

Transforming Lecturer Identity: Exploring the Emotional and Professional Impact of Teaching on Novice Lecturers in Early Career Academia

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: February 14, 2025

Revised: March 30, 2025

Accepted: April 24, 2025

Keywords:

Novice lecturers;
identity formation;
institutional support;
mentorship;
emotional challenges;
professional development;
Indonesian Career
Academia

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the emotional and professional impacts of teaching on novice lecturers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang, focusing on the process of identity transformation. New lecturers face numerous emotional and professional challenges, including stress, role ambiguity, and feelings of isolation, particularly during the initial years of teaching. This research adopts a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews with 22 novice lecturers from various academic disciplines to gain insights into their experiences. The study found that institutional support, particularly mentorship from the Chair of the Department and peer collaboration, plays a crucial role in helping lecturers navigate these challenges and develop a professional identity. Although the institution provides some support, findings suggest that more structured mentorship and additional resources are necessary to better support novice lecturers. The study contributes to existing literature on the identity formation of novice lecturers, especially in non-Western academic settings, and highlights the need for tailored support strategies that address the specific challenges faced by new faculty members. These insights are valuable for improving institutional practices and enhancing the professional satisfaction and development of novice lecturers.

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1. Introduction

The transition into academia for novice lecturers is marked by significant emotional and professional challenges that shape their identity and influence their career development. This process of identity formation in the academic context is an essential aspect of understanding the broader trajectory of higher education professionals. As the academic world

evolves, new lecturers must navigate an array of demands—ranging from the pressures of teaching, research, and administrative duties to the emotional challenges of fitting into academic cultures that may differ significantly from those they encountered during their prior education (Hong & Abdullah, 2020). It is this complex interplay between personal and professional challenges that defines the experience of

novice lecturers in early-career academia, influencing their well-being, professional identity, and long-term career satisfaction (Khalid & Husnin, 2019). Understanding these dynamics is critical for institutions aiming to effectively support their faculty, as tailored mentoring and professional development programs can significantly improve the transition experience for new faculty.

Recent literature emphasizes the importance of identity formation for novice lecturers, particularly as they face the challenges of adapting to academic environments that require a significant shift from their previous roles as students or researchers to that of a teacher and mentor. Novice lecturers, especially in higher education institutions, experience varying degrees of alienation and stress, which can hinder their professional development and impact their emotional health (Lakeman et al., 2022; Soeli et al., 2022). According to research by (Kamali & Javahery, 2024; Remmik et al., 2011), novice lecturers often face feelings of disconnection, which can undermine their self-confidence and professional motivation. These emotional responses are frequently compounded by the increasing demands of academic life (Beaton, 2022; Restrepo et al., 2023) from managing a heavy workload to engaging in continuous professional development, all of which challenge their professional identity and emotional resilience (Fatima et al., 2024). Studies have found that novice lecturers' adaptation is not just an individual challenge but a systemic issue, influenced by the institutions they work for, the social support they receive, and the professional development opportunities available to them (Hašková et al., 2023; Solodkova et al., 2017).

Despite the growing recognition of these challenges, many novice lecturers remain underprepared for the demands they face. Literature highlights the importance of effective teacher training and mentorship, which can support the development of a professional identity and the management of emotional strain. Karpovich et al. (2022) and Limeranto & Kuswandono (2023) notes that

the adaptation of novice lecturers is intricately tied to their ability to manage the emotional challenges they encounter in the classroom, which often include stress, isolation, and role confusion. The transformation of their professional identity is thus a critical component of their career progression, yet it remains inadequately explored in many contexts (Djerasimovic & Villani, 2020). The present study, conducted at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang, seeks to bridge this gap by focusing specifically on the emotional and professional impacts of teaching on novice lecturers in early career academia, with a particular emphasis on the processes of identity transformation in a regional Indonesian context.

The primary research question addresses the emotional and professional challenges faced by novice lecturers as they form their academic identities. This study explores the factors that influence the identity transformation process, identifying how emotional challenges such as stress, isolation, and role ambiguity affect their professional development. Key to this inquiry is understanding how these challenges influence the broader trajectory of their careers and their long-term satisfaction in academia. By examining these issues, the research aims to contribute to the development of more effective support strategies for novice lecturers in early academia. Specifically, the research explores strategies for fostering resilience, supporting identity development, and offering career guidance that aligns with the unique challenges faced by lecturers in Indonesian academic institutions, particularly in regions such as Enrekang, where socio-cultural and institutional norms may differ from those in Western academic settings.

Previous studies in Western academia have emphasized mentorship and social support as pivotal elements in assisting novice lecturers to navigate the challenges of early career academia. (Hobson & van Nieuwerburgh, 2022; Manning & Hobson, 2017; McIntyre & Hobson, 2016) argue that external mentors provide essential support,

offering guidance on professional identity development and facilitating the transition into teaching roles. Such mentorship programs create a space for reflection and discussion of teaching practices, which is vital for addressing the emotional and professional demands faced by new lecturers. In addition to mentorship, De Vries & Malinen (2020) emphasizes the importance of community learning, where novice lecturers are encouraged to engage in collective reflective practices, thereby building a sense of belonging and professional value. These support systems not only enhance emotional well-being but also foster a strong academic identity, leading to greater teaching efficacy and career satisfaction. Dewi & Fajri (2023) further explore the role of personalized career tools in aligning career choices with the individual's identity motives, which can significantly contribute to lecturer retention and professional development.

