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NEGOTIATING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS IN INDONESIAN PRIVATE ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

Mil'ul Hana[1], Ahdi Riyono[2], Titis Sulistiyowati [3]
[1,2,3]*Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Muria Kudus*

Corresponding author's email: hanabiel13@gmail.com

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Abstract: In the constantly changing English language teaching environment, professional development (PD) is central to enhancing teacher competence and quality of learning. However, aside from the overall worry of limited institutional support, there is still a conceptual gap in comprehending the interaction of teacher agency and institutional structures in the development of PD, especially within the context of faith-based Islamic schools where professional development is also shaped by moral and cultural values. Despite these constraints, the majority of English teachers are actively engaged in self-directed learning (SDL) to sustain their professional development. This study aims to examine the forms of professional development pursued by English teachers in private Islamic schools, the forms of institutional support they access, and how their development is influenced by the interaction between SDL and institutional support. With a qualitative case study design, the research involves English teachers at two Islamic schools in Blora. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, provisional follow-up telephone calls, and document analysis, and thematically analyzed according to Braun and Clarke's six-step framework of familiarization, coding, generating, reviewing, defining, and reporting themes. The findings indicate that SDL is an essential element in the driving force of reflective practice and improvement based on teachers' moral and professional values, while institutional support is important for legitimacy, coordination, and opportunities for collaboration. Instead of being a fixed model, teacher professional development is a context-dependent and relational process between self-directed learning and institutional support.
Keywords: *professional development; self-directed learning; institutional support; private Islamic schools; English teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

Professional development (PD) has long been recognized as a central factor shaping the quality and impact of English language teaching. In the context of rapid transformations in pedagogy, technology, and global communication, English teachers are increasingly required to continuously update their professional knowledge and classroom practices (Abakah, 2023; Borg, 2020). Continuous professional development enables teachers to respond to evolving educational demands while remaining aligned with curriculum standards and learning expectations (Desimone & Hall, 2023; Cao, 2025). It also fosters reflective practice, allowing teachers to evaluate their instructional approaches and develop innovative strategies for addressing classroom challenges (Aisyah et al., 2023). Within this perspective, PD is not merely a technical process of training but a sustained professional journey that shapes teachers' identities and pedagogical competence (Firdaus et al., 2023).

Recent scholarship highlights that professional development increasingly emphasizes teacher autonomy and continuous learning rather than episodic training programs (Fatmawaty et al., 2026). Research suggests that sustainable PD occurs when teachers actively participate in learning processes that are relevant to their instructional contexts (Fathi et al., 2024; Alnajjar

et al., 2024). In many educational systems, teachers are encouraged to engage in professional reflection, collaborative learning, and classroom-based inquiry to strengthen their pedagogical practice (Borg, 2020). These approaches position teachers not only as implementers of pedagogical reforms but also as active contributors to educational improvement (Li & Zhang, 2025; Du & Curdt-Christiansen, 2026). Consequently, professional development is increasingly viewed as an ongoing process shaped by both individual learning initiatives and institutional contexts (Golightly, 2025; Kilinc, 2023).

One significant concept within contemporary teacher development research is self-directed learning (SDL). SDL refers to the process in which individuals take responsibility for identifying their learning needs, setting goals, selecting resources, and evaluating learning outcomes (Firdaus et al., 2023; Liang, 2025). In the context of teacher learning, SDL enables educators to pursue professional knowledge independently through reading, online courses, peer discussions, and reflective practices (Pesina, 2023). Such initiatives allow teachers to continuously adapt to pedagogical innovations and changing classroom demands (Lu et al., 2023; Ismailova, 2025). As a result, SDL has been widely recognized as a critical component of lifelong professional learning in the teaching profession (Kausar, 2023; Netasit et al., 2025).

Earlier literature primarily conceptualized SDL as an individual cognitive process centered on personal motivation and learning strategies. However, more recent studies increasingly interpret SDL as an expression of teacher agency within broader social and institutional contexts (Arı & Yavuz, 2024; Li et al., 2026). From this perspective, teachers are not isolated learners but active agents who negotiate, adapt, and transform their learning practices in relation to institutional expectations and professional environments (Qi & Derakhshan, 2026; Kohnke, 2025). This shift highlights the importance of contextual factors in shaping teachers' professional learning behaviors. Consequently, SDL is now widely understood as a socially situated practice rather than a purely individual activity (Kilag & Sasan, 2023; Roux & Du Toit, 2025).

