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From Teaching to Thriving: Exploring the Lived Experiences of English Education Graduates in Non-Teaching Careers

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Abstract

The present phenomenological study discovers the lived experiences of English education graduates pursuing non-teaching careers (any professional roles that do not involve teaching students in formal educational settings). By conducting in-depth interviews with three participants, their lived experiences uncovered the interaction between non-teaching career exploration, appealing job opportunities, interest-driven career decisions, career choice consistency, self-efficacy, confidence, career growth, and development opportunities, which guided them to pursue their non-teaching careers. They considered intrinsic factors (self-efficacy and confidence, personal goals, personal interest, personal development, and outcomes expectations), along with extrinsic factors (financial stability, teaching limitations, career prospect, workload vs. compensation, continued engagement with educational background) in deciding their careers. The skills from English education such as teaching, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and English skills are applicable to help them adapt to their non-teaching career. The findings prove the adaptability of English education graduates in managing job market difficulties and diverse applications of their educational experiences. By having these facts this study informs higher education institutions and English education programs to support and guide the English education graduates as they fit for diverse career paths.

Keywords: career adaptability; career transition; non-teaching careers; social cognitive career theory

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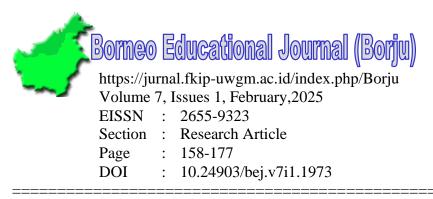
1. Introduction

In Indonesia, English education program is commonly chosen by the students of Teacher Training and Education Faculty. According to data from Indonesia's Higher Education Data and Information Center [PDDIKTI] (2022), English education program ranks ninth in graduate numbers, with 5.08% or 22,536 of the total graduates. Although teaching is the linear

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job option for English education bachelors, it is unfortunate that some of them do not pursue teaching careers, instead they work outside the education sector. This phenomenon attracted the researchers to dig into their lived experience related to their career decisions.

Various factors and reasons might influence this phenomenon, including the facts that the skills and competencies from education programs support numerous professions. Panlaqui & Bardemorilla (2023), stated that some transferable skills from teaching such as openness to learn and listen, complicated problem solving, coordination, critical thinking, mentoring, and deciding, are useful in non-teaching careers. The graduates pursue non-teaching career by evaluating some aspects such as lack of commitment to teaching, circumstantial influence, competitive income, also the passion and growth opportunities they found in non-teaching careers (Panlaqui & Bardemorilla, 2023). Following the evolution of employment market, English education graduates are finding other work opportunities beside teaching that align with their skills and aspirations, showing their adaptability and broad competencies can lead to success in diverse industry. Moreover, Novita (2023) discovered some reasons led the student teachers avoid teaching career because of the employment opportunities, negative perception of the teaching career, and poor teacher working conditions. Additionally, Novita (2023) stated that in Indonesia the perceptions of teaching career differ in societal and economic viewpoints, where socially teachers hold a high status and respect, unfortunately in economic perspective the status is low compared to other careers and their peers in different countries. Furthermore, Suryani & George (2021) specified main reasons for teacher education students not choosing teaching career such as worse learning experiences, low salaries, heavy workload, unfair welfare, unclear government standards and regulations, lack knowledge of teaching career ladder, contributed to their unwillingness to pursue teaching as a long-term career.

By having the background of the study above, the researchers try to explore the lived experiences of English education graduates who have transitioned to non-teaching careers, the factors that have led them to choose non-teaching careers instead of teaching, and the transferable skills and knowledge from English education programs to non-teaching careers.

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1.2. Non-Teaching Career Paths for English Education Graduates

English Education graduates possess a diverse skill set that equips them for various non-teaching career paths. Several studies have found that English education graduates can pursue various careers outside of teaching in schools. Rizqi et al. (2024) found the jobs for English education graduates that do not involve teaching are office work, non-education related to training positions, and management and services. Moreover, Panlaqui & Bardemorilla (2023) discovered the non-teaching jobs of teacher education graduates are grouped into four: education-related non-teacher jobs, non-education-related training jobs, office work, and service and management. In addition, Wulandari (2020) highlights the careers pursued by English education graduates in the fields of marketing, services, and the creative industry.

