Describing Self-efficacy of In-experienced English Teachers in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the self-efficacy level of inexperienced English teachers in elementary schools. This study used a descriptive quantitative approach with a questionnaire instrument based on the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) theory which includes three main domains: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The research subjects consisted of 35 elementary school teachers who taught English but did not have an English education background. The results showed that teachers' self-efficacy levels were generally high, with the classroom management domain receiving the highest score with score (30.9), followed by instructional strategies with score (30.8), and the lowest score on student engagement with score (29.6). This finding indicates that although teachers have no specific experience in teaching English, they have good self-efficacy in managing the classroom and designing lessons. Although research on teacher self-efficacy has been widely conducted in various educational contexts, not much is known about the self-efficacy of novice English teachers in primary schools in Indonesia, especially those who do not have an English language education background or teaching certification. This study addresses the gap of elementary school teachers who do not have an English education background However, they still face challenges in motivating and actively engaging students. This study recommends the need for specialized training that focuses on developing interactive strategies to improve student engagement in English language learning.

I. Introduction

Language has a significant important role in a person's social, emotional and intellectual development. It is very important for people to learn foreign languages in this age of globalization, especially English as it is an international language. Although English is recognized as a foreign language in Indonesia, the majority of Indonesians still communicate daily using *Bahasa Indonesia*, or their mother tongue [1]. The study of English language teaching, especially by non-native speakers, is very important in today's globalized world where English serves as a lingua franca.

In the world of education, the curriculum is an integral aspect to achieve or realize the expected learning objectives. To organize the action of the educational process, a strategic action is needed, especially the curriculum. This shows that the curriculum is the core of all educational programs implemented by educational institutions or the government. If this form of restriction is imposed, then the place or position of the curriculum becomes very significant in the entire educational process [2]. [3]in addition to the importance of the curriculum in the overall educational process, learning is equally important. Curriculum and learning hold a very fundamental (important) position in education. Without a curriculum as a plan, learning will not be effective, and without learning as the application of a plan, the curriculum will not mean anything. The curriculum serves as a direction, guideline, or signpost for the implementation of the teaching and learning process.

In the teaching and learning process, the teacher is an individual who is authorized and responsible for educating students. They guide and nurture the growth of learners, both individually and collectively, inside and outside the classroom [4]. The concept of the ideal teacher has been the subject of much discussion in educational circles around the world. This is because it is widely believed that effective teaching, which is responsive to learners' learning processes, is the key to academic success However, in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 14 of 2005, Article 8, teacher competencies encompass personality, pedagogical, social, and professional skills, which can be acquired through professional education programs. Salam et al., [5] emphasizes the importance of subject expertise and classroom management skills for effective teaching.

Self-efficacy is a crucial factor in teaching effectiveness. It refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to carry out tasks required to achieve specific goals [6]. In the educational context, teacher self-efficacy reflects a teacher's belief in their capacity to manage the classroom, deliver subject content effectively, and motivate students. Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to apply innovative teaching strategies, adapt well to classroom dynamics, and stay resilient in the face of challenges. On the other hand, teachers with low self-efficacy may struggle, particularly when teaching subjects outside their area of expertise [7].

According to Bandura [8], self-efficacy is formed through four main sources: mastery experiences (successful teaching experiences), vicarious experiences (observing other successful teachers), social persuasion (encouragement from peers or superiors), and physiological/emotional states (such as stress or anxiety). In the field of education, teacher self-efficacy refers to the extent to which teachers believe in their ability to influence student engagement, implement effective teaching strategies, and manage the classroom successfully. In the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale by Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, the essential teaching activities in the classroom fall into three categories: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management [9]. For instruction, these three dimensions are essential. Higher levels of self-efficacy among teachers are closely correlated with their ability to successfully complete instructional tasks and foster a supportive learning environment in the classroom [10]. In order to measure teachers' self-efficacy, the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) is typically used. The analysis findings demonstrate that it is sufficiently valid and trustworthy. The test, which consists of 12 or 24 items, is a fair length and ought to be a helpful resource for academics who want to investigate the concept of teacher efficacy [9].

Griffin and Moorhead [11], define self-efficacy as the extent to which individuals believe they can achieve their goals, even after experiencing previous failures. Similarly, Robbins and Judge [12], describe it as a belief in one's ability to complete tasks. Individuals with high self-efficacy generally show greater confidence in achieving success. According to Ariani and Susilo [13], in a teaching context, self-efficacy refers specifically to a teacher's confidence in positively influencing student learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers need to have high levels of self-efficacy, as it impacts not only the quality of instruction but also student achievement. When teachers believe in their ability to help students understand lesson material, student success is more likely [14].