The ecological perspective further emphasizes that professional learning emerges from complex interactions between individuals and their environments. Teachers' learning practices are influenced by multiple relational and contextual factors, including peer networks, institutional policies, and professional communities (Chen, 2023; Gan & Lam, 2024). Within such ecological systems, teachers continuously adjust their learning strategies based on available opportunities and constraints (Petrović & Stojković-Trajković, 2026; Opara et al., 2023). This dynamic process suggests that professional development is embedded within broader socio-institutional environments rather than occurring solely at the individual level. Consequently, teacher learning is shaped through ongoing interactions between agency, context, and professional practice (Temiaková & Pavlov, 2026; Bai & Wang, 2024).

In addition to teacher agency, institutional support has been identified as a key factor influencing professional development. Institutional support includes formal professional development programs, mentoring systems, collaborative learning opportunities, and access to professional resources (Mila, 2025; John, 2025). These mechanisms provide structural conditions that enable teachers to sustain and expand their professional learning activities (Iswandari & Arifani, 2023; Li et al., 2026). Beyond technical assistance, institutional support also involves symbolic recognition of teachers' professional efforts and contributions (Ghorbani, 2026). Such support strengthens teachers' motivation to engage in continuous learning and professional growth (Price, 2026; Xu, 2024).

Despite the recognized importance of institutional support, many educational contexts continue to experience limited access to structured professional development opportunities. This situation is particularly evident in private or under-resourced schools where financial constraints, policy limitations, and limited training programs hinder teachers' participation in formal professional learning (Algamdi, 2025; Kausar, 2023). In such contexts, teachers often rely heavily on personal initiative and informal learning networks to improve their professional competence (Netasit et al., 2025; Oberholzer & Mestry, 2025). Self-directed learning therefore becomes a crucial mechanism for sustaining professional growth. Nevertheless, individual initiative alone may not fully compensate for the absence of institutional support (Maipath & Zulu, 2025; Zhang, 2023).

Empirical evidence from several international contexts demonstrates that effective professional development often results from the interaction between individual initiative and institutional support. Studies conducted in educational systems

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such as South Korea and Saudi Arabia indicate that teachers' self-directed learning becomes more sustainable when supported by collaborative school cultures and supportive leadership (Algamdi, 2025; Shen, 2026). Institutional encouragement can strengthen teachers' motivation to participate in professional activities such as peer mentoring, workshops, and online learning communities (Lu et al., 2023). These findings suggest that professional learning environments should foster both teacher autonomy and organizational support structures. Such interaction allows professional development to evolve as a collaborative and contextually responsive process (Haruna et al., 2025; Price, 2026).

Within the Indonesian context, teacher professional development has often been implemented through centralized or top-down training models. These programs typically emphasize formal workshops and government-initiated training rather than teacher-initiated learning practices (Firdaus et al., 2023; Irgin, 2025). While such initiatives contribute to professional capacity building, they may overlook the role of teacher agency and informal professional learning networks. This limitation is particularly relevant in Islamic private schools that operate within unique institutional and cultural frameworks. In these settings, professional learning is influenced not only by educational policies but also by religious values and community expectations (Abakah, 2023; Gan & Lam, 2024).

Despite growing interest in teacher professional learning, research examining the interaction between self-directed learning and institutional support remains limited. Existing studies tend to investigate SDL primarily as an individual learning strategy or focus on institutional support as an organizational structure without exploring how these two dimensions interact in shaping professional development (Bai & Wang, 2024; Roux & Du Toit, 2025). This limitation is particularly evident in faith-based educational institutions where professional learning is influenced by cultural and religious values (Amin & Prasojo, 2024; Takona, 2024). Furthermore, empirical research addressing teacher professional development in Indonesian Islamic schools remains relatively scarce (Firdaus et al., 2023; Gan & Lam, 2024). To address this gap, the present study investigates how English teachers in private Islamic schools negotiate their professional development through the interaction between SDL and institutional support. Specifically, this study explores: (1) the forms of SDL practiced by teachers, (2) the types of institutional support available, and (3) how these two dimensions interact in shaping professional development.

This study offers several conceptual contributions to the literature on teacher professional development. First, it reconceptualizes self-directed learning not merely as an individual cognitive activity but as a socially and morally embedded professional practice within Islamic educational settings (Arı & Yavuz, 2024; Lindvall et al., 2025). Second, the study applies perspectives from structuration theory and Bourdieu's habitus to explain how professional learning emerges from the recursive interaction between teacher agency and institutional structure (Bai & Wang, 2024; Roux & Du Toit, 2025). Third, it highlights the role of faith-based institutional culture in shaping teachers' professional learning behaviors and opportunities (Amin & Prasojo, 2024; Tamayo-Preval & Ruiz-Ramirez, 2025). By integrating sociological theory with empirical investigation, the study provides a more nuanced framework for understanding professional development in religious educational institutions (Chen, 2023; Roux & Du Toit, 2025).