1.3. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

Proposed by Lent et al., (1994), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) was designed to assist exploration in interest development, choice, and performance in career and educational sectors (Lent & Brown, 2006). In explaining how individuals choosing a career, the theory emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy, outcomes expectations, and personal goals (Lent et al., 1994). This demonstrated that SCCT is notably helpful in situations where individuals face difficult career decisions, such as career transition or overcoming obstacles to advancement. Moreover, SCCT tries to form a cohesive framework that overwhelms the limits of old-style theory that parts psychological, social, and economic aspect by added systematically elucidates in what way the interaction among core cognitive, personal, and environmental variables contributes to individual's career progress (Wang et al., 2022).

1.4. Career Construction Theory

The theory of Career Construction describes the interpretive and social processes of individuals in shaping their personal traits, guide their career-decision making, and derive meaning from their career (Savickas, 2020). This theory hypothesizes that the dynamic process of mutual adaptation between subjective self and external objective world is the core of how

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individuals construct a differ and unique career stories (Wang & Li, 2024). Three parts included in this theory, vocational personality (what careers an individual's construct), career adaptability (how individuals build their careers), and life theme (the reasons and importance of the career decisions) (Wang & Li, 2024).

1.5. Human Capital Theory

Developed by Becker (1962) and Rosen (1976), the theory of Human Capital claims that workers have a set of skills and abilities that can be improved or collected through education and training (Xu & Fletcher, 2017). Individuals are more valuable in the job market as they receive more education and skills to become more proficient and productive in their positions. The quantity of credits a worker receives frequently reflects this increased value (Xu & Fletcher, 2017). This theory sees education as a capital, where knowledge and skills from learning process become a resource that can be used in professional settings, and return in higher earning, better work opportunities, and increased economic movement.

2. Method

Contains the type of study, the time and place of research, the targets/objectives, the research subjects, the processes, the instruments, and the data analysis techniques, as well as other topics relevant to the research method that might be included in sub-chapters with sub-subheadings. This qualitative study followed Creswell's (2013) phenomenological analysis approach which contains bracketing, identifying significant statements, formulating themes, and developing textural (what), structural (how), and composite descriptions (essence).

2.1. Participants

The participants of this study were three English education graduates who pursuing non-teaching career. A purposive sampling technique employed to select participants who can provide rich and meaningful insights into the research questions. Purposive sampling described as purposefully selecting participants who possess specific characteristics that are essential for the research (Hennink et al., 2020). Therefore, several potential participants were grouped

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based in their current job types as the first step to take. Several job types were categorized, such as banking, services, marketing, freelance work, corporate staff, and self-employment.

The next step was establishing key criteria as follows: holding a Bachelor of English education and pursuing non-teaching career after graduated (graduated in 2020-2021); actively participating in relevant activities or organization during their time as students in the English education program; being consistent in career interest; having progress or engagement in their current careers; and willing to share their experiences for this research. The criteria were established to ensure the chosen participants had relevant experiences to explore in-depth insight on how the English education graduates adapt and thrive in their non-teaching careers.

From this process, one graduate from the service sector working in a government agency as relationship officer was identified as the first participant (P1). This participant was actively involved in academic activities, representing the country in student exchange programs multiple times during and after the university education. Another participant as the second participant (P2) was a graduate who works in the marketing sector of a private company, being employed as a cluster sales manager in a telecommunication provider company. An outstanding progress in a non-teaching field has been achieved by this participant, such as receiving an award for professional accomplishments, which has allowed to travel to various regions within the country and overseas. In addition, the last selected participant (P3) has worked at a mining company as a human resources officer.

Table 1 Demographic Information

Name	Age	First language	Employment status	Years of experience	Gender
Participant 1	27	Indonesian	Full time	4	Male
Participant 2	26	Indonesian	Full time	2	Male
Participant 3	26	Indonesian	Full time	4	Female

2.2. Instruments

An interview protocol was used as the instrument in this study. The interview questions covered the areas of non-teaching career decisions, personal goals, motivation, career expectations, and other factors related to their career choices. Interviews were conducted online

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to accommodate participants' schedules and avoid in-person meeting constraints. The interviews were conducted once, each session lasting 20-30 minutes for each participant.