Telef [15], indicates teachers' career and life satisfaction are significantly positively correlated with their self-efficacy, which encompasses their views on classroom management, teaching tactics, and student involvement. Conversely, there found a negative correlation between instructors' exhaustion and low self-efficacy. In elementary school teachers tend to exhibit significantly better classroom management than secondary school teachers, and do not show significantly better classroom management. Superior classroom management skills compared to secondary school teachers, and there were no differences when taking into account instructional methodologies and student involvement [16]. Rahmawati & Wirakhmi [14], also noted that self-efficacy is shaped by both personal circumstances and the surrounding environment. Whether high, moderate, or low, a teacher's self-efficacy significantly affects their performance. Enhancing self-efficacy can improve student achievement, teaching effectiveness, and job satisfaction. Conversely, a decline in self-efficacy can negatively impact all three areas. Therefore, creating a supportive work environment that fosters the development of self-efficacy is essential to maximizing teacher performance. Researchers Ghasemboland & Hashim [17] stated that regarding the level of efficacy of the teachers in the study, it is significant that the teachers' self-reported confidence or efficacy in teaching English was found to be higher in this study compared to previous

studies using the TSES. This suggests that compared to the teachers in the previous studies, the teachers in this study felt more comfortable in carrying out their teaching tasks.

However, the reality is in-experienced teachers, especially those who are assigned to teach English without formal training or expertise, often face unique challenges that can affect their self-efficacy. The importance of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge for effective teaching. When teachers lack these essential competencies, they may struggle to deliver engaging and informative lessons [18]. Non-native teachers face biases regarding their language skills and teaching efficacy [19]. Many do not have sufficient practice opportunities, limiting their teaching experience [20]. Challenges include language barriers, cultural differences and institutional preferences for native speakers [19]. The early childhood education sector is currently facing a significant challenge: a shortage of teachers with formal English language training. This trend is particularly concerning as English language instruction is increasingly integrated into the early childhood curriculum [21]. While early childhood educators are typically trained in areas such as child development or education, they may lack the specialized knowledge and skills needed to teach English effectively [22].

In the specific context of Mabini District, Davao de Oro, out-of- field teaching is prevalent in English and English-related subjects, particularly at the Senior High School level. For example, Biology teachers may be assigned to teach Oral Communication due to the shortage of qualified English teachers [23]. In Indonesia, similar problems are also found, such as the case of a teacher at SMPN 7 Prabumulih who was assigned to teach subjects outside her area of expertise. The consequences of this practice are quite complex, ranging from teachers' difficulties in understanding certain teaching materials, to students' difficulties in absorbing the subject matter effectively. Although various efforts have been made by schools to overcome this problem, such as providing additional training, in essence, the alignment between the teacher's field of expertise and the subjects taught remains ideal to achieve optimal learning quality [24]. Furthermore, (M. Galuh Elga Romadhon, Dzulfikri Dzulfikri, 2019) [25], claim that non-English instructors' experiences of teaching English to young learners in Indonesia include issues such as pronunciation, vocabulary translation, and sentence construction. Teachers use a variety of coping tactics, including digital devices, music, and activities to engage students.

The consequences of teaching outside the subject area can be far- reaching. As Ingersoll (as cited in Zhou, 2012) [26] points out, teachers who are not adequately prepared to teach a particular subject may find it difficult to deliver high-quality instruction. This can lead to suboptimal student learning and hinder their academic progress. The phenomenon of inexperienced teachers with no background in English is a common problem in many educational institutions, especially at the primary school level. One example is the assignment of inexperienced teachers with no English background to teach English subjects in primary schools in *Tarumajaya*. While this is often due to human resource constraints, the practice has significant implications for the quality of learning. In-experienced teachers without adequate English background may find it difficult to deliver the material effectively, thus impacting on students' comprehension.