Understanding how teachers negotiate professional learning within specific institutional contexts is essential for developing sustainable professional development models. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical insights into teacher learning practices in private Islamic schools, a context that remains underexplored in educational research (Widagsa et al., 2026; Verster et al., 2024). The findings are expected to inform educational policymakers and school leaders about the importance of balancing teacher autonomy with institutional support in designing effective PD initiatives (Borg, 2020; Bragg et al., 2021; Dogan & Kırkgöz, 2022). Additionally, the study highlights the role of socio-cultural and moral values in shaping professional learning practices within faith-based educational institutions (Mujiyat et al., 2025; Mistry & Horpynich, 2026). Ultimately, the research offers practical insights for developing contextually responsive professional development strategies that encourage teachers to become reflective practitioners and lifelong learners (Mayombe, 2025; Murry et al., 2023).

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore private Islamic school English

teachers' self-directed learning and institutional support for their professional development. A qualitative design was employed since it provides an opportunity to thoroughly examine the participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings within their natural educational environment. This design allowed the researcher to document the dynamic tension between institutional arrangements and teacher agency in practice, producing rich detail that might be unobtainable with large-scale quantitative designs. The qualitative case study also produced a rich contextual understanding of how professional learning was undertaken by teachers in faith-based contexts where institutional values and individual agency are at all times conflated, and tensions as well as opportunities were brought to the surface in their development.

Two Islamic private schools in Blora, Central Java, were purposively selected because they had distinctive institutional profiles and contextual differences. The two schools have similarities in their proximity to the city center and in a peripheral section of the city, such that they share differences in instructional environments and in institutional facilities. Each of these schools is located in a different part of the city, and each has an active English program with differing levels of formal support for teacher professional development, providing a comparative insight into the interaction of personal initiative and institutional facilitation. The employment of contrasting settings allowed the researcher to analyze how teachers' engagement in professional learning is shaped by institutional culture, geographic location, and commitment from leadership, and construct a deeper description of teacher development among diverse educational ecologies.

The participants were four English teachers (one male, three female), with teaching experience ranging from 6 to more than 10 years. They are selected using purposive sampling for ensuring information-rich cases. The participants were all involved in professional development activities and had prior exposure to programs such as MGMP or Ma'arif workshops. They also pursued self-directed learning through YouTube tutorials, teaching blogs, and scholarly readings. Even though the sample was small, it captured diverse experiences in the nature and levels of institutional support offered. Though the criterion ensured that the participants were able to reflect on their PD experience, it could have excluded some of the less engaged teachers' perspectives from view, which is identified as a potential sampling limitation. Backgrounds of participants, such as teacher levels, professional learning motivation, and institutional affiliation, were utilized to enhance further an understanding of how agency operates in given structural contexts within Islamic education.

The small sample size (n=4) is justified in terms of the concept of information power, where the depth, specificity, and contextuality of information are sufficient to provide analytical insight. In the context of the specific research question, the relative homogeneity of the research participants, and the richness of the qualitative data collected, the sample size is adequate to provide meaningful interpretations.

Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used for data collection. The interviews focused on four main aspects: (1) teachers' experiences and strategies in self-directed professional learning, (2) perceptions of institutional support and its adequacy, (3) the interplay between SDL and IS in fostering professional growth, and (4) challenges and recommendations for future professional development. Documents such as lesson plans, mentoring logs, and reflective diaries were used to triangulate teachers' narratives and contextualize findings within the broader organizational structure. The documents were compared to interview data using pattern matching and content comparison for analyzing the content in order to determine repeated institutional practices and support mechanisms.

Data collection was carried out over a period of four to six weeks after obtaining consent from the school principals and participants. Reflective opening responses were collected through Google Forms to allow the teachers time to provide considered responses; they were followed by semi-structured interviews conducted through WhatsApp video or voice calls in a timeframe of 20–40 minutes per interview. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim for accuracy. The initial use of Google Forms, though less spontaneous than real-time interviews, was intentional to provide teachers with reflection time. Although pre-interview Google Forms surveys were useful in understanding the initial perspectives, they might have affected the responses in terms of reducing spontaneity and increasing the tendency to provide more structured and socially desirable responses.