In these sessions, participants shared their thoughts in their native language, Indonesian, and were guided through the interview process with confidentiality assured.

2.3. Data Analysis

An interview protocol ensured that questions were unbiased and designed to explore participants' lived experiences. During interviews, the researchers acted as a neutral listener, avoiding subjective interpretations. After transcribing the interviews, the data were read and re-read to identify significant statements that reflected participants' experiences. After the process, the researchers categorized the words and phrases from the statements into broader themes, emphasizing their similarities and distinctions. To make it efficient, a single table was used to extract significant statements, create meanings, and group themes. In the end, textural descriptions (participants' experiences), structural descriptions (the manner of those experiences), and a composite description were formulated and systematically arranged in a table. This approach provided a clear understanding of shared themes and unique perspectives in participants' career decisions. To enhance data trustworthiness, strategies like member checking and triangulation were used. Transcripts were shared through Google Docs, allowing participants to add comments or suggest edits in real-time. This allowed the researcher to track all feedback efficiently and make necessary revisions based on participants' input.

3. Findings and Discussion

The main themes from the interview data are described and discussed below, including the participants' lived experience, factors leading them to choose non-teaching careers, and the transferable skills.

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3.1. Participants' Lived Experience

This part explains the participants' personal experiences after graduation and pursuing non-teaching career, focusing on how they experienced and made sense of this significant phase in their career journey by analyzing the emerged themes from their experiences.

3.1.1. Participant 1

After graduating from English education programs in 2020, Participant 1 decided to pursue a profession outside of teaching. He considered pursuing a career that matched with his passion for communication. He began working for a government institution as a democracy volunteer after graduating. His job involved digital communication, interacting with the public on social media by producing informative contents for young voters. He moved to his current role as a relationship officer in the health sector in 2021, where he handled the offering of legal products and relationship with users, including private sector employees, civil servants, police, and military personnel. Even though he adored teaching, Participant 1 was drawn to jobs that offered better career growth and financial stability. He still intends on continuing his education and becoming a lecturer in the future, but currently he focuses on obtaining financial stability for himself and his family, then finding scholarship opportunities. He enjoys the financial gains and professional development in his current position, feels comfortable and competent in it, and is open to continuing study in the future. His career choice illustrates achieving a balance between long-term objectives, passions, and finances.

3.1.2. Participant 2

After completing a degree in English education, Participant 2 chose to become a Cluster Sales Manager for a telecommunication company in 2022. He initially considered a career in teaching, but he later found that there were more opportunities in telecommunications. During his teaching practice back at university, he discovered that teaching was primarily limited to formal educational settings, which he regarded to be repetitive and inflexible. Moreover, he also gained exposure to the corporate world through his part time job when he was a student,

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where he found a more practical use for his abilities in telecommunication sector. Therefore, he pursued prospects in the highly demanded telecommunications sector. Participant 2 gained useful experience working in sales at two different company before his current position, which influenced his decision to enter the corporate world. He currently manages the marketing and distribution of company products while handling and leading sales teams at vendors locations. Even though it has nothing to do with teaching, he guides his team, shares insights, and communicates strategies using the teaching and communication skills he learned in his English education study. Despite the initial stress, he is sure of his career choice. His confidence came from his earlier experience and strong interest in telecommunications, which confirm that this career fits his goals. His career journey serves as an example of how graduates of English education programs can easily move into a various non-teaching career, motivated by curiosity, experience, and a desire to advance.

3.1.3. Participant 3

After graduating in 2020, Participant 3, a bachelor of English education graduate, decided to choose a non-teaching career. She has been employed by a mining company as an HRD (human resources development) officer. She first thought about becoming a teacher, but for more prospect with greater salary and growth development in HRD, she changed her decision. In 2020, she put aside teaching as a career option because of the low salary for non-permanent teachers, and limited opportunities to apply civil servant program. She began her non-teaching career in a palm oil industry, getting experience in two companies before her current job. Her experiences validated her interest in human resources field, and thus increased her confidence. Handling staff development, payroll, HR budgeting, reports, attendance, and SOP (standard operating procedure) compliance were all part of her work duties. Despite her initial doubts, working in HR has helped her grow professionally, personally, and financially. She admitted that external influences, such as the limitation of teaching opportunities, greatly influenced her decision to pursue this career. Her journey demonstrates how English education graduates use their skills to succeed in different sectors by adapting in non-teaching careers.