Previous studies have highlighted (Çankaya, 2018) [27], this study revealed that practicing English language teachers exhibited higher levels of self-efficacy compared to student teachers. This finding suggests that prospective teachers tend to possess slightly lower self-efficacy, indicating the need for further investigation into the factors contributing to their lower confidence levels. (Utami & Kuswandono, 2023) [28], in their study the results indicated that teachers' perceptions of agency were influenced by school conditions and their professional aspirations. Furthermore, the study highlighted the crucial role of professional development in enhancing both agency and self-efficacy among EFL teachers. Similarly, Noviani and Kuswandono (2022) [29], in their study the findings revealed that teachers were more confident in their technological and pedagogical knowledge compared to their content knowledge. These results underscore the importance of ongoing professional development to strengthen self-efficacy across all components of TPACK (Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge). (Safitri, 2021) [10], through her study found that the overall self-efficacy level of pre-service teachers was moderate, with the highest scores in instructional strategies. However, the challenges experienced during actual teaching significantly influenced the self-efficacy levels of these prospective teachers. Lastly, Aydin Yildiz (2024) [30], in the study the findings demonstrated variability in the TPACK and self-efficacy levels of English teachers, with a significant positive correlation between the two. This emphasizes the importance of integrating technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge to bolster self-efficacy, especially for teachers working with gifted learners.

(Hutagalung et al., 2025) [31], stated in education, teaching and learning which incorporate ideas, technologies, and methods are crucial. In the past, learning involved comprehending and using knowledge, whereas teaching involved imparting it. Therefore, it is important to examine the self-efficacy of teachers who are inexperienced in English but are still assigned to teach the subject in primary schools. An in-depth understanding of the level of self-efficacy of teachers in this context is needed to provide a clearer picture of their condition and to formulate more targeted strategies to improve the quality of learning.

However, the phenomenon of inexperienced teachers with no background in English teaching English subjects in primary schools-especially in rural or non-urban areas-has not been widely studied in the Indonesian context. Most of the existing research tends to focus on certified teachers or those who have had formal English language training (e.g. PPG/PLPG participants), and is often conducted in urban settings or secondary schools. Very few studies have specifically examined the self-efficacy of novice or non-certified teachers who are assigned to teach English at the primary school level without adequate preparation or background in the subject [10] [29] [28].

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the self-efficacy of teachers with no English education background who are assigned to teach English in elementary schools. By focusing on this specific population, this study contributes new insights into a neglected area of teacher education studies in Indonesia. The findings of this study are expected to inform future teacher training programs and policy interventions that can meet the unique needs of teachers working in teaching contexts outside the classroom, particularly in primary school settings.

II. Method

A. Research Design

This study uses a descriptive quantitative method to describe the self-efficacy level of inexperienced English teachers in elementary schools. Descriptive quantitative methods are used to describe a phenomenon systematically, factually, and accurately related to the facts and relationships between the variables studied [32].

B. Participant

The research was conducted in this study are teachers who teach English in primary schools but do not have a background in English education and are still relatively inexperienced in teaching. There are 35 data from the total respondents involved in this study who are teachers who teach English in elementary schools but do not have a background in English education in *Kecamatan Tarumajaya,Bekasi*, East Java.

C. Data Collection Method

To obtain the data, the study employed the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) questionnaire established by Tschannen Moran & Hoy (2001) adapted by Safitri (2021). With a five-point Likert scale. Teachers' confidence in their teaching activities is indicated by the following scores: 1. Not at all confident *(sama sekali tidak percaya diri)*; 2. Slightly Confident (sedikit percaya diri); 3. Somewhat Confident *(agak percaya diri)*; 4. Confident *(percaya diri)*; and 5. Very confident *(sangat percaya diri)*. Three subscales comprised the twenty-four items of questions: classroom management (items 17–24), instructional approach (items 9–16), and student involvement (items 1–8). The researcher modified the questionnaire to *Bahasa Indonesia* via a competent translator.

D. Data Analysis

For this research, the researcher used a descriptive statistical approach to provide a clear and concise picture of the data that had been collected. In accordance with the opinion [33], descriptive statistics are a powerful tool for summarizing raw data into more meaningful information. After the data collection process was complete, all research data was then organized and grouped into Microsoft Excel. This makes it easier for researchers to carry out the next stage of analysis.

Furthermore, to obtain more accurate and efficient results, researchers utilize statistical software, namely SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 23. By using SPSS, researchers can perform statistical calculations accurately. In the initial stage of analysis, the researcher calculated the mean and standard deviation for all items. This mean and standard deviation provide

an overview of the mean and standard deviation values of the variables studied. After obtaining the mean and standard deviation for all items, the researcher then performed further calculations to obtain the mean and std. deviation based on each dimension of self-efficacy (efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management). Then the average score for each dimension was calculated to find out which areas had the highest and lowest levels of efficacy. This total average provides an overview of the scores or values obtained by all respondents. In other words, this total average is an average picture of the perceptions of all research participants.