The exploration of professional identity formation for novice lecturers has also expanded across various disciplines, with studies noting differences in the experiences of lecturers in the humanities versus the sciences. (Bywater & Mander, 2018; Miller-Young Dr et al., 2018; O'Sullivan et al., 2021) note that the challenges and opportunities within different academic fields require tailored support strategies to ensure that lecturers can successfully adapt their identities to meet disciplinary expectations. For example, while lecturers in the humanities may experience a stronger sense of autonomy and flexibility in their teaching approaches, those in the sciences may encounter more rigid structures and institutional pressures that influence their identity development. Understanding these field-specific challenges is crucial for developing interventions that are both relevant and effective. However, few studies have comprehensively addressed these issues in a non-Western academic context, which is a key gap in the current literature.

This study fills this gap by providing a comparative analysis of novice lecturers' identity formation in Indonesia, with a

particular focus on Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang. By examining both the emotional and professional impacts of teaching on novice lecturers, this research seeks to uncover the unique challenges they face in a culturally distinct setting. While existing literature has predominantly focused on Western contexts, this study broadens the scope by incorporating the Indonesian educational environment, where social and institutional norms may differ significantly. The research aims to explore how these differences shape the process of identity transformation and how novice lecturers in this context navigate the intersection of emotional challenges and professional expectations.

The overarching aim of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of the factors influencing novice lecturers' identity formation, with a particular focus on the emotional and professional challenges they encounter. The research is grounded in the hypothesis that the transformation of professional identity is central to the career development and emotional well-being of novice lecturers. By investigating the challenges they face and the support strategies that can help mitigate these challenges, the study aims to provide practical recommendations for higher education institutions to better support their early-career faculty. Furthermore, by focusing on the specific context of Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang, the study will offer insights into how cultural and institutional factors shape the experiences of novice lecturers in Indonesia, contributing to the development of more effective support mechanisms tailored to regional needs. Ultimately, this study seeks to enhance the quality of teaching and the professional satisfaction of novice lecturers, thereby improving the overall academic environment in Indonesian universities.

2. Literature Review

The transition into academia for novice lecturers is a critical period in their professional lives, often marked by emotional and professional challenges that

significantly influence their long-term career development and satisfaction. A growing body of literature examines the emotional and professional impacts on novice lecturers, focusing particularly on the formation of their academic identities. This literature review explores the major themes and findings in this field, with a focus on how emotional and professional challenges shape the career trajectories of novice lecturers and the strategies that can facilitate their successful transition into academia.

2.1 Emotional and Professional Impact on Novice Lecturers

One of the primary emotional challenges faced by novice lecturers is alienation. This feeling of disconnection from colleagues, students, and the academic community can be particularly acute in the early stages of their careers. Kamali & Javahery (2024) highlights how this alienation can erode self-confidence and motivation, making it difficult for novice lecturers to establish a solid professional identity. Such emotional challenges are compounded by the stress of adapting to the academic environment, which often includes heavy workloads, the pressure to publish research, and the demand for high-quality teaching. As noted by Hašková et al. (2023) and Solodkova et al. (2017) managing these pressures while simultaneously developing a professional identity can be overwhelming for novice lecturers, affecting their emotional well-being and job satisfaction.

Moreover, the shift in professional identity from being a student or researcher to becoming a teacher is another significant emotional and professional challenge. As McGeough (2017); Wood et al. (2016) points out, novice lecturers may experience a sense of inauthenticity or loss during this transition, as they attempt to reconcile their previous identity as a practitioner with the new expectations of being an academic teacher. This feeling of identity conflict is often heightened by the institutional and cultural demands placed on new faculty members, which may differ significantly from their prior experiences. Diasti, 2021

argue that this transition is not merely a professional one but also a psychosocial process, where novice lecturers must negotiate their personal and professional identities, often leading to a sense of tension and stress. These challenges underscore the importance of supporting novice lecturers through mentorship, training, and institutional support to help them navigate the complexities of identity formation.

2.2 Supporting Novice Lecturers: Mentorship and Social Support

A major theme in the literature is the role of mentorship and social support in facilitating the professional development and identity formation of novice lecturers. Several studies emphasize the importance of external mentors who can provide guidance, support, and a non-judgmental space for novice lecturers to discuss their experiences. Hobson & van Nieuwerburgh (2022); Manning & Hobson (2017); McIntyre & Hobson (2016) argue that mentor relationships are essential for providing the guidance needed to navigate the emotional and professional challenges faced by new faculty members. Mentors play a critical role in helping novice lecturers understand their roles, adjust to institutional norms, and foster a sense of professional identity. These relationships also offer emotional support, which is crucial for maintaining resilience in the face of the emotional challenges described earlier.

In addition to mentorship, institutional support systems are essential for the professional development of novice lecturers. A supportive work environment that includes opportunities for peer learning, professional development workshops, and reflection is critical for building confidence and promoting identity development. De Vries & Malinen (2020) suggests that fostering a community of learning within the institution can provide novice lecturers with opportunities to engage in reflective practice, which is crucial for their emotional well-being and professional growth. Such communities enable lecturers to share experiences, discuss challenges, and learn

from one another, which can help mitigate the sense of isolation that often accompanies the early years of academic life (Brownell & Tanner, 2012).

2.3 Identity Formation in Different Disciplines

The process of identity formation varies across different academic disciplines, and this is a crucial area of exploration in the literature. Boyd & Harris (2010); Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013) discuss how novice lecturers in different academic fields face unique challenges related to professional identity. For example, lecturers in the humanities may have more flexibility in developing personalized teaching approaches and engaging deeply with their students, which may facilitate a stronger sense of identity alignment. In contrast, lecturers in the sciences often encounter more rigid structures and higher expectations regarding research productivity, which may impact their identity development differently. These field-specific challenges highlight the need for tailored support strategies that take into account the distinct characteristics of each academic discipline.