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Table 2 Key Findings of Participants' Lived Experience

Themes	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Non-Teaching Career Exploration	"I sought a career that aligned with my interests and strengths in the field of communication."	"Before graduating, I began exploring careers outside of teaching, focusing on the corporate world, especially telecommunications."	"I chose it because waiting for civil servant exams, with uncertain outcomes, would have delayed my career."
Appealing Job Opportunity	"I had the opportunity to work as a Relationship Officer ... closely related to communication studies"	"This field is clearly demanded as nearly everyone relies on networks for communication and internet access."	"I got an opportunity to work in HR, which offered a stable income and good prospects for advancement."
Interest-Driven Career Decisions	"I wanted to pursue a career that matched my interests so I could enter the professional world with a genuine passion for the work itself."	"This job aligns with my interests"	"After my first experience in HR, I found it suited me well, and I genuinely enjoy this career path."
Career Choice Consistency	"Both roles are closely related to communication studies..."	"Before my current position, I had also worked twice in different companies in the same role."	"...I worked at two companies, but I've always held HR positions."
Self-Efficacy and Confidence in Career Decision	"I feel well-suited and have no doubts about my job, though I continue to build self-confidence"	"I am confident in my abilities, despite initially feeling overwhelmed by the high pressure at work."	"Initially, I questioned if I could handle a career in HR, but over time, I grew more confident in my abilities."
Career Growth and Development Opportunities	"It's not that I don't love teaching, but I was drawn to roles that offered greater financial potential and career advancement opportunities."	"...telecommunications offered a broader field with better practical applications and more opportunities for personal growth and learning."	"This job has improved my financial stability... new experiences and challenges, enhanced my communication skills...refined my critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, independence, and decision-making skills"

3.1.4. Textural Description

From the interview data, all participants have their own experiences and reasons in deciding their career. Participant 1 went straight into a non-teaching career because he wanted to pursue a master's degree but needed to financially support his family and himself. Therefore, he preferred a career that he believed would help him reach his personal goals and stable his finances. Participant 2's interest in corporate telecommunication positions led him to pursue a

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career in a telecommunication company after graduation. Meanwhile, due to limited opportunities for new grads to apply for civil servant recruitment program when she graduated in 2020, Participant 3 decided not to be a teacher. She believed that the wait for a good opportunity in teaching career would delay her career progress, causing her to prefer to work outside of teaching.
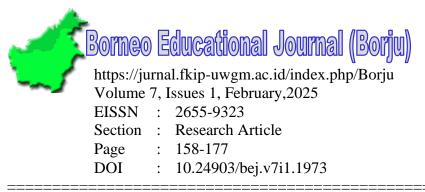
To sum up, those three participants persistently explored non-teaching careers, carefully considering their career choices which had to do with their interests and skills. By being consistent in their career choices, participants proved their skills and adaptability. Despite the initial doubts, they showed increasing confidence in their abilities, and strength from overcoming challenges and success in their roles. In addition, their chosen careers gave them opportunities for growth, refining important skills which led to personal and professional development. Their narratives show how carefully chosen, interest-driven career decisions can lead to meaningful success and fulfillment beyond a teaching career.

3.1.5. Structural Description

Based on the interview data, the three participants' decisions for their career outside teaching were influenced by market demands and employment opportunities. There are several things to be considered to select the careers that suited them well, including the career advancements opportunities, financial stability, and professional networking. These criteria have led them to their current jobs. During their career transition, they have been committed to building expertise, adapting to new roles, and developing skills. The confidence that grew as they overcame challenges, proved their adaptability and ability to find the resources necessary to survive in a dynamic work environment.

3.1.6. Essence Description

The interview data showed that the need for satisfaction, development and stability in work and life were the underlying reasons for the participants' decision to choose non-teaching jobs. They tried to accomplish it by actively seeking for jobs that met their personal interests,

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strengths, financial needs, career development and security. Their success in maintaining their positions and developing in non-teaching jobs shows that English education graduates can compete and adapt in a dynamic work environment.