III. Results

The There are 35 data from the total respondents involved in this study. From the questionnaire results, the respondents were dominated by the female with 25 respondents and then followed by male with 10 participants from the total of respondents who submitted the questionnaire (see figure 1). The figure also shows that 16 respondents from 1-5 year teaching experiences, 9 respondents came from 5-10 year teaching experiences, and 10 respondents came from >10 years (see figure 2).
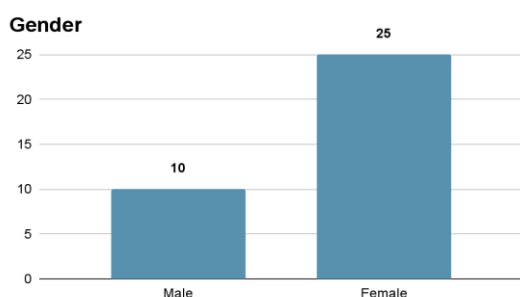

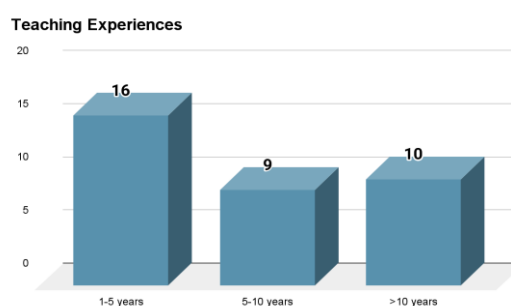Figure 1. Chart of Gender

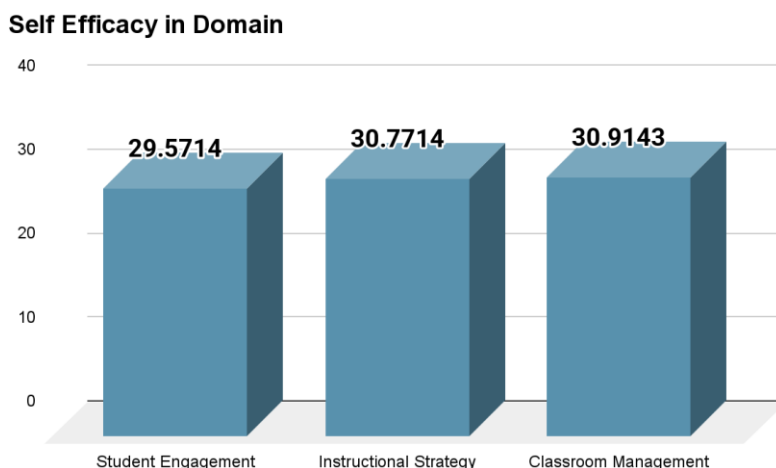Figure 2. Chart of Teaching Experiences

Figure 3. Chart of Efficacy in Domain

The purpose of this study is to describe the self-efficacy of inexperienced English Teachers in Elementary Schools. According to the results of the questionnaire analysis using the TSES scale, which has three main domains, as illustrated in figure 3. Classroom Management has the highest average score of 30.9143 in the three main domains of teacher self-efficacy, indicating that teachers feel most confident in their ability to manage the classroom, this entails having the capacity to keep the classroom in order, deal with disruptive students, and establish a positive learning atmosphere.