Participants were thoroughly informed of the aims of the study, procedures, potential risks, and

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benefits of the study. Written informed consent was offered, and confidentiality was ensured through anonymization and secure data handling. Participants were assured of the voluntary nature of the study and rights of withdrawal at any point without penalty. Furthermore, pseudonyms were used throughout documentation to ensure participant anonymity, and data were stored within password-protected documents accessible only to the researcher in accordance with internationally accepted ethical research standards within educational research.

Data were analyzed on a thematic basis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step reflexive analysis process: (1) becoming familiar through multiple readings of institutional documents and interview transcripts, (2) developing initial codes manually to stay close to the data, (3) merging related codes into potential themes, (4) reviewing and refining themes against the dataset, (5) defining and naming themes with illustrative extracts, and (6) building the analytic narrative. Themes of teacher agency, institutional facilitation, barriers and obstacles, and professional identity development were iteratively constructed to align with the research questions and conceptual framework. In order to promote a better alignment between theory and analysis, the coding procedure was guided by the notions of agency and structure. Codes labeled as "agency" were determined by the presence of initiative, autonomy, reflection, and self-regulation in the context of teachers' professional development. At the same time, "structure" was determined by the presence of institutional norms, expectations, leadership, and symbolic authority that facilitated or hindered teacher development. The coding procedure guided by theoretical notions promoted an analytical interpretation of professional development in the institutional and socio-cultural context.

Analytic transparency was maintained through reflexive memoing, coding logs, and an audit trail of important analytic decisions. Triangulation was employed through multiple data sources and researcher reflections to enhance the credibility of the findings.

Several steps were taken to establish trustworthiness. Credibility was enhanced with member checking, where participants reviewed summary findings and verified the interpretation. Transferability was enabled with thick description, employing rich contextual description and verbatim quotations so that readers could determine relevance to other settings. Reliability was achieved through systematic documentation of procedures in an audit trail, and confirmability was achieved using English Education peer debriefing sessions to minimize researcher bias. Data triangulation was achieved by cross-checking interviews, reflective responses, and institutional texts in order to screen for confirmatory themes.

For example, data points that involved teachers autonomously looking for learning resources, trying out practices in the classroom, and reflecting on their teaching practices were coded as "agency." On the other hand, data points that involved institutional policies, encouragement from leadership, training, and collaborative structures were coded as "structure." This coding approach was informed by the theory and allowed for a more explicit analysis of the relationship between agency and structure in shaping professional development practices.

Reflexivity was maintained throughout the process by recording assumptions, reflections, and positionality of the researcher in analytic memos to ensure transparency. Ethical permission for this study was provided by the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Muria Kudus Research Ethics Committee (Approval No. 58/MPBI.FKIP.UMK/B.09.01/VI/2025).
Informed written consent was achieved from all subjects, with assurances of confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntariness. Pseudonyms were used on transcripts and data were stored securely in password-only accessible files by the researcher, meeting international standards for ethical practice in educational research.

Overall, the methodological strategy; combining mixed sources of data, clear analytic documentation, and self-evident trustworthiness processes, established solid groundwork for the rigor and validity of this qualitative case study while being sensitive to the Islamic school context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the results of the study derived from interviews, observation, and institutional documents of English teachers in private Islamic schools in Blora. The data were presented thematically to address three research questions. Every subsection is preceded by empirical data (teacher voices), interpretation, and then theoretical perspectives. To ensure analytic clarity, excerpts have been consistently presented prior to interpretation, allowing findings to emerge inductively prior to their connection with relevant theories.

The themes identified in this section were developed through a thematic analysis procedure that included initial coding, categorization, and abstraction. Codes like "independent learning practices", "institutional facilitation", and "validation of innovation" were grouped into broader themes. These themes were further examined by distinguishing descriptive patterns from their analytical meanings, enabling a clearer separation between data representation and theoretical interpretation.

Self-directed learning of English teachers

English teachers were actively involved in self-directed learning (SDL) activities such as watching YouTube tutorials, reading blogs and journal articles, trying out classroom practices, and preparing teaching materials. These were largely motivated by intrinsic factors, including professional duty and concerns for students' learning.

Teacher V explained:

> "It is an experimental and reflective process. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, but I always learn something." (Teacher VK)

Teacher F said:

> "I enjoy reading teacher blogs or journals in my free time. It helps me to learn new ways of engaging my students more actively." (Teacher FTS)

Other teachers (A, F, and U) also mentioned the frequent use of online resources because of their convenience and accessibility. However, some challenges were also identified, such as limited internet access, time constraints, and lack of structured feedback.