Wood et al. (2016) further argue that the institutional context in which novice lecturers operate significantly influences their identity development. For instance, academic institutions with strong cultures of research and publication may place greater pressure on new lecturers to produce high-quality research outputs, which can affect their ability to focus on teaching and identity formation. Conversely, institutions that emphasize teaching excellence may provide more opportunities for novice lecturers to develop their teaching identities. This distinction is important when designing professional development programs, as the support provided must align with the specific needs of novice lecturers within different institutional contexts.

2.4 The Role of Reflection and Professional Development

Reflection is widely regarded as an essential process for the development of professional identity. According to McIntyre

& Hobson (2016), reflective practice allows novice lecturers to critically examine their teaching experiences, identify areas for improvement, and align their professional goals with their values. This process of self-reflection not only enhances teaching practices but also contributes to the development of a coherent professional identity. Reflective practice helps novice lecturers integrate their personal and professional experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities as educators.

Moreover, professional development opportunities play a key role in supporting the identity transformation of novice lecturers. These opportunities, which may include workshops, conferences, and collaborative teaching projects, provide novice lecturers with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in academia. Dewi & Fajri (2023); Hunter et al. (2007) emphasize that personalized career tools that align with lecturers' individual motivations and career goals can help maintain their commitment to teaching and prevent burnout. These tools may include mentoring programs, career counseling, and opportunities for lecturers to explore alternative teaching strategies and methodologies.

2.5 Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Novice Lecturer Identity

While much of the existing literature on novice lecturer identity formation is focused on Western academic contexts, there is a growing interest in understanding how these processes unfold in different cultural and institutional settings. O'Sullivan et al. (2021) suggest that the professional identity formation of novice lecturers is deeply influenced by the cultural and institutional norms of the academic environment in which they work. For instance, novice lecturers in Western contexts may face different challenges related to individualism and autonomy compared to their counterparts in Asian or African academic settings, where collectivism and hierarchy may play a more prominent role. This cultural variation

necessitates a more nuanced understanding of identity transformation processes, particularly in non-Western contexts.

2.6 Frameworks for Effective Teaching and Professional Identity Development

2.6.1 The Chain Effect: Bridging Education, Industry, and Innovation

In further enhancing the discussion of the emotional and professional development of novice lecturers, several conceptual frameworks and models are crucial in shaping their roles and identity formation in academia. These frameworks not only inform teaching practices but also highlight how novice lecturers can navigate the complexities of their early careers. Below is a detailed exploration of key models that can support the development of novice lecturers, helping them evolve both emotionally and professionally as they progress in their academic journey.

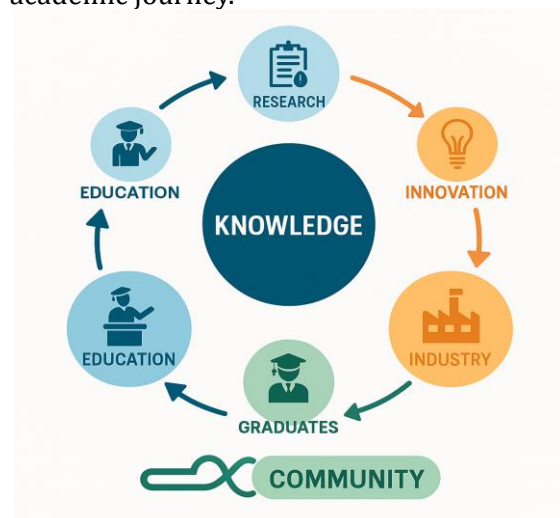


Figure 1 The Interconnected Loop of Education, Industry, and Innovation

The chain effect of knowledge, community, and industry underscores the interconnectedness of educational practices and their impact on society (Figure 1). In this model, educators play a pivotal role in transferring knowledge, which then undergoes further refinement and expansion through academic research. This research, in turn, enhances the quality of the knowledge imparted, ensuring that students are

equipped with up-to-date, evidence-based insights that can better address real-world challenges. As students gain this knowledge, they become well-prepared to enter the workforce and contribute meaningfully to industry sectors.

Once graduates enter the industry, they apply their acquired knowledge, solving practical problems and creating innovations that drive economic and societal advancements. These innovations contribute to the well-being of the community by providing new technologies, services, and solutions to local and global issues. The cycle then perpetuates as industries, through their partnerships with educational institutions, contribute feedback that further refines academic curricula and research priorities, ensuring a dynamic and mutually beneficial relationship.

In this context, the role of the lecturer extends beyond teaching; they are also integral to fostering innovation, guiding students through knowledge application, and maintaining an active connection with both research and industry (Ducheva, 2019; Rahmat, 2021). Their ability to balance teaching, research, and community involvement is essential for ensuring that the knowledge imparted is not only academic but also practical and relevant. This integrated approach supports continuous development in both educational and industry sectors, reinforcing the need for universities to strengthen ties with both community and industry to foster innovation, provide practical learning opportunities, and address societal needs (Li, 2023; Shandu, 2016). The following key questions emerge from this exploration:

- 1) How do lecturers balance their roles in teaching, research, and industry collaboration?
- 2) What strategies can enhance the connection between universities and industries, ensuring mutual benefits?
- 3) How does fostering innovation in teaching practices impact the development of future academic leaders?