Despite coming from non-English backgrounds, teachers are highly confident in their ability to design and implement successful teaching techniques, as seen by the instructional strategy mean score of 30.7714. With the lowest average score of 29.5714 for student engagement, teachers continue to struggle to actively include students in the teaching and learning process.
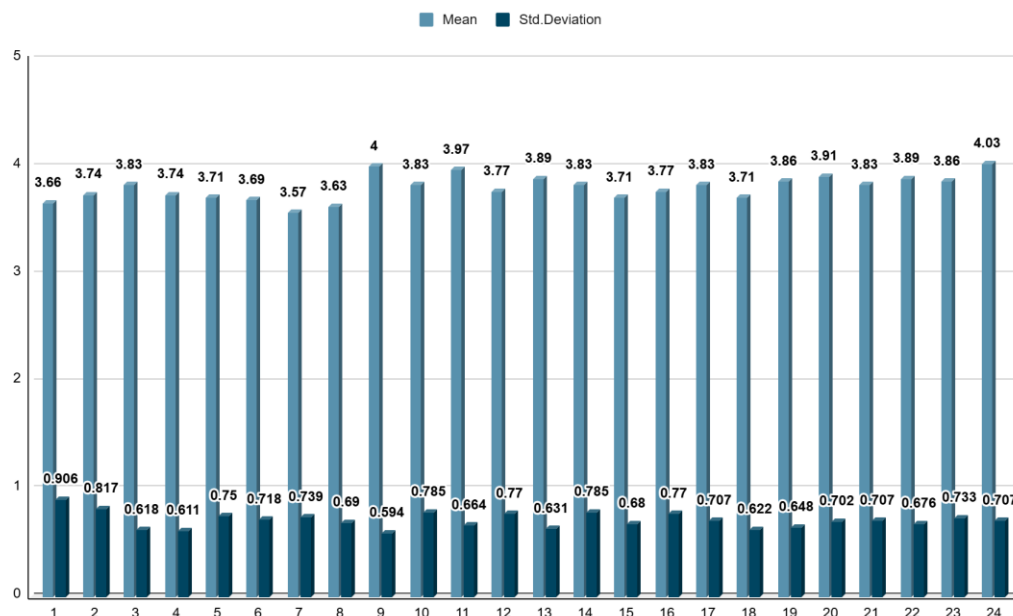

Figure 4. Result of the Questionnaire

The mean scores of the 24 questionnaire items fall between 3.57 and 4.03, as seen in figure 4. This suggests that the majority of respondents were extremely confident in the statements that described their level of self-efficacy. With an average score of 4.03, item 24 (How well can you respond to defiant students?) had the highest score. On the other hand, item 7 (How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?) had the lowest average, averaging 3.57.
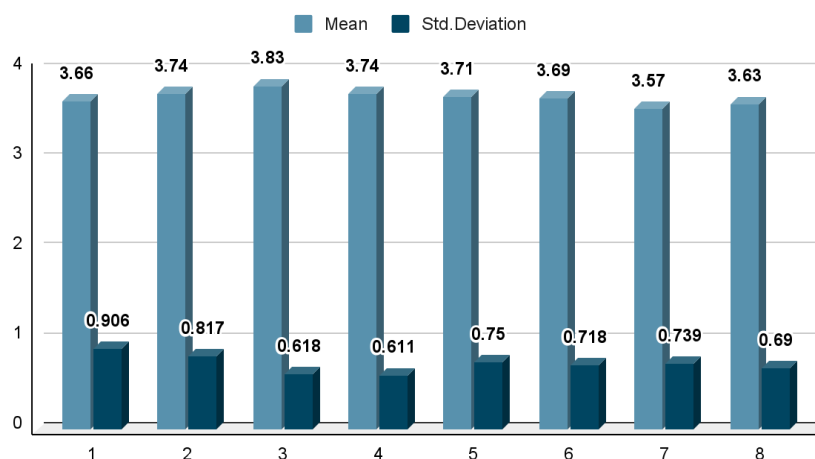

Figure 5. Chart of Student Engagement

Figure 5 shows the detailed breakdown of the Student Engagement domain, which includes items 1-8. The analysis of mean scores reveals a relatively narrow range, from 3.57 to 3.83, indicating a generally consistent level of perceived efficacy among respondents across various aspects of student engagement. Notably, item 3 (How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?) received the highest mean score of 3.83, with a standard deviation of 0.618. This suggests that respondents generally feel confident in their ability to encourage disengaged students, and there is a moderate level of agreement among them.

