. These areas are likely viewed as key factors in the success of the educational or training programs being evaluated.

Flexible Teaching Approaches

The important result is the 93% agreement presented through quantitative data, displaying the high level of educators' consensus on the essentiality of adapting teaching approaches. This further substantiated unanimous voices through the interviews, where every single participant echoed the same feeling, that is, teachers must adapt their strategies and ways of doing things to meet the learner where he understands, not sticking with benchmarks provided by the curriculum. This is indicative of acknowledging the nature of teaching to be dynamic and student-needs-centred, adjusting itself to the plurality of learning paces and the diverse needs that one finds in a classroom.

The findings brought to the surface the unanimous support of the interviewees for flexible teaching approaches that mirror the recognition of diverse needs on the part of learners within the Indonesian EFL context. The teachers maintain that there is a great need to design instructional strategies that are quite flexible in order to fit and meet students' needs, which vary in learning styles, ability levels, and cultural backgrounds. One participant mentioned that rigid teaching plans are unreal to our class realities to bring out the mismatch between what was standardized in the curriculum and what took place in the dynamic class. Advocate for a student-centred approach that easily allows for adjustments and differentiation based on the feedback and engagement of students at any time.

This flexible approach is not the preference but ineluctably seems to become one of the central aspects of successful teaching, for it sets students and their learning ways open before a curriculum that would target everyone's expectations with one method. The message received from the group of teachers in these interviews is clear: educational success in today's classroom can adapt by being able to touch the fine, ever-flowing changes and needs of the teaching style of the student to suit their personalized needs.

Investment in Technology

The overwhelming 95% consensus among participants regarding investment in technology signifies a shared belief in its crucial role as a catalyst for pedagogical

innovation. One of the participants in the interview said that "*technology is not just a tool; it is a facility to create more meaningful learning and function as an education bridge to a global classroom*" (Int. Teacher 2). Among these, perhaps the most important of all is the change that technology integration in pedagogies and learning practices has brought in the changing paradigm of education. Such a changing landscape is largely driven by the spread of blended learning, digital resources, and interactive communication that sit comfortably alongside traditional, face-to-face modes of instruction.

The strategic importance of technology in education is growing, enhancing teaching methods and preparing students for a globally connected world. Blended learning environments have proven successful, particularly for special needs learners, by providing flexible, enhanced, and inclusive experiences. The progression of technology in education must align with evolving demands, fostering a system that equips learners with the necessary competencies for a digital-based ecosystem. Investment in technology should be forward-looking, ensuring an inclusive and dynamic educational environment.

Community of Practice

Although slightly lower, at 86%, the importance of a community of practice is also acknowledged by a significant majority. The findings highlight the remarkable recognition of the critical role played by the community of practice in the domain of English Language Teaching (ELT). This underscores the value education institutions place. One of the participants said, "*The symbiosis of shared expertise and experiential knowledge amongst educators is a cornerstone for pedagogical innovation*" (Int. Teacher 3). The community of practice is characterized by both knowledge sharing, which happens even in established communities, and everything taking place in a vibrant ecosystem exchange around pedagogical best practices.

Furthermore, it highlights that the community practice and the experience-based knowledge that experiences communities of educators are paradigm shifts as a part of this practice, recognized by the community in relation to improving the quality of teaching. The overwhelming endorsement of such communities by 86% does imply there is a consensus on their necessity for substantive evolution in ELT pedagogies within Indonesia. These communities effectively operate as organic repositories of real-time pedagogical insights that are more readily applied than through traditional professional development channels. Besides, the ethos of such communities is intrinsically geared to the teaching practices being represented, or the teaching practices are represented by living them.

Professional Development

Closely linked to the previously discussed opportunity gap, the high percentage of agreement at 92% reinforces the necessity for relevant professional development. This overwhelming concurrence lights an acute awareness within the teaching fraternity of the imperative need for professional development programs intricately tailored to the real-world complexities of the classroom. One of the most interesting explanations in this line mentioned by one teacher, "*professional development should be a catalyst for transformative classroom experiences, not just another administrative formality* (Int. Teacher 5)". The statement reflects that the value of professional development programs is not measured through completion but by their tangible impact on teaching efficacy and student outcomes. The call for professional development, nested in the day-to-day

realities of teaching, means there is a desire for pragmatic teacher education, one that moves beyond notions and gives actually actionable strategies for the moving sands of modern education.