3.2 Factors Leading English Education Graduates to Non-Teaching Careers

This section explains the factors leading the English education graduates to non-teaching careers.

Table 3 Key Findings of Participants' Lived Experience

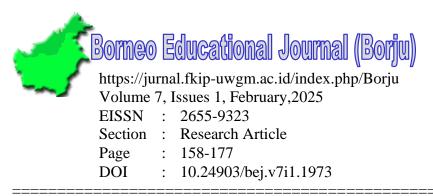| Themes	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Financial Stability	"Financial responsibilities led me to choose a stable job to support my family and personal goals."	-	-
Personal Development	-	"This job challenges me to continuously learn and improve my skills every day."	-
Teaching Limitations	"Systemic and financial challenges make the education sector less appealing."	"Formal teaching feels monotonous and rigid, with repetitive materials. Part-time teachers also face unequal welfare."	"I chose not to teach due to low salary, challenging career advancement, underappreciation and limited autonomy."
Career Prospects	"My job balancing my financial needs and personal interests."	"I chose this career because of its promising prospects and the continuous demand for this role in the market."	"My job offered a stable income and good prospects for advancement."
Self-Efficacy and Confidence	"I have no doubts about my job."	"I have no doubts and believe this is the right career decision."	"Now, I'm confident in both my skills and my decision."
Personal Goals	"My career choice prioritized financial stability and higher income to achieve personal goals, including further studies."	"This career helps me achieve personal and professional goals, some of which I've already accomplished, while others remain in progress."	"My goals evolved from gaining experience to advancing my career in HR and improving my finances."
Personal Interest	"My personal interest drives my job choice."	"My personal interest and capability in this field motivated me to pursue this career."	"I'm interested in a career outside teaching and plan to stay in HR."
Outcomes Expectations	"I expect this job to provide financial	"This job allows me earn, grow mentally, improve my	"My hopes are to improve my skills, career, and finances even further."

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	stability and positively impact the society."	skills, and aim for continued advancement"	
Continued Engagement with Educational Background	"I stay involved in English education by volunteering, keeping my skills up and contributing."	"My job lets me teach while working in telecoms, which feels fulfilling."	"Doing employee training feels like teaching and still involves using English."
Workload vs. Compensation	"The workload and challenges are higher than teaching, but the salary makes it worthwhile."	"More stressful and dynamic than teaching, but the salary matches the responsibilities."	"The workload and stress in HR are higher than in teaching, but the rewards make it worthwhile."

3.2.1. Textural Description

From the above data, intrinsic factors (self-efficacy and confidence, personal goals, personal interests, personal development, and outcomes expectations), and extrinsic factors (financial stability, teaching limitations, career prospects, workload vs. compensation, continued engagement with educational background) have influenced the participants' career decisions. Participant 1 stated that the factor of financial stability, where he wanted to continue his studies but had an obligation to help his family, combined with his perception of the limitations of teaching jobs in terms of education system and salary, led him to choose a job outside of teaching, which he felt better met the criteria of the job he wanted and met his personal goals. Meanwhile, Participant 2 needed a job that allowed him to continue learning and improving his skills and was not formal or attached to a schedule with a repetitive routine of teaching material like a teaching job. While Participant 3 chose to work outside of teaching because of the lack of teaching employment opportunities after she graduated, which she felt was insufficient in income and career development. She also expressed her concern over the recent cases of injustice experienced by teachers who tried to act for disciplining their students but were seen as violence. Furthermore, the participants prioritized the alignment of their careers with their interests, expectations, goals, and desired job prospects. Their current careers were also considered to have a good balance between workload and compensation. Therefore, they are willing, confident, and able to carry out their duties with pleasure. The participants felt by choosing a non-teaching job, they were still able to continue the skills and knowledge they

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gained in college and had time to stay involved in English education through volunteer activities.

3.2.2. Structural Description

The data show that external conditions are the main influences on participants' career decisions, where the three participants felt there were limitations in teaching careers that led them to seek employment outside of teaching. Furthermore, it is also supported by the personal motivations and goals of each participant who wanted a work-life balance. Finally, non-teaching careers were chosen by the participants to fulfill their needs, even though they had no experience in teaching career. While their careers were not linear with their studies and degrees, they have managed to survive and adapt through personal and external encouragement.

