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How Does Emergency Remote Learning Affect the Future Career Readiness of Indonesian EFL Preservice Teachers?

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Abstract. The study investigated how the policy of emergency remote learning during the global pandemic affected graduating English as a foreign language (EFL) preservice teachers. Using the social-cognitive career theory (SCCT) as the framework, this phenomenological study examined their readiness to start their career as EFL teachers. Additionally, it investigated participants' self-efficacy regarding their competencies as teacher candidates. Using semi-structured interviews and employing purposive sampling by recruiting seven EFL preservice teachers from a private university in Indonesia, the study found that the policy of emergency remote learning affected the participants' readiness for their upcoming careers as future EFL teachers. Although most of the participants claimed that they were ready to enter the work field as teachers, the study found they suffered anxiety and low self-efficacy regarding competence to teach. Finally, the importance of external support for study completion, as well as for career preparation, is indicated.

Keywords: global pandemic; social-cognitive career theory; teacher candidates

1. Introduction

Since its outbreak in 2020, the global pandemic has forced multi-dimensional changes in human life. Restrictions were placed on physical interaction, to diminish the devastating effects of COVID-19. As a result, people needed to adjust to the new situation and create "new normal" life, to survive the pandemic. Fortunately, new developments in technology helped to sustain social interaction and enable people to continue their daily routines. Of the aspects of human life, education became a primary concern, since it affects many individuals of various ages and a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds. The global pandemic required teachers and students to adapt to the new situation and adopt emergency remote learning (Taghizadeh & Ejtehadi, 2021). This sudden transition surely presented multiple challenges related to sustaining the quality of educational practices. It

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also required every party in the education field to generate strategies to mitigate the negative effects of emergency remote learning.

Preservice teachers were also among those affected by the global pandemic. During the pandemic, all university coursework and field teaching programs were conducted remotely. Koşar (2021) argues that, for preservice teachers, field teaching experiences such as teaching practicum and student-teaching programs involve observations and actual teaching practice that are necessary to help them build up an image of their future careers. These programs allow them to teach in a real classroom and manage the class using pedagogical competence that has been shaped through multiple pedagogy-related coursework projects. However, the global pandemic brought changes to the programs, as preservice teachers were required to participate in the programs in a remote format. Moreover, other essential requirements, for example, final projects or theses, had to be completed remotely. All these changes proved to be challenging for many preservice teachers. Thus, it might be safe to assume that these changes might affect their competencies, self-efficacy, and also their perceptions as teacher candidates.

Several studies report how preservice teachers reacted to emergency remote learning policies during the global pandemic. Some studies focused on self-efficacy and mental states. For instance, a qualitative study by Çamlıbel-Acar and Eveyik-Aydın (2022) describe the application of emergency remote learning from the perspective of English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) preservice teachers. The study sheds light on the issues that emerged in remote learning, as well as the significance of this learning format. Moreover, this study suggests that remote learning has bright prospects for the future, especially in the area of teacher training. Sun and Zou (2022) found that EFL preservice teachers in China accepted the remote learning format after they had completed their study in this format for one term. These two studies describe how EFL preservice teachers managed to adapt to the changes and moved along with the situation facing them, to achieve their academic goals. However, there is a need to investigate the impacts of these changes on their readiness and self-efficacy upon completion of their program further. Thus, it is important to research this topic, since the final goal of a teacher preparation program is to prepare professional teachers who possess the necessary competencies and self-efficacy to manage their classes optimally.

The current study investigated how the policy of emergency remote learning affected graduating EFL preservice teachers' readiness for their future careers. It also explored participants' self-efficacy regarding their competencies as teacher candidates. Thus, the primary goal of this study was to reveal the impacts of remote learning on EFL preservice teachers' career readiness. The following questions served as a guide for this study.

1. What were the impacts of remote learning on EFL preservice teachers' career readiness?
2. What are the implications of this study?

1.1 EFL learning experience through emergency remote learning in the teacher training program

A teacher training program aims to prepare competent future teachers by developing their academic and pedagogic skills. During the global pandemic, the purpose of the program remained the same, despite differences in the format of learning. For EFL preservice teachers, remote learning could have different impacts on the development of language skills than offline learning. For instance, a study by Karataş and Tuncer (2020) addressed this issue by examining the effects of emergency remote learning on EFL preservice teachers' language skills development. This study recruited 118 EFL preservice teachers, and they imply that emergency remote learning put heavy emphasis on writing activities and less on speaking skills. Thus, participants' writing skills showed significant improvement in comparison to their speaking skills.