Moving further on the importance of contextually relevant professional development, the study further found that often, teachers feel that professional development activities need to fit with perfection against their instructional practice for them to benefit in a very real way. One of the participants underscored the dynamism of the learning settings with the words: "*There is an immense need for growth opportunities that are a full mirror of our teaching context but grow with it* (Int. Teacher 2)". This adaptive model of professional development is reflected in the data showing a strong preference for ongoing, formative professional learning over sporadic summative training sessions. Such preference speaks volumes of the forward-looking mindset of Indonesian educators and their quest to keep improving pedagogy. Thus, the findings of the current study reflect the tendency of its educators to pursue more progressive aspirations.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the implementation of innovative and collaborative learning strategies in Indonesian EFL classrooms holds substantial importance. The findings are in line with the study's findings by Kariippanon et al. (2019), which found the positive impact of flexible learning spaces on student interaction and engagement. Hunter et al.'s (2023) study also noticed that flexible grouping instructions help create culturally relevant learning communities. These findings highlight the significance of creative teaching techniques in fostering a more engaging and interactive learning environment, ultimately enhancing the educational experience for students from diverse backgrounds and with varying learning styles. The present study further supports these findings, revealing significant efficiency improvements associated with these strategies in Indonesian EFL contexts, with high percentages of positive responses across all impact areas. These outcomes advocate for the adoption of innovative and collaborative approaches to make learning more exciting and manageable, benefiting both students and educators.

Despite the potential benefits, several barriers exist to implementing these strategies. Resource scarcity in educational settings poses a significant challenge, as highlighted by Woschke et al. (2017), who noted that financial constraints could foster incremental innovation in SMEs, suggesting that similar constraints in education might lead to modest yet impactful improvements. Mehta and Zhu (2016) also found that resource scarcity can enhance creativity in product use, implying that educators might leverage limited resources to develop unique teaching strategies. Furthermore, van Egmond et al. (2017) emphasized the importance of intrinsic motivation and basic psychological needs in maintaining educational engagement, even under severe resource constraints. These findings suggest that while scarcity presents challenges, it can also catalyze adaptive strategies and resilience in the educational sector.

Large class sizes present another significant barrier, affecting the quality of teaching and learning. Harfitt and Tsui (2015) emphasized that smaller classes enable more individual attention and active student participation, enhancing the quality of teaching. They also noted that smaller classes foster a community of practice conducive to high-quality learning, suggesting that group activities and peer learning in larger classes could emulate such an environment. Akdere et al. (2021) further revealed that engagement decreases in larger classes, with low-attaining students at secondary levels being the most affected, underscoring the need for differentiated strategies in large

classrooms.

Professional development for EFL teachers in Indonesia is crucial for overcoming these barriers. The research underscores the significance of aligning professional development with teachers' immediate classroom realities and the cultural context in which they operate (Bachtiar, 2020; Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). Contextualized and teacher-centred professional development programs enhance teaching practices and improve student learning outcomes. Sustained professional development, rather than one-off workshops, provides ongoing support and learning, which is key to effective teaching in diverse educational settings (Zein, 2017). This highlights the importance of designing professional development programs that are deeply embedded in the practical and cultural nuances of the teaching environment (Bachtiar, 2021).

Several challenges and requirements mark the professional growth of EFL teachers in Indonesia. Cirocki and Farrell (2019) emphasized that teachers perceive professional development in various ways, such as academic pursuits and self-directed learning. However, not all teachers take advantage of available opportunities, indicating a gap between availability and participation. Bachtiar (2020) noted that while Indonesian EFL teachers view government professional development programs favorably, these programs often focus more on administrative issues than on improving practical teaching abilities. Therefore, Zulfikar (2019) identifies the importance of reflective practice for professional growth, transitioning teachers from being engaged learners to reflective practitioners. Fitri et al. (2021) demonstrate that participation in professional development activities significantly influences teachers' professional lives, advocating for a systematic approach tailored to instructors' experiences and needs.

The research findings also noticed that flexible teaching approaches are necessary for contextually appropriate professional development in English Language Teaching (ELT) within Indonesia. The findings corroborate Munandar and Newton (2021) study findings that emphasized the need for teachers to be viewed not just as implementers but as creators of the curriculum. This is important to enhance social navigation and cultural circumstances with creativity and autonomy. Solikhhah and Budiharso (2019) explored the misalignment of learning objectives in ELT programs with the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (INQF), proposing a rejuvenated strategy that embraces real-world teaching complexities. These discussions confirm the urgent need for professional development tailored to the subtle needs of ELT in Indonesia, reinforcing the call for a more practical, context-aware, and revolutionary professional growth paradigm.