- 4) How can universities create a more impactful curriculum that aligns with community and industry needs?

These questions will guide further exploration into the complex relationship between knowledge transfer, community development, and industry advancements, contributing to the growth of both higher education and societal innovation.

2.6.2 Understanding Learners and Creating an Effective Learning Environment

Figure 2 illustrates that understanding students involves more than just delivering content; it also requires adapting teaching methods to meet their cognitive and emotional needs, fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom environment. At the heart of effective teaching is understanding the diverse needs of learners. Novice lecturers must recognize that students bring different learning styles, backgrounds, and motivations into the classroom, and effective teaching begins by adapting to these needs. This involves not just covering the content but also addressing students' cognitive and emotional needs, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages student engagement. By using interactive and participatory teaching methods, novice lecturers can help students take ownership of their learning, which is critical for deep learning (Education et al., 2019; Nazari et al., 2023).

A positive learning environment, which includes both physical and psychological spaces, is essential for student success. Lecturers must create an atmosphere where students feel safe to express ideas and engage with the content without fear of judgment. This environment can be challenging to establish in the early years of teaching, but building strong relationships, setting clear expectations, and fostering collaboration can lay the foundation for effective learning. Additionally, novice lecturers must implement diverse learning processes, such as active learning and problem-based learning, to help students engage

meaningfully with the material and develop critical thinking skills. By adopting these principles, novice lecturers can strengthen their professional identity and foster academic success in the classroom (Hong & Abdullah, 2020)

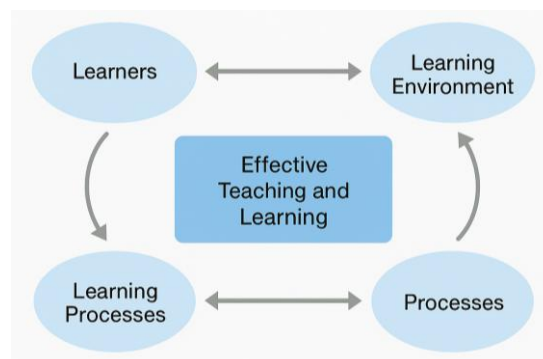


Figure 2 Key Principles for Effective Teaching and Learning

For novice lecturers, adopting the Key Principles for Effective Teaching and Learning framework is a crucial step in professional development. By focusing on understanding their learners, fostering a positive learning environment, and implementing effective learning processes, novice lecturers can enhance their teaching practices and develop a stronger professional identity. Additionally, as Huber-Jackson (2021) suggest, that applying these principles leads to a more reflective and student-centered approach to teaching, which is essential for fostering both academic success and personal satisfaction in the classroom.

2.6.3 Innovative Transformation in Teaching

Innovation in teaching has become a central focus in 21st-century education, particularly in response to global dynamics, technological advancements, and the increasingly complex and diverse needs of students. Innovative transformation in teaching refers to the implementation of new approaches, methods, and technologies that fundamentally change how teachers teach and students learn (Angeli, 2005; Tarling & Ng'ambi, 2016). According to Earl & Timperley (2015); Peterson et al. (2018)(2018), teaching innovation should

aim to enhance the quality of learning interactions, expand access to educational resources, and facilitate personalized learning. This can be achieved through the integration of digital technologies, collaborative pedagogical approaches, and the implementation of authentic assessment.

Innovation in teaching is needed because of the growing need for knowledge.

Nevertheless, novice lecturer may be faced with some barriers when planning innovations in teaching. The barriers can come from the teachers themselves (who need to update their knowledge through research), institutions, or even the learners Figure 3.