Aside from the impacts of emergency remote learning on language skills development, other essential elements of the teacher training program are teaching practicum and the student-teaching program. Both programs are deemed vital for the development of EFL preservice teachers' pedagogical competence, as they facilitate field experience that presents actual descriptions of duties and the daily routine of professional teachers. During the global pandemic, both programs operated remotely, which presented different learning experiences and different possible impacts. Regarding this matter, Koşar (2021) conducted a survey study by recruiting 25 EFL preservice teachers and investigating their perceptions of teaching practicum undertaken in a remote format as part of the first year of teaching preparation. Using inductive content analysis, the findings point to dissatisfaction with the format of the teaching practicum. The participants argued that the practicum did not provide the necessary insights or help them to prepare for the actual teaching practice. Furthermore, Shinta and Aprilia (2020) agree that online teaching practicum posed various challenges for EFL preservice teachers. These challenges were caused by teachers and students failing to adapt their preparation to the rapid transition of the instructional format. Because teachers did not have direct contact with the students, students were less satisfied with the program.

1.2 Social-Cognitive Career Theory

This study was conducted under the framework of the social-cognitive career theory (SCCT). The early concept of this theory was proposed by Bandura (1986) through social-cognitive theory (SCT), which explains the behavioral transformation of an individual and the elements that affect it. More specifically, SCT emphasizes the impacts of self-efficacy on individuals' behaviors. Bandura (1997) asserts that perceived self-efficacy directs individuals' actions and performance in completing particular tasks. In turn, perceived self-efficacy is stimulated by their prior success in particular tasks, modeling others' success, receiving verbal encouragement, and their physiological state (Bandura, 1997). Later, Lent et al. (1994) developed SCCT on the basis of SCT to serve as a framework to help explain individual behaviors relating to people's choice of career. This theory explains the behaviors of individuals in developing their career interests, formulating vocational objectives, adapting to their work environments, and achieving job satisfaction further.

The focus of SCCT is on career aspects, including career preference, career selection, and performance in career and education (Lent et al., 1994). It asserts that career development is affected by learning and working experience, heredity, and environment (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Furthermore, SCCT highlights the impacts of self-efficacy on the pursuit of an ideal career (Gushue et al., 2006; Lent et al., 1994; Ali & Menke, 2014). Brown and Lent (2019) and Klassen and Tze (2014) report that career self-efficacy influences an individual's action to perform optimally for the selected career and to adapt to the new working environment. Furthermore, Sheu et al. (2010) assert that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy, required skills, and supportive environments tend to perform their preferred jobs relatively well. Under the framework of SCCT, this study examined whether the application of emergency remote learning as the sole learning format during the global pandemic affected EFL preservice teachers' career decisions and self-efficacy (Lent et al., 1994; Brown & Lent, 2019). Also, it determined whether preservice teachers deemed external support from the institution, families, and friends necessary to pursue their future careers.

2. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative inquiry that collected narrative information from the participants. Mills et al. (2010) assert that, in a qualitative inquiry, data are analyzed collectively. To present robust results, the researcher needs to fully comprehend the collected data, and achieving this understanding involves elaborated steps of data analysis, among which reading the data, reducing the data into smaller components/codes, formulating themes from the clustering of the codes, comparing data, and describing data (Moustakas, 1994).

More specifically, this study employed a phenomenological approach. This approach focuses on how individuals experience a phenomenon at a particular time (Ashworth, 2003). It emphasizes how individuals perceive and make subjective meaning of that phenomenon. Each participant is considered unique, and the phenomenological approach could capture this uniqueness and reveal in-depth findings and conclusions (Moran, 2000). Each datum was examined thoroughly to draw and connect the common ideas between the data.

3. Participants

This study employed purposive sampling and recruited seven EFL preservice teachers majoring in the English language education study program at a private university in Indonesia as participants. All participants had experienced two years of emergency remote learning during their program due to the global pandemic. They also participated in a remote teaching practicum. During this program, they were expected to follow instructions and receive feedback from professional in-service teachers at schools to manage language classes as EFL instructors. They learned how to design lessons and conduct learning evaluations, and were assisted by professional teachers. These participants were purposefully selected based on their interest in pursuing careers in the education field as EFL teachers. Regarding their demographic information, these participants were two male and five female preservice teachers. Their ages ranged from 22 to 23 years old.