The data show that teachers on their own initiate learning activities independently of the institution's provision. The teachers' learning is motivated by the needs of their classes, curiosity, and a feeling of responsibility. However, these activities are still individual and not supported by group feedback mechanisms. This reveals that although SDL is strongly present, its effect is limited in part due to a lack of collaboration in validation and reflection.

Institutional support to teachers' professional development

Institutional support was facilitated through MGMP activities, workshops, seminars, mentoring, administrative facilitation, and partial financial support. However, the level of intensity and continuity of these support systems was dependent on leadership commitment, school resources, and collaboration with external sources.

Teacher A said:

> "Sometimes MGMP gives us good ideas on teaching, but after the event, no one follows up. Therefore, I continue to learn by myself until the next one comes." (Teacher A)

Teacher U said:

> "When the school invites us to attend workshops, I feel more confident to apply new ideas." (Teacher U)

The data show some variation in the level of consistency and support structure. When support is unstructured, teachers depend more on individual learning. However, structured support helps build teachers' confidence and motivates them to adopt new approaches. This reveals that institutional support is not only a means of access but also a stabilizing force that influences the continuity of professional learning practices.

The interplay between self-directed learning and institutional support

The results also indicate that self-directed learning and institutional support are interrelated in the development of teachers' professional learning.

Teacher U said:

> "I get a lot from online sources, but workshops give me a chance to think more about classroom implementation." (Teacher U).

Teacher F reported that her involvement in MGMP activities had improved her motivation to exchange ideas and work on teaching practices together with her colleagues.

The results show that self-directed learning is responsible for the generation of ideas and initial practices, while institutional support offers opportunities for validation, refinement, and collaboration. Not all practices initiated by teachers are recognized at the institutional level. Generally, the results show that teachers' professional learning is a process that involves individual initiative and institutional engagement.

Importantly, this process illustrates the complex interaction, which is characterized by the strengthening, refinement, or delimitation of ideas developed individually. The inclusion of the "Interpretation" and "Theoretical Meaning" columns enhances the analysis by making the connection between the empirical and the conceptual, the theoretical, and the ideas of agency and structure.

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Table 1. *The interplay between self-directed learning and institutional support*

Teacher	Self Directed Learning (SDL)	Institutional Support (IS)	Interplay on PD	Interpretation	Theoretical Meaning	Example Quote
V (School A)	YouTube learning	Occasional MGMP programs	SDL compensates IS	Relies on personal initiative since the lack of support from the structure	Agency emerges strongly when the structure is weak	"I usually learn from YouTube since formal training occurs rarely."
A (School B)	Online + reading	Occasional MGMP programs and collaboration with other teacher	SDL refined by collaboration	Learning is enhanced through discussion	Structure supports refinement of agency	"Discussions in MGMP help me adjust ideas."
F (School B)	Reading	Occasional MGMP programs	SDL dominates PD	Individual initiative substitutes for the lack of support from the structure	Agency operates under structural limitation	"Training is not regularly provided."
U (School B)	Online + reading	Occasional MGMP programs and join seminar or workshop	Complement arily	Simultaneous interaction enhances confidence	Agency and structure co-construct PD	"Workshops give clearer direction."

The current study reveals that English teachers' professional development in private Islamic schools is influenced by the interaction between self-directed learning (SDL) and institutional support (IS). Instead of operating independently, these two aspects work as interdependent processes that influence professional development under certain contextual conditions (Arı & Yavuz, 2024; Alamri, 2024).

Self-directed learning as contextually mediated agency

The results show that teachers are actively involved in self-directed learning activities such as independent learning, reflection, and production of learning materials. This implies that teacher agency is a critical factor in promoting professional learning, especially in situations where institutional support is not available (Li & Wang, 2024; Li, 2024). However, this agency is not entirely autonomous. The learning process of teachers is influenced by factors such as constraints of resources, time, and lack of feedback (Zhang & Ng, 2024). This study adds to the previous SDL research by showing that teacher agency is mediated by contextual and institutional constraints rather than being a completely independent process (Roux & Du Toit, 2025).

From the adult learning theory, this study supports the principles of experiential learning (Malcolm Knowles). However, this study goes beyond the existing literature on SDL by demonstrating that self-directed learning is not an autonomous process but is constantly negotiated within the context of institutional constraints (Arı & Yavuz, 2024; Shen et al., 2026). Therefore, teacher agency in this situation can be considered as situated rather than autonomous.