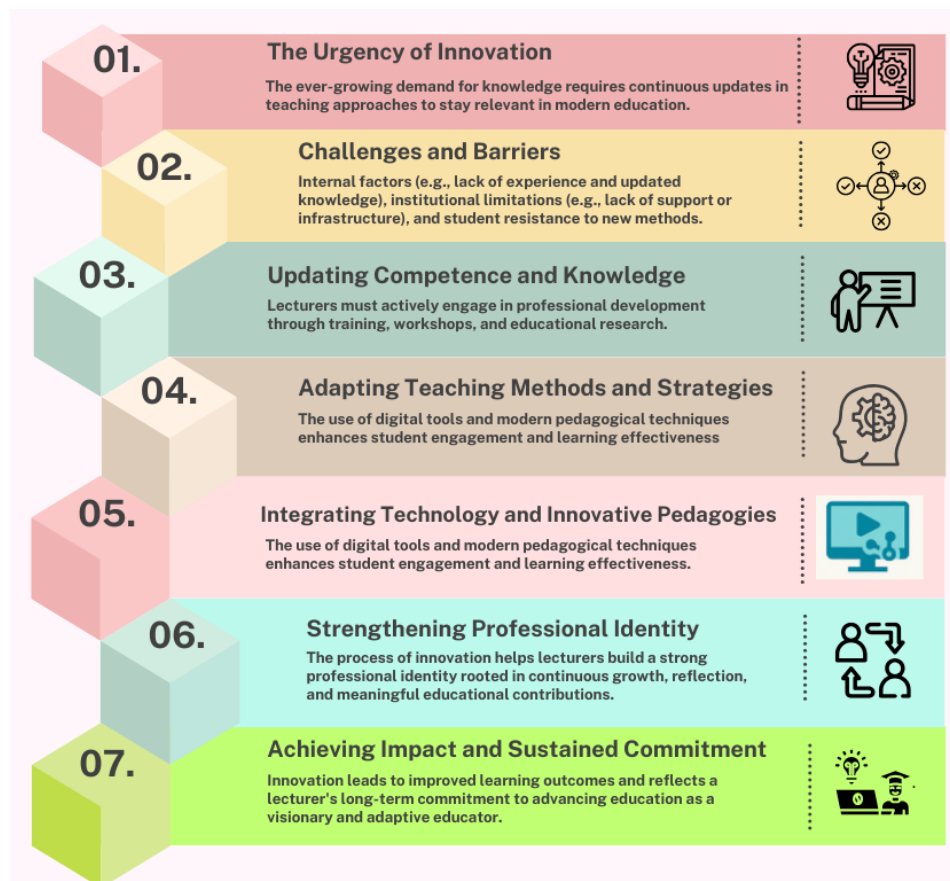


Figure 3 Preparing for Innovation in Teaching

This model emphasizes the need for innovative teaching strategies to address evolving educational demands. Innovation in teaching involves adapting teaching methods to cater to diverse student needs and integrating new technologies and pedagogies. For novice lecturers, embracing innovation in their teaching practices is not only a way to improve their teaching outcomes but also an opportunity to develop a professional identity centered around continuous growth and adaptability. By being proactive in preparing for innovation, novice lecturers demonstrate their commitment to

advancing educational practices and establishing themselves as forward-thinking educators who meet the changing needs of students.

2.6.4 Learning Environment for Millennials

The learning environment for millennials must align with their digital-native characteristics, prompting educators to adapt to new teaching paradigms. Bridging the gap between digital immigrants (educators) and digital natives (students) requires professional development and embracing technological advancements

(Ducheva, 2019; Jefferies et al., 2006; Larekeng et al., 2019). Millennials expect a relaxed, non-threatening environment that fosters engagement, creativity, and critical thinking. Educators should therefore design learning spaces that cater to these preferences while ensuring the content remains relevant and research-based. For novice lecturers, understanding these factors is crucial for developing a teaching identity that resonates with the needs of this new generation. By creating a classroom atmosphere that meets millennial expectations, educators can enhance student engagement and demonstrate their awareness of the cultural and technological shifts influencing education today.

The key features of an effective learning environment for millennials, as

outlined in the figure, include creating a relaxed and inclusive learning environment, which allows millennials to thrive in a comfortable and non-threatening space that fosters creativity and participation, enabling deeper engagement with the content. Interactivity and collaboration are also vital, as they emphasize the importance of student interaction, both with peers and educators. This helps millennials develop critical thinking skills, encourages teamwork, and enhances the learning process by incorporating diverse perspectives. Relevant and practical content is another critical feature, as millennials prefer learning that is directly applicable to real-world situations, connecting theory to practice and preparing them for challenges in their careers and daily lives.



Figure 4 Key features of an effective learning environment for millennials

The desire for independence and flexibility is central to millennial learners, who value control over their learning pace and style, making flexible learning options, such as online courses and self-paced modules, essential. Additionally, millennials appreciate personalization, speed, and accuracy, with personalized learning

experiences ensuring greater engagement and understanding, while quick access to precise information meets their need for efficiency (Kraglund-Gauthier, 2015). Finally, an experience-based and research-driven approach resonates with millennials, as they value learning that incorporates real-world problems and up-to-date research, making

their learning experience more meaningful and impactful. These features collectively create a dynamic learning environment that meets the digital and educational needs of today's students, bridging the gap between traditional teaching methods and modern expectations.

2.6.5 Catur Dharma Pendidikan

The Catur Dharma Education framework is an extension of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, originally comprising teaching, research, and community service, with the addition of a fourth component specific to Islamic education: *al-Islam Kemuhmadiyah*. This framework is primarily implemented in Muhammadiyah-affiliated higher education institutions (*Perguruan Tinggi Muhammadiyah* or PTM), reflecting the organization's commitment to integrating Islamic values within academic life. This model is highly relevant in the context of higher education in Indonesia, where faith-based institutions play a significant role in shaping students' academic and spiritual development. The aim is to create a holistic educational environment that not only focuses on academic excellence but also nurtures students' moral and spiritual integrity. Teaching remains a fundamental pillar, emphasizing the importance of delivering quality education that equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in their respective fields (Brunetti et al., 2020). In Islamic education, teaching also encompasses the transmission of religious values and ethical principles, supporting students in developing a strong moral foundation (Halstead, 2007; Ramdani et al., 2023).

Research serves as a critical pillar for advancing knowledge and innovation within universities, encouraging lecturers to engage in scholarly activities that contribute to the academic community through publications and research (Ismail & Elihami, 2019; Jabri & Ismail, 2021). In Islamic education, research may involve exploring religious texts and their relevance in contemporary society (Shofiyyah et al., 2023). Community service

reflects the commitment of academic institutions to societal development, with activities often focusing on empowering communities through education and practical support, such as enhancing the quality of Islamic education in rural areas (Parker & Raihani, 2011; Shofiyyah et al., 2023). This component emphasizes the university's role in addressing social issues and improving the well-being of communities.