4. Instrument

Due to the design of the study, interviews were used as the sole instrument to collect data for this study. More specifically, this study employed semi-structured interviews, which allowed the researcher to improvise questions and gather more elaborate data from the participants. All interviews were conducted in an in-person format and each session took about 45 minutes. The interviews were video recorded with the participants' consent. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted in the participants' native language, Indonesian, and later translated for analysis. The questions for the interviews were constructed according to the SCCT of Bandura (1986). The questions reflect various variables that are associated with career aspects, including career preference, career selection, and performance in a career and education.

5. Data Analysis

This qualitative study employed a phenomenological approach. Data analysis might include subjectivity and bias, depending on the background and perspectives of the researcher (Trochim, 2001). To alleviate these issues, transparency of data collection, data analysis, and researchers' reflections are often included (Tong et al., 2012). The interviews served as the main and sole instruments for collecting data. In this study, each participant explained the phenomenon they experienced. For the first step, the recordings of the interviews were transcribed. The transcribed data were checked at least twice and sent to the interviewees for validation, to ensure the accuracy of the content (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Later, the transcriptions were read several times, so that the researcher became familiar with the content, which helped them to formulate codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After the transcriptions had been finalized, they were translated into English, manually and electronically, using translation engines.

The data were then collectively analyzed and coded through a two-cycle coding process (Saldana, 2015). The first cycle of coding was done manually by highlighting in the data the essential elements related to the topic. These elements were in the form of words, phrases, or even clauses. Moreover, this analysis used a deductive coding approach that made use of a coding frame or a predefined list of codes before the data coding (Miles et al., 2013). According to Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019), theories, as the frameworks of studies, can be used to develop themes that serve as guidance for the discussion of the findings. However, deductive coding also allows researchers to flexibly adapt the predefined themes and the formulated themes based on the analysis. Thus, this format of analysis can help identify essential issues, which are usually also highlighted in related studies. It can also be used to test existing theories, and to support or reject previous claims about particular issues (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). After the list of codes was made, some longer codes of clauses were simplified into phrases or words.

The second-cycle coding employed NVivo 11 to focus on the identified codes and theme formulation. The transcripts were also rechecked to avoid any possibility of missing important information or codes that should be included in the discussion. Also, during the process, some codes were eliminated due to an

absence of backing data, and new codes were created based on the manual rechecking of the transcription. Having completed the list of codes and shortened them in the second-cycle coding, the code compilation was done by correlating and compiling the codes under particular themes. All the collected themes were then categorized further to generate the categories. Each category was paired with several quotes that explicitly support the theme, as evidence. The categories in the analysis include education struggle and career choice, anxiety, and external support.

6. Findings

This study aims to explain the intertwined elements that contributed to EFL preservice teachers' career readiness under the influence of an emergency remote learning policy during the global pandemic. The study investigated their experiences during the 2020–2022 academic school year and the challenges or barriers that emerged during the time they were completing their studies at the university.

To help explain the intertwined elements, several themes were formulated from the coding, regarding the SCCT, which served as the framework of this study. Table 1 displays the themes and subthemes that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data gathered in the interviews. The explanations of the themes and sub-themes were presented and complemented by quotes from the participants.

Table 1: Coding and themes formulation from the transcript

| Topic | Categories | Themes and Coding Instruction | Transcript Samples |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| The future career readiness of pandemic survivors: A case of Indonesian EFL preservice teachers | Education Struggle and Career Choice | Behavioral changes Self-efficacy | <i>I feel like I was being lazier as I lacked the motivation to join my classes and completed the class assignments. And for my teaching competence, I think I am confident that I can teach well in class.</i> |
| | Anxiety | Career anxiety Alleviating anxiety | <i>The economic situation is very challenging, so I am aware that getting a job is becoming more difficult. I thought that I need to think positively about what is currently going on.</i> |
| | External Support | Institutional Support | <i>I expect that the university can do something about it. I think they can make a policy to instruct the instructors to allow</i> |

| | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|---|
| | | Family and friend support | <p><i>more flexibility for the submission due.</i></p> <p><i>I hope my parents do not force me to rush my study completion ... I hope I was given more time to handle my issues with the current situation.</i></p> |
|--|--|---------------------------|---|