3.2.3. Essence Description

The need to balance life, work, and goals is the primary thing that the participants try to accomplish. Their decision to choose a non-teaching job is considered to enable them to meet their goals. While the participants decided to not pursue a career in education, they continue the knowledge acquired from the English education program. Their career journeys illustrate resilience, adaptability, and long-term fulfillment.

3.3 Transferable Skills

This section explains the transferable skills of English education graduates to non-teaching careers.

Table 4 Transferable Skills

Themes	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Teaching Skills	"Teaching and knowledge transfer still apply as I use guidelines to share product knowledge with users, similar to teaching students."	"I teach strategies to vendors by clearly explaining material, creating an engaging environment, and tailoring my approach to each person's needs."	"Learning and development in HR is like teaching, where I train employees, prepare materials, adjust the training for adults, and keep sessions engaging."

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Communication, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving	"I need to understand the user cluster and adjust accordingly, while also addressing problems when communicating with users."	"I summarize and analyse instructions from my company and communicate them with vendors."	"In HR, communication, public speaking, problem-solving, and critical thinking help in resolving employee conflicts quickly."
English Skills	-	"I still use English, mainly for listening during meetings with international board members and for reading materials like tool books and handbooks from the head office."	"In my job, I mostly use English for reading, writing, and listening, like handling emails, documents, and meetings with other branches."

3.3.1. Textural Description

From the presented data, the participants mentioned that several skills and knowledge from the English education program such as teaching, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and English skills are applied in their current non-teaching careers. Participant 1 uses teaching skills to guide users and deliver product knowledge with structured guidelines. Moreover, Participants 2 and 3 apply teaching skills in conducting training sessions for vendors and workers.

In addition, the communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills are equally important in their current work. Participant 1 needs these skills to understand each user cluster, adjust the communication style appropriately, and solve any problems or complaints. Participant 2 uses these skills to analyze and communicate instructions from the company to vendors. Participant 3 stated the importance of these skills in resolving problems and conflicts between employees. Furthermore, English skills are used more by Participants 2 and 3 since they work in companies that have international relations, such as during meetings, reading materials, and written communication.

3.3.2. Structural Description

From the interview data, the three participants' university-acquired skills and knowledge proved to be relevant in their current non-teaching careers. With their educational

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background adjusted to fit the needs of their current roles, it enabled them to handle challenging tasks. Their chosen roles allow them to continue their skills and knowledge from their English education and give them the growth opportunity to apply the hard and soft skills they have acquired through their education.

3.3.3. Essence Description

The relevance and applicability of skillsets and knowledge from English education to non-teaching careers prove that English graduates have a broad range of employment opportunities outside of teaching English in schools. Although the linear job for an English education graduate is an English schoolteacher, it is undeniable that in this era English is an important language and is spoken nearly worldwide as an international language. This leaves English education graduates with the opportunity to have a successful career outside of teaching, as the participants did.

3.4 Discussion

The participants' lived experiences showed an interaction between non-teaching careers exploration, appealing job opportunities, interest-driven career decisions, career choice consistency, self-efficacy and confidence in career decisions, and career growth and development opportunities. These findings are in line with the key components of the SCCT by Lent et al., (1994), as they reveal how self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals influenced their exploration and decision to pursue non-teaching careers. The participants' self-efficacy initially high in English education, which proved by their choice of major. Over time, they developed higher self-efficacy and interest in other fields which led to various outcome expectations: some sought stability and a good salary, others sought new challenges, and some aimed for continuous self-development. Finally, this guided them to achieve their own personal goals. The participants' career goals evolved over time and experience. Initially, they may have wanted to have a career in English education, but this goal later shifted to seek more rewarding jobs or new interests.

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Moreover, from the perspective of Career Construction Theory, participant's career transitions were influenced by their personal values and the meaning they attach to their work. The theory highlights how individuals adjust to their social life and act as agents to manage their motivations, align their work roles with their occupational traits, and express their vocational self-concepts (Savickas, 2019). Furthermore, these findings align with Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes that the education and skills possessed by graduates open opportunities in a broader job market, where the knowledge and skills acquired through their education help them in their current jobs.