On the other hand, item 7 (How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?) recorded the lowest mean score of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 0.739. This lower score, coupled with a relatively higher standard deviation, indicates that respondents may feel less effective in supporting students who are significantly struggling academically, and there is slightly more variation in perceptions. These findings highlight areas of strength and challenge within the domain of student engagement, suggesting a potential need for professional development or targeted interventions to enhance teachers' perceived efficacy in assisting underperforming students.
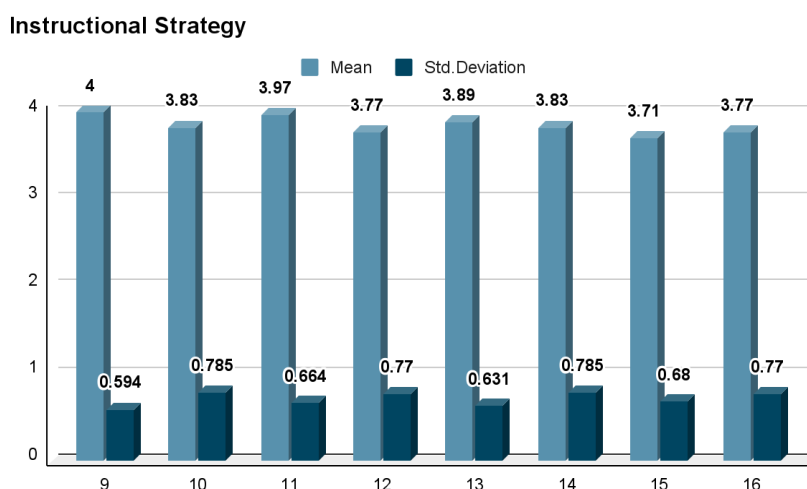

Figure 6. Chart of Instructional Strategy

Figure 6 shows the details of the Instructional Strategy domain, which includes items 9 to 16. The mean scores obtained from each item are within the range of 3.71 to 4.00, indicating a relatively high and stable level of teacher self-efficacy in implementing learning strategies in the classroom. Item number 9 (How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?) achieved the highest mean score of 4.00 with a standard deviation of 0.594. This score reflects the respondents' strong belief in their ability to deal with intellectual challenges coming from students and shows a fair degree of uniformity in their perceptions.

Meanwhile, item number 15 (How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?) gained the lowest mean score of 3.71 with a standard deviation of 0.680. While this is still a high score, the difference suggests that some teachers may feel less confident in exploring or implementing unconventional learning approaches or customizing teaching methods to meet students' needs. This finding highlights the importance of continuous support and training for teachers, especially in developing and implementing adaptive and innovative alternative learning strategies in the classroom.
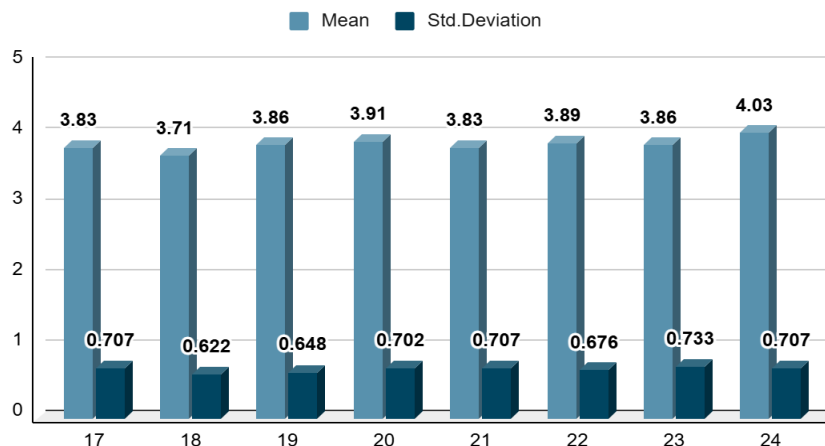
Figure 7. Chart of Classroom Management

Figure 7 shows the breakdown of the Classroom Management domain consisting of items 17 to 24. The mean scores of each item were in the range of 3.71 to 4.03, reflecting the respondents' perceived high self-efficacy in managing the classroom effectively. Item number 24 (How well can you respond to defiant students?) gained the highest mean score of 4.03 with a standard deviation of 0.707. This indicates that most teachers feel confident in their ability to deal with challenging student behavior, although there is little variation in respondents' responses.

In contrast, the lowest mean score was on item number 18 (To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behaviour?) with a score of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 0.622 was the lowest score. This score indicates that while teachers generally feel fairly confident, some may have difficulty in clearly conveying behavioral expectations to students. This discrepancy may point to the need to improve teachers' communication skills in framing and conveying classroom rules and expectations so that they are easier for students to understand and comply with. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of continued training in aspects of classroom management, especially in terms of preventing and addressing disruptive behavior and building a positive learning environment.

IV. Discussion

This study revealed that inexperienced English teachers in primary schools showed high levels of self-efficacy, especially in the domain of classroom management (30.91), followed by instructional strategy (30.77), and student engagement (29.57). These results indicate a relatively strong belief among these teachers in their ability to manage classrooms, deliver lessons, and engage students despite their lack of formal educational background in English language teaching.