6.1 Education Struggle and Career Choice

Completing the study during remote learning during the pandemic proved to be challenging. In addition to the restrictions on communicating with instructors or supervisors, the participants acknowledged that the challenge to complete their studies derived mostly from their motivation. One participant commented,

While the situation around us was pretty much uncertain, my motivation to finish my study was getting lower. For me the time felt like being stopped and I was unwilling to do anything for quite a long time since the global pandemic broke out and I had to study remotely. (Participant 1)

Interestingly, several participants mentioned that the communication restriction did not directly affect their study completion and graduation plans. They commented that the existence of technology facilitated communication with their supervisors.

I think the global pandemic did not really affect my plan for graduating on time. Although I was unable to do my routine as I used to do, it is good that we can use technology to ease our life. I mean, we can now communicate easily and cheaply with our mobile devices. (Participant 3)

In the interviews, the participants explained that they had their respective plans for their future careers. The policy of emergency remote learning during the global pandemic made them reconsider their plans. While the majority of the participants mentioned that there was no change of plan, and they still intended to apply for teaching positions after graduation, some participants mentioned considering alternative options, due to competition in the market for teaching jobs. One participant mentioned that, in this unprecedented situation, it would be more difficult to find schools that accepted applications for EFL teachers.

Even before the pandemic, it is not easy to find a school and apply for a teaching position. I heard it from my seniors. I am quite sure; the pandemic's effects are still there affecting my chance to get a job. (Participant 5)

One participant explained that they could harness technology to collect additional income. Thus, they expected to explore using technology as a content creator aside from pursuing a career as a teacher:

While completing my studies remotely, I found that I could create content to make use of my time at home. While I am still unable to monetize the content, I am sure that, if I do harder, one day I will reap the results of my hard work and make quality content that people can enjoy. (Participant 6)

Behavioral Changes. In the unprecedented situation, EFL preservice teachers encountered various issues and barriers that shaped their behaviors. They performed to their strengths and harnessed resilience and, along the way, improved their individual qualities, which would be necessary for their future careers. Participants mentioned how emergency remote learning changed their behaviors because it changed their routine. More specifically, they claimed that they were demotivated and tended to procrastinate, as the pressure to complete the tasks of studies through online platforms was less than that of in-person meetings:

I feel like I was being lazier as I lacked the motivation to join my classes and completed the class assignments. It was just that each class gave me an assignment and I felt overwhelmed by the assignments. (Participant 4)

In contrast, two participants mentioned that emergency remote learning contributed to better learning management, due to the flexibility of this learning format.

Being at home and spending my time with my family, I could reorganize my routine. I had no issues with depression or being lazy like others as you mentioned. (Participant 2)

Self-efficacy. Another important subtheme that correlates strongly with the SCCT is self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy relates to individuals' confidence about their competence to perform particular actions by displaying necessary behaviors. This construct also indicates individuals' capacity to build their motivation and attitudes, to get engaged in their communities. For teachers, self-efficacy is necessary to perform their tasks relating to manage their classes optimally (Barni et al., 2019; Azari Noughabi & Amirian, 2021; Ma, 2022).

One primary issue regarding self-efficacy that affected the participants' readiness for future careers concerns teaching competence. All participants explained that the emergency remote learning policy did not directly influence their teaching competence or their teaching confidence. However, all participants agreed that, initially, it was quite challenging to cope with the transition to a different learning format. They had been concerned about the microteaching class, in which they were required to conduct a teaching simulation as teachers, as they had had no preparation for this activity.

When we had our microteaching class, it was not easy as we had to do it remotely. I think what we learned previously could not be applied in my teaching simulation. However, I am still pretty confident that I taught well through my laptop screen at the time. (Participant 3)

Interestingly, despite the participants facing several unknowns during the previous two years of study, and which posed various challenges, a few participants claimed that all university courses, including the ones focusing on classroom pedagogy, could be completed with satisfactory results.