The participants' career decisions were influenced by intrinsic factors (self-efficacy and confidence, personal goals, personal interest, personal development, and outcomes expectations), and extrinsic factors (financial stability, teaching limitations, career prospects, workload vs. compensation, continued engagement with educational background). These factors were in line with SCCT principles that emphasize the role of self-efficacy, personal goals, and outcomes expectations in career decision (Lent et al., 1994). The participants showed a strong interest and belief in their capabilities (self-efficacy) in their choice, which led them to pursue non-teaching careers that they considered in line with their outcome expectations and personal goals. In Career Construction Theory, there are three parts included: vocational personality (what careers are constructed by individuals), career adaptability (how individuals build their careers), and life theme (the reasons and importance of career decisions taken) (Wang & Li, 2024). This theory helps explain the findings, where the careers that the participants worked on were corporate jobs in the fields of public relations, telecommunications marketing, and HRD which they considered suitable and manageable. The participants managed to adapt and improve their skills to survive in their jobs until today. their initial experiences in non-teaching careers led them to the decision to continue taking non-teaching careers as they felt more fulfilling and led them to achieve their goals.

The relevant skills and knowledge from the English language education program for the participants' non-teaching jobs are teaching skills, communication, critical thinking,

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problem-solving, and English skills. The findings align with Human Capital Theory which theorized that education and skills are investments that improve a human's productivity and value in the labor market (Becker, 1962). Participants' ability to utilize their education-required skills and knowledge contributed to their human capital. Through Lent et al., (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory, participants have a belief in their ability (self-efficacy) to apply their education-required skills properly in their non-teaching jobs. With their high self-efficacy, they can do their job and achieving the goals and outcomes they set. The three participants of this study who stated the relevance of teaching skills in their jobs, showed that teaching is not only limited to formal education. Practically, teaching can be done by anyone and anywhere. English education provides not only a space to learn the language, but also unlocks global perspectives and the development of critical thinking (Sarpamones & Ibojo, 2024).

Moreover, the findings align with several previous research. Panlaqui & Bardemorilla (2023), discovered that teacher education graduates considering competitive income, passion, and growth into their decisions to choose non-teaching careers. They also found that skills and competencies from teacher education include learning and teaching abilities, professional values and attitudes, transversal skills, and paperwork. Furthermore, they mentioned transferable teaching skills that can be implemented in non-teaching jobs such as mentoring, learning, listening, problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, and coordination. It is also supported by Martin (1995) who found that skills from teacher education such as oral and general communication, working independently, and training in general and specific areas, can be effectively applied to a wide range of non-teaching jobs.

Wulandari (2020) additionally mentioned several reasons for English education graduates preferring a non-teaching career, including salary and self-development. In addition, Xinxin & Amoozegar (2024) identified three factors that had positively contributed to career decisions (promotion opportunities, job security, and work environment). Moreover, Laher (2024) revealed that competitive salaries and support for personal passion and growth were the main reasons participants chose non-teaching careers. Furthermore, Sarpamones & Ibojo

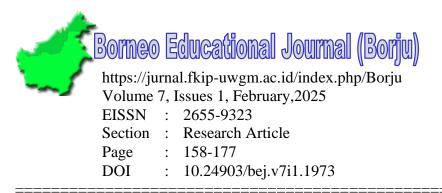===

(2024) argued that in seeking a career and a job, it is important to consider salary wise to match your hard work and fulfill the living needs.

4. Conclusion

Every job has its positives and negatives. Participants' negative perceptions and dissatisfaction with teaching careers show the need for a better improvement in education sectors regarding the system and equal welfare for teachers. Also, the importance of English education students' awareness and consistency in choosing their majors and careers to positively contribute and improve the education industry after graduation. Furthermore, this study proves the wide employability of English education graduates. With the skills and knowledge gained during their time in the English education program, graduates have successfully adapted and overcome challenges that provide room for their personal and professional development. Finally, this study suggests to higher education institutions (HEIs) and English education programs to improve the curriculum following the recent job market needs for teaching and non-teaching jobs that are still related to English. Pre-graduation career guidance from HEIs and English education programs will greatly assist graduates in directing their careers to be on target and benefit from their degrees.

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