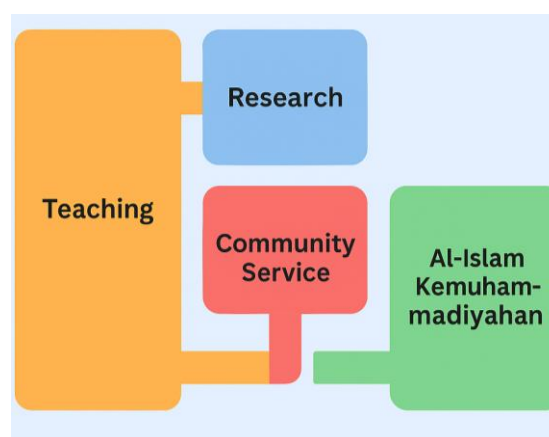


Figure 5 Caturdharma Education Framework

The final component, *Al-Islam Kemuhmadiyah*, is unique to this framework and involves integrating Islamic teachings and values into the educational process. It guides students in developing a comprehensive understanding of Islam, including its spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions, with the aim of nurturing individuals who are not only academically proficient but also embody Islamic principles in their personal and professional lives (Elhoshi et al., 2017). The Catur Dharma Education framework provides a valuable model for creating an educational environment that fosters both intellectual and moral development. While its implementation may vary across institutions, this framework encourages the integration of teaching, research, and community service, helping to shape a holistic professional identity.

Novice lecturers often face challenges in balancing the multiple responsibilities of teaching, research, and community service, particularly when these roles conflict with

each other. The Catur Dharma Education framework, however, encourages a holistic approach where all four components—teaching, research, community service, and al-Islam Kemuhammadiyah—*are* interrelated and contribute to a lecturer's overall professional identity. By embracing all these aspects of academic life, novice lecturers can create a well-rounded and fulfilling professional identity. This model not only helps lecturers balance their academic responsibilities but also fosters a sense of purpose, as it integrates academic and moral development, as well as social contributions. Through this framework, lecturers are guided to see their roles as interconnected, enhancing their impact on both their students and the broader community, while simultaneously fostering personal growth and spiritual development aligned with Islamic values.

2.6.6 Research and Publication as Pillars of Academic Identity Formation

In the context of early-career academia, research and publication are not only performance indicators but also central pillars in shaping the professional identity of novice lecturers. Engaging in scholarly research enables lecturers to contribute to the advancement of knowledge while reinforcing their credibility and visibility within their academic communities (Dewi & Fajri, 2023; Hunter et al., 2007). For novice lecturers, publishing is often perceived both as a source of pressure and as a pathway to professional recognition.

A growing body of literature emphasizes the dual role of research: as a requirement for academic progression and as a reflective practice that deepens one's pedagogical expertise (McGeough, 2017; Wood et al., 2016). When novice lecturers integrate their teaching with research activities, they develop a more coherent and impactful academic profile. This alignment contributes to the formation of a sustainable academic identity, where lecturers see themselves not only as educators but also as scholars contributing to global discourse.

However, the pressure to publish—often within the first few years of appointment—can also heighten stress and create conflicts between teaching and research responsibilities. McIntyre & Hobson (2016) note that without adequate support, such expectations may hinder rather than enhance professional growth. Structured mentorship and targeted research development programs, therefore, are essential for guiding novice lecturers through the publication process, helping them build research capacity while managing the emotional demands associated with academic performance.



Figure 6 Research and Publication as Pillars of Academic Identity Formation

In the Indonesian context, especially in regional institutions like Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang, novice lecturers often encounter limited access to research funding, writing support, and international collaboration networks. These constraints highlight the importance of institutional efforts to provide training in academic writing, research methodology, and publication strategy (Zhazira et al., 2024). Moreover, research engagement offers lecturers the opportunity to link their inquiry to local socio-cultural contexts, making their contributions both globally relevant and locally grounded.

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Research Design and Approach

A qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate for this study because it provides rich, detailed insights into the lived experiences of novice lecturers. Qualitative research is particularly useful for understanding complex processes such as identity formation and emotional adaptation, as it allows for the exploration of individuals' subjective experiences. The focus of this study is to understand the emotional and professional impact of teaching, which can be deeply personal and nuanced. Therefore, a qualitative methodology enables the researcher to capture the intricacies of these experiences and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges novice lecturers face in their early career years.

The study is primarily grounded in the theoretical frameworks of identity formation and emotional labor, drawing on the works of (Lap et al., 2022; McGeough, 2017; Wood et al., 2016), who argue that the transition from practitioner to lecturer is a significant and often challenging process of self-discovery and professional adaptation. In addition to these frameworks, the research also draws on social support theory (McIntyre & Hobson, 2016) and mentoring models (de

Vries & Malinen, 2020) to examine how institutional support and peer relationships contribute to the identity transformation of novice lecturers. These frameworks guide the exploration of the key emotional and professional challenges that novice lecturers face and offer insight into the strategies that may support their transition into academia.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were novice lecturers from various academic disciplines at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang, a higher education institution located in southern Sulawesi, eastern Indonesia. The focus on novice lecturers is crucial, as this group faces unique challenges in adjusting to their new roles. According to Hašková et al. (2023) and Solodkova et al. (2017), the first few years in academia are crucial for professional identity formation, making this period an ideal focus for the study. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a method often employed in qualitative research to select individuals who are specifically knowledgeable about the research topic and who can provide rich, relevant data (DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, 2006; Qu & Dumay, 2011).