I never expected to learn through my screen. It was something new for me and at first, it made me extremely stressed ... I think I performed quite well in my class and for my teaching competence, I think I am confident that I can teach well in class. (Participant 2)

Another interesting finding is that participants expressed their positive attitudes and high self-efficacy regarding the use of technology. Despite the initial struggle to adopt remote learning, they finally found comfort in using this learning format. They also claimed that they became aware of the benefits of technology and felt encouraged to incorporate it into their future classes. One participant said,

Yes, it was not easy at first to have remote learning. Sometimes, I had several technical issues with the learning platform. However, I worked hard and found myself getting more accustomed to this technology.
(Participant 7)

As future EFL in-service teachers, the EFL preservice teachers were supposed to have continuously practiced their language skills. However, the adoption of emergency remote learning affected their language competence in various ways. For instance, the indirect interaction through the screen diminished the urge and restricted the chances to verbally interact with their colleagues and instructors. Thus, participants lacked the practice to improve their speaking skills, which subsequently lowered their efficacy regarding speaking performance.

I rarely spoke in my classes and I did not feel like talking in my classes because I was not really confident with my English. (Participant 2)

However, three participants commented that the existing restrictions did not necessarily affect their writing skills. They argued that many of the class assignments required them to practice and demonstrate proper writing skills. One participant said,

Most of the assignments from my classes were in written format. So, I write a lot and I think from the assignments, I improve my writing skills.
(Participant 4)

6.2 Anxiety

Anxiety is conceptualized as an individual feeling of unease, which includes worries or distress at various levels of effect, from mild to severe. Thus, this study explored the existence of anxiety in EFL preservice teachers, and how it affected their preparation for their future careers. Furthermore, it explained their efforts to alleviate the negative effects of anxiety.

Career anxiety. One particular reason why participants felt anxious was because of uncertainty caused by the global pandemic. The data show that, in the post-pandemic era, the participants were still anxious about the impacts of negative economic circumstances caused by the global pandemic. One participant expressed anxiety about finding a job once they graduate.

The economic situation is very challenging, so I am aware that getting a job is becoming more difficult ... hmm, I definitely have my own worry that I would be jobless for some time after graduation. (Participant 2)

In similar vein, another participant commented that finding a job was very challenging, due to the already few job vacancies for teaching positions, in addition to the competition caused by many other applicants:

People have been laid off by the company everywhere. So, I think, finding the right job is quite challenging now. Besides, we know that now many universities are offering a teacher training program, which means that the competition is becoming tougher. (Participant 1)

Participants also expressed their frustration regarding economic instability. In addition to facing competition in applying for teaching positions, the general income for novice teachers is generally quite low. Thus, the economic instability might cause insecurity, even for those who are employed. One participant said,

Even if I get a job, I hear that the salary is not so good. The problem is that I might not get the usual allowance that my parents used to give.
(Participant 7)

Alleviating anxiety. Each individual has strategies to cope with anxiety or stress (Yan & Horwitz, 2008). This study found that each participant used different strategies to alleviate their stress and anxiety regarding their future career. For instance, participant 3 thought about the positive aspects of the situation they were facing and expressed optimism for better global conditions in the near future.

I always thought about the positive sides of any problems I encountered. For the global pandemic, I thought that I need to think positively about what is currently going on. I know that, even when I was struggling with my study, God always guided me, and, I believe that things would end well. (Participant 5)

Another participant expressed ignorance about anxiety issues. They argued that it was not wise to deal with situation facing them by thinking about it – focusing on completing the study was the only way to alleviate the anxiety.

I could not stay quiet and do nothing while I was at home. Even if I felt nervous, I think I still had to work hard to finish my study. (Participant 4)

Finding an alternative career also caused concern for some participants. Creativity should be harnessed optimally to face the uncertain future. One participant specifically mentioned thinking about being a content creator to earn additional income.

6.3 External Support

Higher education institutions that offer teacher training programs are responsible for preparing quality teachers who are ready to perform duties as classroom facilitators. However, the emergency remote learning policy erected multidimensional barriers, which affect various aspects of educational practices and mental wellbeing. Thus, it was likely that extraordinary support would be necessary to help EFL preservice teachers shape their confidence and alleviate mental issues that obstructed the development of academic and non-academic competence, including the ability to perform proper behaviors in various social contexts in pursuit of future careers.

Participant 4 explained their view regarding the university's efforts to alleviate the negative impacts of the emergency remote learning policy:

It was difficult working on my class assignments which were done remotely. They often make me so stressed and overwhelmed. Thus, I expect that the university can do something about it. I think they can make a policy to instruct the instructors to allow more flexibility for the submission due. (Participant 4)

Another participant expressed their expectation regarding the institution's support, and suggested the institution should hold job fairs to help graduates connect with institutions that can employ them.