Investment in technology is another crucial aspect of modern education, as noticed from the research results. Byers et al. (2018) and Tharapos (2022) also found that technology integration allows for the development of more interactive and engaging learning designs, extending education beyond the physical classroom. Web-based technologies revolutionize the educational landscape, providing tools such as web conferencing, blogs, wikis, and mobile devices that enhance learning experiences. The strategic importance of technology in education is increasingly recognized, positioning it as a key enabler for improving educational methods and preparing students for a globally connected world. Previous studies show success in blended learning environments, particularly for special needs learners, highlighting technology's role in creating flexible, enhanced, and inclusive learning experiences (Bachtiar, 2023; Sunubi & Bachtiar, 2022). Salcedo (2022) suggests that technology investment should be progressive, aligning with the demands of learning and skills development to foster an education system ready to equip learners with the competencies needed for success in a digital ecosystem.

The community of practice plays a critical role in English Language Teaching (ELT). These collegial networks provide teachers with the courage to experiment with and apply innovative teaching methods, creating an environment conducive to pedagogical risk and innovation (Bachtiar & Nirmala, 2023). Lavitt and Boothe (2015) highlighted the transformative potential of incorporating problem-based learning within community settings for English language acquisition. Volchenkova et al. (2017) further explored the integration of online and face-to-face communication in ELT teacher education programs, demonstrating how these diverse communication modes foster sharing, collaboration, and situated learning. Akdere et al. (2021) emphasized the effectiveness of integrating technology in collaborative inquiry, enhancing ELT pedagogy across content areas. These findings align with the current study's emphasis on the value of communities of practice for sharing experiential knowledge and pedagogical best practices, supporting the exploration and implementation of innovative instructional strategies.

Recent scholarly investigations further highlight the urgency for contextually relevant professional development in ELT within Indonesia. Solikhah and Budiharso (2019) explore the practices of EFL teachers, emphasizing the need for teachers to navigate sociocultural contexts with creativity and agency. Sofiana et al. (2019) reflected on the necessity for ELT programs to evolve alongside curriculum mandates, aligning with teachers' calls for development opportunities that mirror their teaching contexts. Sukirman (2022) delved into the misalignment of learning outcomes in ELT programs with the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (INQF), advocating for a revitalized approach that incorporates real-world teaching complexities. This collective scholarly dialogue underscores the immediate need for professional development tailored to the nuanced demands of ELT in Indonesia, amplifying the call for a more pragmatic, context-aware, and transformative professional growth paradigm.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

This research carefully studied the incorporation of innovative and collaborative learning strategies in Indonesian EFL classrooms, revealing a large beneficial influence on student engagement, language competency, and the learning environment. The results demonstrate the readiness of teachers and students to adopt new techniques for a more participatory, entertaining, and practical learning experience. Despite the hurdles cited, such as conventional teaching attitudes, limited resources, huge class sizes, and a lack of professional development, the agreement among educators highlights a compelling need to change towards more dynamic, student-centred educational practices. The research aligns with global educational trends emphasizing creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking as essential skills for the 21st century, underscoring the importance of overcoming existing challenges to foster an enriching and inclusive learning environment in Indonesian EFL contexts.

The research offers a multimodal strategy to solve creative and collaborative learning hurdles in Indonesian EFL contexts. Key strategies include the adoption of flexible teaching approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs, significant investment in technology to bridge gaps in resources and global classroom connectivity, the establishment of communities of practice for sharing pedagogical insights and best practices, and the provision of contextually relevant professional development opportunities tailored to the unique challenges of the Indonesian educational landscape. These guidelines seek to provide educators with the resources and support required to innovate teaching approaches and boost student learning

outcomes successfully. The study's conclusions propose a change in the paradigm towards a more involved, collaborative, and technology-integrated approach to education, offering a hopeful future for Indonesian EFL learners and instructors.

This study was conducted in one district in West Sulawesi, which may not fully represent the diverse educational contexts across Indonesia's extensive archipelago. The relatively small sample size, involving only 42 EFL teachers in the questionnaires and six teachers in the interviews, might limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the resource availability in the studied district may differ from other regions, affecting the applicability of the results in areas with more or less access to educational resources. Furthermore, while the study identified teacher reluctance as a barrier, it did not delve deeply into the underlying causes, which could be crucial for effectively addressing this issue.

Future studies should consider expanding geographical coverage to include multiple districts across different islands, capturing a broader spectrum of challenges and successful strategies in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Longitudinal research could also provide insights into the long-term effects of innovative and collaborative learning strategies on student outcomes and teacher practices. Further investigation into the root causes of teacher reluctance to adopt innovative methods, such as cultural factors, training gaps, and support systems, is essential. Additionally, examining the effectiveness of specific digital tools and platforms in enhancing EFL instruction and student engagement could offer more targeted recommendations.

Acknowledgements

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