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Novice Lecturers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang

Variable	Category	Number of Novice Lecturers	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Male	13	59.09	
	Female	9	40.91	
Age	20 - 30 years	15	68.18	
	31 - 40 years	7	31.82	
Last Education	Master's degree (S2)	19	86.36	
	Doctoral Candidate	3	13.64	
Academic Field	Education	7	31.82	
	Agriculture	2	9.09	
	Communication	2	9.09	
	Social Sciences	5	22.73	
	Health Sciences	2	9.09	
Functional Position	Applied Sciences	4	18.18	
	Assistant Professor (Lektor)	1	4.55	
	Assistant Expert (Asisten Ahli)	21	95.45	
	Rank Group (Golongan Kependidikan)	III/b - Penata Muda Tk. I	10	45.45
		Non-Rank	12	54.55
Certification Status	Not Certified	22	90.91	
	Certified Lecturer	2	9.09	

Source: UNIMEN Academic Bureau 2024

The inclusion criteria for the participants were as follows: (1) They must be in the early years of their academic career (defined as the first three years of teaching at the university level); (2) They must have teaching experience in their discipline; and (3) They must be willing to share their personal experiences and reflections on their professional journey. A total of 22 novice lecturers from diverse fields (humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences) were invited to participate in the study. This sample size is considered sufficient for qualitative studies, allowing for a deep, comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences while maintaining the feasibility of data collection and analysis.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

To gain a thorough understanding of the emotional and professional impacts on novice lecturers, data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Interviews are a widely used method in qualitative research, particularly when exploring personal experiences, as they allow participants to express their thoughts, feelings, and reflections in their own words (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Semi-structured interviews offer flexibility, enabling the researcher to ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses, which can lead to deeper insights into the subject matter (DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, 2006).

The interview protocol was developed based on the research questions and the literature review. The questions were designed to explore various aspects of the novice lecturers' experiences, including: (1) the emotional challenges they face in their first years of teaching, (2) how their professional identity has evolved during this time, (3) the role of institutional support, (4) the impact of mentorship or peer relationships, and (5) the strategies they have used to manage stress and adapt to their new roles. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, the primary language spoken by the participants, ensuring that they could express themselves

fully and comfortably. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour, and they were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants.

In addition to interviews, document analysis was also employed as a secondary data collection method. Documents related to the professional development programs, institutional support systems, and mentorship programs at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang were reviewed to gain further insights into the formal mechanisms in place that support novice lecturers. This secondary data helped contextualize the primary data gathered from the interviews, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the institutional environment in which novice lecturers are situated.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely used method for analyzing qualitative data that allows researchers to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data. Thematic analysis was chosen because it offers flexibility and allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences while maintaining a focus on the research questions. The analysis process was conducted in six phases: (1) familiarizing with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) writing the report.

The data were analyzed inductively, meaning that themes and patterns were derived directly from the data rather than being imposed based on pre-existing theories or frameworks. This approach ensures that the analysis remains grounded in the participants' experiences and perspectives, rather than the researcher's assumptions. In addition to thematic analysis, member checking was employed to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings. After the initial analysis, the

researcher returned to the participants to review the findings and confirm that the interpretations of their experiences accurately reflected their perspectives. This step is essential in qualitative research, as it enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the emotional and professional impacts of teaching on novice lecturers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang. As the process of identity formation in academia is complex and multifaceted, this section will discuss the findings in relation to the emotional and professional challenges faced by these lecturers, how they navigate these challenges, and the role of institutional support in facilitating their identity development. The findings are discussed with reference to the literature and the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study.

4.1 Emotional Challenges and Identity Formation

One of the primary emotional challenges faced by novice lecturers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang is stress related to the demands of teaching. A significant number of respondents indicated feeling anxious and uncertain at the start of their teaching careers. This initial uncertainty aligns with previous research which emphasizes the emotional turbulence experienced by new lecturers, particularly in their first few years. For example Kamali & Javahery (2024) highlights how feelings of alienation and stress can undermine the confidence of novice lecturers, leading to difficulties in establishing a clear academic identity. In the context of Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang, many of the novice lecturers reported that the first year was particularly challenging in terms of adjusting to the expectations of their role as educators.

However, as the lecturers gained more experience, their confidence and professional identity gradually evolved.

Respondent 1, for instance, shared that after overcoming initial challenges, they began to feel more capable in managing the classroom and engaging with students. This shift is consistent with findings by Hašková et al. (2023) and Solodkova et al. (2017), who suggests that novice lecturers' sense of professional identity strengthens as they gain practical experience and reflect on their teaching practices. This shift towards professional confidence was often linked to positive feedback from students and peers, which served as a critical indicator of success for the lecturers.

Another key emotional challenge identified by the respondents was the conflict between their previous identity as students or researchers and their new role as educators. Many reported experiencing a sense of inauthenticity in the early stages of teaching, which is a common challenge noted in the literature. Wood et al. (2016) argue that this feeling of identity conflict is a natural part of the transition from practitioner to educator, where novice lecturers struggle to reconcile their academic roles with the new expectations placed upon them as instructors. This was echoed by Respondent 2, who expressed difficulty in adjusting to the teaching responsibilities while trying to maintain their previous identity as a researcher. The process of resolving this conflict was essential for establishing a more authentic professional identity as an educator.

The emotional challenges of teaching were further compounded by feelings of isolation. Several respondents expressed that the lack of a robust support system within the institution, particularly during their initial years, led to a sense of alienation. Respondent 3 stated, "I often felt alone in my struggles, and it took a long time to reach out for help." This finding supports the literature suggesting that social support is crucial in mitigating the emotional challenges faced by novice lecturers (Gourlay, 2011; Hong & Abdullah, 2020; McGhie, 2017). Without adequate mentorship and peer relationships, new lecturers may experience heightened stress, which can undermine their ability to

effectively navigate the demands of academia.