*I hope the university can help me find a job once I complete my study.
Hmm, at least, they could hold a job fair. (Participant 5)*

In the study, all participants referred to the importance of parents' support for their success. Aside from references to financial support, which indicates that all participants relied on their parents to fund their studies, and which is common in Indonesian contexts, participants explained that they also needed mental support. They explained that their relationships with their parents were essential and they acknowledged that the absence of parental support might affect their mental state. Participants expected their parents to understand the difficulties they faced in their studies, given the global instability and turn of events over the previous two years, which had affected academic progress, social relationships, emotional health, and changes in behaviors.

I want my parents to understand my situation. It was hard for me to deal with all assignments given to me. I was also depressed by the situation in which many things were restricted. (Participant 3)

Furthermore, most participants commented that their parents did not explicitly express support by asking them to consult on academic or non-academic issues. However, they believed it was sufficient that their parents did not rush them to finish their studies. One participant summarized their expectation as follows:

So, I hope my parents do not force me to rush my study completion. I am well aware that the economic situation was not really good, and my parents need to support me financially. I hope I was given more time to handle my issues with the current situation. (Participant 5)

The participants also mentioned the role played by their friends. They argued that during the pandemic, especially, their connections with their friends could affect their progress in their studies. Due to restrictions on physically socializing with their colleagues, the participants were struck by loneliness, and they felt the need to communicate with their friends to exchange stories and avoid boredom. The participants reported that they continued socializing with their friends despite the restrictions, by utilizing social media and other applications for distant communication. One participant commented,

My friends' role was important. I think communicating with my friends helps me stay healthy mentally. (Participant 6)

7. Discussion

This study collected qualitative data from graduating EFL preservice teachers about the impacts of emergency remote learning on their readiness for their future careers. The adoption of emergency remote learning during the global pandemic had a tremendous impact, which led to intense mental pressure and other personal issues in the classroom and society. However, only a few studies have investigated students' readiness for their future careers, specifically EFL preservice teachers facing physical restrictions that directly impact their psychological wellbeing.

In general, behavioral changes are reported by various studies; these changes were caused by a change in learning format and exposure to new learning experiences (Tanga et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2021). Adapting to the changes required time and effort and placed a burden on learners to learn new technology, which had the potential to cause learning demotivation. This study found that the majority of participants suffered from learning demotivation, resulting in learning time mismanagement (Alhasani et al., 2022). However, as time progressed, there were indications of changes in habits of participants, which tended to be positive – the application of remote learning forced them to adapt by improving their time management. Tanga et al. (2022) recruited students in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa to share their experiences of learning at the university during the global pandemic, and reports similar findings. The study refers to students' depression and lack of motivation to learn, due to the limitations they faced, including the underdevelopment of infrastructure that was needed to facilitate remote learning. However, the study also found that students developed their own strategies to alleviate issues during remote learning, by harnessing the existing technology to stay connected with their peers and practicing new hobbies, such as reading and exercising. They also exerted effort to upgrade their digital skills, and were supported by stakeholders and government.

Studies focusing on self-efficacy (e.g. Jeh-Awae & Wiriyakarun, 2021; Çamlıbel-Acar & Eveyik-Aydın, 2022), more particularly on language competence as one of the primary concerns in EFL teacher training programs, indicate a low level of self-efficacy of EFL preservice teachers regarding their speaking skills. During the program, class interactions were limited, which decreased the frequency of the target language use. Several studies (e.g., Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020; Choi & Chung, 2021) found that the adoption of emergency remote learning had negative impacts on students' learning performance. Interestingly, EFL preservice teachers managed to adapt and develop their writing skills through individual practices. Additionally, all participants could complete their teaching practicum remotely by following the instructions of collaborative teachers, without significant issues. This teaching condition encouraged students to use education technology more intensively and develop their digital self-efficacy. However, this study indicated EFL preservice teachers' low self-efficacy regarding conducting in-person teaching, due to the absence of teaching experience in this format.