The findings align with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, which identifies four main sources of efficacy beliefs: performance experience, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal [8]. Many teachers in this study had prior teaching experience in other subjects, which likely provided them with performance experience in managing classrooms. These accumulated experiences might explain why their self-efficacy in classroom management was the highest, despite not being trained in English specifically.

In addition, verbal persuasion, such as encouragement from school leaders or peer support, appeared to play a role in strengthening their efficacy. Several respondents mentioned that they felt

more confident after receiving input and guidance from more experienced colleagues, indicating the presence of vicarious experiencesv that support Bandura's theory. Furthermore, their emotional state, motivation and willingness to learn also influenced their ability to persist in facing the challenges of teaching English.

This pattern supports the model of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, who conceptualize teacher self-efficacy into three domains: classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement [9]. The fact that teachers scored highest in classroom management, followed by instruction and engagement, reflects a hierarchy of confidence areas that mirrors their general teaching experience. Even without strong content knowledge, teachers who possess pedagogical and interpersonal skills can still feel capable in certain domains of teaching efficacy.

These findings are partially consistent with Rahmawati and Wirakhmi (2022) [14], who found that most elementary teachers in Indonesia exhibit moderate self-efficacy, especially in the instructional strategy domain. However, in contrast, this study found that classroom management ranked highest, possibly due to the participants' longer experience managing various subjects in the classroom.

Furthermore, the results support Noviani & Kuswandono (2022) [29], who found that English teachers from non-educational backgrounds can still exhibit strong self-efficacy, especially when supported by adequate resources and school infrastructure. In this study, access to peer mentoring, school-based training, and collaboration with colleagues was frequently cited as helpful in building confidence. These elements reflect vicarious learning and social reinforcement, which contribute significantly to perceived self-efficacy.

In comparison, Safitri (2021) [10] reported that pre-service teachers had lower confidence in classroom management, with instructional strategies as their strongest domain. The difference may stem from the actual teaching exposure as this study involved in-service teachers, while Safitri's focused on teacher trainees. According to Bandura, the quality and context of experience significantly influence efficacy levels [8].

A further contrast is found with Sarfo et al. (2015) [34], whose research showed that teachers had the lowest self-efficacy in instructional strategies, while they were most confident in student engagement. This discrepancy may be due to contextual differences in curriculum, teacher training models, or cultural expectations of teaching roles.

Overall, the relatively high levels of self-efficacy observed in this study reflect a positive outlook for the development of English instruction in elementary schools, even when conducted by teachers without specialized English training. The findings emphasize the importance of ongoing professional development, collegial collaboration, and school-level support in empowering teachers to overcome content-related challenges. Thus, educational stakeholders should prioritize creating supportive environments that foster reflective practice, mentorship, and peer learning to enhance teacher efficacy across all domains.

One of the strengths of this study lies in its specific focus on the self-efficacy of English teachers who do not possess a formal background in English education. This focus addresses a gap in the literature, as few studies have explored this unique population in depth. As such, this study offers new insights into the dynamics of language teaching in Indonesian primary schools, especially in areas where qualified English teachers are scarce. However, this study was conducted with a limited number of respondents from a particular region, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to a wider teacher population across Indonesia.

V. Conclusion

The study findings indicate that despite the respondents were in-experienced English Teachers, they generally demonstrated a high level of self-efficacy, particularly when it came to classroom management. This can be as a result of their general education training or their prior expertise instructing other topics. The lower results on the Student Engagement domain, however, suggest that more instruction is required, particularly in the areas of interactive strategies and motivating tactics to encourage students to participate more actively in the English language learning process. In general, although the teachers did not have an English language education background, they still showed positive self-efficacy. However, the aspect of student engagement is still a weak point that requires further attention.

For this suggestion, teachers are expected to continue developing interactive teaching strategies and student-centered learning approaches to improve their skills in teaching English. Schools should provide training or workshops that specifically engage teachers in the use of effective English teaching methods, with an emphasis on improving student learning. For future researchers, it is recommended to examine more factors that influence students' self-efficacy, especially in the aspect of student engagement, as well as provide guidance from various disciplines so that the results of the study are more general and widely applicable.

Acknowledgment

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Supplementary Material

Supplementary material that may be helpful in the review process should be prepared and provided as a separate electronic file. That file can then be transformed into PDF format and submitted along with the manuscript and graphic files to the appropriate editorial office.