3.2 Role of Institutional Support and Mentorship

One of the primary findings of this study is the central role that institutional support, particularly from the Chair of the Department, plays in the development of novice lecturers' professional identity. Unlike the mentorship models commonly discussed in Western contexts, where external mentors are often emphasized (Hobson & van Nieuwerburgh, 2022), the Chair of the Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang was reported to have provided critical guidance in both research and teaching. Respondent 4 noted that "The Chair of the Department has been instrumental in helping me navigate the early years of teaching, providing me with insights into both research opportunities and effective teaching practices." This finding aligns with De Vries & Malinen (2020) assertion that strong institutional mentorship can significantly alleviate the emotional strain experienced by novice lecturers, thereby fostering professional development.

Furthermore, the role of peer support emerged as a vital component of identity development. Respondent 5 stated, "My colleagues have been a great source of support. We often collaborate and share teaching strategies, which helps me feel more confident in my role." This peer support network plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and providing novice lecturers with the opportunity to engage in reflective practice. This observation supports the findings of De Vries & Malinen (2020), who emphasizes the importance of community learning within academic institutions, where reflective practice and peer collaboration contribute to professional growth.

While mentorship from the Chair of the Department and peer support were acknowledged as helpful, many respondents noted that more structured mentorship programs could further enhance their professional development. This is consistent

with the findings of (McIntyre & Hobson, 2016), who argue that formal mentorship structures are necessary to ensure that novice lecturers receive consistent and targeted guidance during their early careers. In the case of Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang, respondents suggested that while the support provided was valuable, the institution could benefit from more organized mentorship programs that specifically address the challenges of early-career lecturers.

3.3 Strategies for Managing Professional and Emotional Challenges

To cope with the emotional and professional challenges of their roles, many respondents reported using a variety of personal strategies. Time management was frequently mentioned as a key strategy for balancing the demands of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. Respondent 6 explained, "I had to learn how to manage my time effectively, making sure that I set aside specific hours for teaching, research, and personal life." This echoes findings in the literature which highlight the importance of time management for novice lecturers in maintaining their well-being and productivity (B. Garipov, 2019; McGeough, 2017; Wood et al., 2016).

In addition to time management, several respondents highlighted the importance of seeking feedback and engaging in continuous self-reflection as key strategies for overcoming challenges. Reflective practice, as discussed by (Hobson & van Nieuwerburgh, 2022; McIntyre & Hobson, 2016) is an essential tool for novice lecturers to critically evaluate their teaching practices and professional identities. Respondent 7 shared, "I often reflect on my teaching after each class, which helps me identify areas for improvement and boost my confidence." Reflective practices were found to be particularly effective in helping novice lecturers manage the emotional strain of their new roles, as they provided a structured way to engage with their experiences and seek personal growth.

Despite these strategies, respondents acknowledged that institutional support, such as structured training workshops and formal mentorship, could further aid in managing the dual challenges of emotional strain and professional development. This aligns with the work of Hunter et al. (2007) who emphasize the need for institutions to provide tailored career tools that align with lecturers' professional goals, which can ultimately enhance their job satisfaction and retention.

3.4 Institutional Culture and Academic Expectations

The culture of academia at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang was perceived as supportive but also demanding, particularly with respect to the expectations placed on novice lecturers. Respondent 8 commented, "The academic culture here is very focused on teaching excellence, but there is also pressure to publish research." This dual expectation reflects the broader trend in many academic institutions where lecturers are required to balance high-quality teaching with research productivity. This finding aligns with the arguments made by Myers et al. (2022); Wood et al. (2016), who point out that the shift from being a researcher to becoming a teacher often comes with the challenge of balancing these two sometimes conflicting roles.

Furthermore, some respondents noted that the institution's emphasis on teaching excellence created an environment where lecturers were expected to perform at high standards, but without always having the necessary resources or support to meet these expectations. Respondent 9 shared, "While I understand the emphasis on teaching, I sometimes feel like there are not enough resources to help me deliver my best." This highlights a potential gap in the institutional culture, where the pressure to perform is not always matched with the provision of adequate resources or support for novice lecturers.

This finding is consistent with Hašková et al. (2023) and Solodkova et al. (2017) assertion that institutional support systems,

such as access to resources, professional development opportunities, and research support, are essential in helping novice lecturers navigate the challenges of balancing teaching and research responsibilities. Without adequate support, the pressure to meet institutional expectations can contribute to feelings of burnout and decreased job satisfaction, which can undermine the professional development of new lecturers.

5. Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into the emotional and professional challenges faced by novice lecturers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang, focusing on their identity transformation during the early stages of their academic careers. The findings show that while novice lecturers experience significant emotional stress, role ambiguity, and feelings of isolation, these challenges decrease as they gain more experience and engage with institutional support systems. Over time, their professional identity evolves as they receive feedback, collaborate with peers, and adapt to the academic environment.

A key takeaway from this study is the importance of institutional support, particularly from the Chair of the Department, in facilitating the development of a professional identity. The support provided by the Chair and colleagues helps novice lecturers navigate the demands of teaching and research, fostering both emotional resilience and professional growth. However, the study also highlights the need for more structured mentorship programs, as well as increased resources, to provide ongoing support throughout the early years of teaching. In addition, this research contributes to the body of knowledge by focusing on the experiences of novice lecturers in a non-Western context, specifically in Indonesia. It underscores the importance of understanding how local institutional and cultural factors influence the identity formation process. Future research could explore the impact of mentorship in different academic disciplines

or compare the experiences of novice lecturers across different cultural settings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges they face.

Ethical considerations

Research approval has been granted by the research and Community Service Institute of Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang, Indonesia.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Funding

This research did not receive any financial support.

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