Other interesting findings deal with external support, including institutional, family, and friend support during the global pandemic. Because EFL preservice teachers were struggling to complete their studies, they claimed that they needed institutional support. They expected the institution to provide greater flexibility on the learning policy and classroom instructional practices, in order to address technical and non-technical issues they experienced. Similarly, Turnbull et al. (2021) suggest that institutions should consider formulating strategies to facilitate meaningful learning experiences during the global pandemic. These strategies include creating a digital community that involves faculty and students who train to teach and learn with technology, and developing robust technology infrastructure to present quality educational practices. This study also reports that family support is essential. As more technical or non-technical challenges emerge, parents are expected to be financially and psychologically supportive. The results

also indicate that support by friends and social connections are essential to meet students' needs to socialize and stay connected with global updates. Ojo et al. (2021) agree that enjoying time with friends and family helped to improve individuals' endurance for coping with social and physical restrictions during the global pandemic. All in all, these findings lead to the conclusion that external factors, such as EFL preservice teachers receiving institutional support, parental support, and support by friends, are essential to students' psychological wellbeing. However, further studies on how these variables affect self-efficacy and future career readiness are necessary, to provide more in-depth insights regarding this matter.

The global pandemic changed the perspectives of global society on various aspects of life. Aside from the negative effects of the pandemic on psychological wellbeing, positive attitudes toward technology developed. More specifically, we learned about the important roles of technology in maintaining the social connection and bridging the interaction for various purposes, despite the limitations and unequal access to decent technology. We also learned how important it is to maintain psychological wellbeing, in order to achieve the predetermined objectives in our lives (Alqarni, 2021; Malkoç & Kesen Mutlu, 2019; Shifat, 2020).

8. Pedagogical Implications

The physical and social barriers that emerged due to the occurrence of the global pandemic placed tremendous burdens on EFL preservice teachers. The adoption of emergency remote learning required both instructors and students to adapt. For students who live in areas with poor internet quality, this learning format can pose considerable challenges, and they need to exert extra effort to stay connected with their lessons. As a consequence, this format might not only reduce learning effectiveness and negatively impact students' competence, but also increase the risk of students developing psychological issues, such as stress and anxiety. Universities need to pay attention to students' mental wellbeing, and institute measures to alleviate the risk of mental issues developing. In addition, social interaction is deemed necessary to maintain stable mental health. Aside from the need to interact with the instructor during lessons and the learning process, interaction with colleagues and friends could prevent mental burnout and develop cognitive skills. Hence, instructors should employ flexibility in their courses and facilitate collaborative academic discussions among students (Creed et al., 2022). Additionally, scoring benchmarks for testing should be adjusted to the prevalent circumstances.

Universities must provide resources and offer the required assistance to develop students' self-efficacy on their path to graduating and embarking on the journey to build their careers. First, universities can offer additional services for students who apply for teaching positions. Universities can offer seminars and workshops to prepare students for job interviews and write the required application documents. Second, universities can hold job fairs to connect graduates with the job markets, especially, in this case, schools. Universities can bridge the communication gap between job applicants and schools, to help both parties meet the needs of teaching applicants. Third, universities should consider building up students' entrepreneurial skills, to help graduates become more independent,

resilient, and creative. As the competition for teaching positions in schools is becoming tougher by the year, due to huge numbers of teachers graduating (Hobir & Kurniawan, 2019), graduates should be encouraged to creatively utilize their skills to create opportunities for themselves. Thus, instead of applying for teaching positions at schools, they can explore other working fields that match their competencies.

9. Research Implications

Despite the large number of studies that have been undertaken on the impacts of emergency remote learning during the global pandemic on the education field, additional studies that concern the readiness EFL preservice teachers for their future careers might present valuable contributions to this field. Career preparation involves a complex mental process (Coetzee & Beukes, 2010). Fossey et al. (2002) argue that qualitative research that investigates the experiences of participants with particular socio-cultural backgrounds is necessary, to compare previous findings and present more comprehensive insights. Thus, it is deemed necessary that future studies center on the experiences of preservice teachers in relation to family interventions and economic background as it relates to diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. More specifically, findings from research conducted in countries in Asia, America, Australia, Africa, or Europe might present different results and conclusions. Also, considering the unequal composition of genders of participants in the current study, future studies might need to include gender comparison as an additional variable.