Institutional support as structuring mechanism

Institutional support is another factor that is vital for the sustainability of professional development, as it not only makes it easier for teachers to access learning but also legitimates and organizes teaching practices (Alamri, 2024; Lee, 2024). The findings indicate, however, that the level of support varies from one school to another.

This research contributes to the existing views by demonstrating that the effectiveness of institutional support is not only dependent on its provision but also on its continuity and follow-up (Amin & Prasojo, 2024; Stockwell & Tafazoli, 2025). However, if the support provided by institutions varies, teachers have to depend on self-learning, which may negatively influence collaborative development. On the other hand, effective support boosts teachers' confidence and motivates them to adopt innovative strategies (Kausar, 2023). Although it has been perceived that teachers are facilitated by institutions, it has been noted in this study that institutions have also impacted teachers' practices.

The interplay between agency and structure

The essential finding of this research emphasizes the relationship between SDL and support structures. Professional development is a product of the interplay between teacher agency and support structures and is not an exclusive product of either one of these factors (Bai & Wang, 2024; Roux & Du Toit, 2025).

As is consistent with sociocultural theory, the relationship between agency and support structures is a site of negotiation and tension. SDL is a means for teachers to generate innovations in their practices, but support structures selectively endorse and regulate these practices. This suggests that support structures not only facilitate but also shape and sometimes limit professional development (Philpott & Oates, 2023).

The present study contributes to the literature on professional development in several ways. It shows that professional development in Islamic schools is a relational and contextual construct (Rohmah, 2023; Sulistiyo, 2023). It adds to the literature on SDL by showing that teacher learning is not an autonomous construct but is filtered through support structures and contextual factors (Arı & Yavuz, 2024). Furthermore, institutional support is also reconceptualized as both a facilitative and regulative factor which influences professional practices (Lee, 2024; Yusuf & Ahmad, 2024).

The findings also carry practical implications. Firstly, there should be continuous professional development programs in place within the school system. Secondly, there should be recognition of teacher-led initiatives by school administrators. Thirdly, there should be a blend of institutional support and self-directed learning for the purpose of teacher professional development (Firdaus et al., 2023; Siziba, 2025). Fourthly, even within limited resources, there can be significant teacher development by making use of digital resources for teacher professional development (Chen, 2023; Bai & Wang, 2024).

Thus, the study once again highlights that teacher professional development is not a linear but a continuous process of negotiation, which is affected by both enabling and constraining conditions (Roux & Du Toit, 2025; Maipath & Zulu, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the professional development of English teachers in private Islamic schools in Blora, Indonesia, is a negotiated and contextually mediated process that is influenced by the dynamic interplay between self-directed learning (SDL) and institutional support (IS). Teachers' agency is exercised through self-directed learning activities like online browsing, reflection, and sharing, while institutional support in the form of MGMP, workshops, and mentoring provides structural and social scaffolding.

The results of this research suggest that professional development is not a process that is agency-driven or institutionally supported, but rather one that is mediated by the dynamic interaction between the two. This interaction in the Islamic schooling context is further mediated by the values of sincerity (ikhlas), responsibility (amanah), and cooperation (ta'awun) that shape teachers' engagement with professional development.

This research makes a contribution to existing literature by showing that teacher professional development is a negotiated and contextually mediated process, rather than an autonomous one. It also extends existing theories by showing that self-directed learning is structurally mediated and that institutional support is not only a facilitative but also a validating mechanism for professional practices.

In practice, the results emphasize the importance of schools shifting from single training sessions to continuous professional development. Schools can facilitate teachers' SDL through the development of mentoring structures, the organization of regular peer discussion forums, and the development of structured and flexible professional development planning in alignment with the school values.

This can be done by establishing professional mentoring systems, providing opportunities for peer dialogue and reflection, and designing flexible professional development programs that

integrate institutional goals with teacher autonomy.

This is especially important in the Islamic school setting, where limited resources mean that the integration of teacher autonomy with institutional support can improve the sustainability of professional development.

There are a number of limitations in this study. The first is that the small and purposeful sample size means that generalization is not possible outside of the Blora setting. The second is that the study is based on self-reported data, which may not accurately reflect classroom implementation. The third is that the study is based on teachers who are already actively involved in professional development, and may not capture the views of less active teachers.

Future studies are recommended to include a more varied sample and to conduct classroom observations to gain a better understanding of how professional development is implemented.

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