EFL preservice teachers experienced anxiety and depression during emergency remote learning, due to an unstable global economic situation (Buheji et al., 2020; Mofijur et al., 2021; Berawi, 2020). In this regard, this study revealed that external variables, such as institutions, parents, and friends, contributed to positive self-belief, hope, and self-efficacy. However, this study did not specifically or extensively address how these variables affected self-belief, hope, and self-efficacy. Thus, future studies could investigate this issue and provide more in-depth findings that reveal the relationship between external factors and individuals' success in building positive self-belief, hope, and self-efficacy.

10. Limitations

This study presented valuable insights into the voices of graduating EFL preservice teachers regarding the impacts of emergency remote learning during the global pandemic on their readiness for and concerns about their future careers. However, aside from the contributions of the study, it also has several limitations, which stemmed from the method of the study. First, the participants were all Indonesian, attended a private higher education institution, and possessed relatively similar socio-cultural backgrounds. Thus, the participants might hold different life values than preservice teachers from other Asian countries or even Western nations. The small number of participants involved in the study restricts generalization of the findings. Secondly, the study topic restricted its coverage to the relationship of the participants with the education institution. A broader approach might reveal the impacts of other variables, such as the effect of relationships with families and friends on self-efficacy and the readiness of the participants, though no in-depth investigation was directed at these variables.

Investigating these variables might present insightful findings in this area. Moreover, because this study used semi-structured interviews within a limited time allocation, the data might not reveal the necessary details to confirm whether the pandemic and the remote learning policy were the only variables affecting the issues addressed in this study. The findings are possibly affected by the researcher's bias or common conceptions. Since this study was conducted by a single researcher, the analysis process, including the formulation and interpretation of the theme, was influenced by the researcher's perceptions and beliefs. All in all, future studies that are conducted should address the aforementioned limitations, to present more robust findings.

11. Conclusions

The outbreak of the global pandemic forced EFL preservice teachers into different learning experiences. The current study explains how these experiences built their self-efficacy and readiness for their future careers. The findings imply that emergency remote learning during the global pandemic affected the participants' readiness for their upcoming careers as EFL teachers. Although the majority of the participants claimed that they were ready to enter the work field as teachers, there were some indications of anxiety and low self-efficacy among them. Language competencies were both positively and negatively influenced, as participants reported that they lacked oral language practice while gaining more opportunities to improve their writing skills. Also, due to having teaching practicum remotely, the participants complained that they did not perform the required tasks to teach the assigned classes optimally.

This paper adds to the literature on career readiness among EFL preservice teachers, which is essential as an evaluation for the teacher training program, and to identify the strength and benefits of the current policy. Also, the findings can be a reference for the improvement of the program to prepare quality and competent EFL teachers who can adapt to any teaching environment. Considering the rapid advancement of technology, the adoption of remote learning is likely to continue on an even bigger scale. Thus, this study can be a reference for improving the quality of remote learning, especially within the scope of a teacher training program. All in all, the study implies that higher education institutions need to formulate strategies to alleviate the negative effects of a remote learning policy on EFL preservice teachers' mental states, and to support their career preparation.

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13. Interview Questions

1. What are the effects of the global pandemic on your readiness for your future career?
2. To what extent does the global pandemic affect your plan for your future career?
3. What are any personal changes or behaviors that you experience due to the global pandemic?
4. Do you feel any form of anxiety due to the global pandemic? Can you give me an example of any form of anxiety or insecurity that you feel upon your graduation?
5. What have you done to alleviate the negative effects of your anxiety or insecurity due to the global pandemic?
6. What are the effects of the global pandemic on the development of your language skills during your teacher preparation program?
7. What are the effects of the global pandemic on your confidence in your language skills?
8. What are the effects of the global pandemic on the development of your teaching competence during your teacher preparation program?

9. What are the effects of the global pandemic on your confidence in your competence as EFL preservice teacher?
10. What benefits do you think you obtain as you complete your program during the global pandemic?
11. What do you think you miss in your program as you work to complete it during the global pandemic?
12. What are the challenges during your program completion during the global pandemic?
13. As a survivor of the global pandemic, what have you learned that you think is beneficial for your future career as a teacher?
14. What do you think you could have done better to complete your program during the global pandemic?
15. What do you think the institution could have done better to support you in completing your program?
16. What kind of support do you expect from your institution to mitigate the negative mental effects of the global pandemic on your career readiness?
17. Whom do you think you can expect to get support from during your program completion? And what kind of support do you need from them?