

## Exploring EFL Teachers' Motivations for Engaging in Reflective Practice: A Case Study from Papua

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**Abstract:** Reflective practice is widely regarded as an important dimension of teacher professional development, yet less is known about why EFL teachers engage in reflection, particularly in multilingual and geographically remote contexts such as Papua, Indonesia. This study examines the motivational orientations associated with EFL teachers' engagement in reflective practice. It considers how these orientations are shaped within the institutional, geographical, sociocultural, and multilingual conditions of their professional work. Using a qualitative interpretive case study design, the study involved five EFL teachers. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and relevant institutional and reflective documents. The data were analyzed inductively and interpreted through the lens of Self-Determination Theory. The analysis identified four motivational orientations: institutional accountability, professional self-improvement, responsiveness to students' learning needs, and relational and affective engagement with students. Institutional accountability was associated with supervisory and accreditation requirements, whereas the other orientations reflected teachers' personally valued professional and pedagogical concerns. The findings suggest that teachers' engagement in reflective practice cannot be reduced to either external compliance or intrinsic motivation. Rather, different motivational orientations may coexist as teachers navigate institutional expectations while attending to professional improvement, students' learning, and classroom relationships. In the Papuan context, these orientations are situated within geographical remoteness, sociocultural diversity, and multilingual classroom realities. The study contributes to research on teacher motivation and reflective practice by showing how institutional and personally valued purposes can operate concurrently in teachers' everyday professional work.

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**Keywords:** *reflective practice; teacher motivation; Papuan EFL teachers*

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## INTRODUCTION

The paradigm shift in education requires teachers to move beyond the role of mere knowledge transmitters and become *reflective practitioners* who can critically evaluate, adapt, and improve their teaching practices in response to local contexts. Within the educational landscape of Papua, this demand for transformation is confronted by a complex set of challenges, including limited learning resources, restricted access to professional development, and geographically remote conditions. Educational conditions in Indonesia's *frontier, outermost, and underdeveloped regions (Daerah 3T)* continue to present particular challenges for teachers' professional work. Papua illustrates these conditions through persistent inequalities in teacher distribution, limited educational facilities, and restricted opportunities for sustained professional support (UNESCO, 2021). Geographical isolation also affects how teachers translate nationally prescribed curricula into locally meaningful classroom practices. Government data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2020–2022) similarly point to the difficulties faced by teachers who must work within national curricular expectations while responding to the practical constraints of geographically isolated communities.

Moreover, the Bank (2020) identifies substantial inequalities in student learning outcomes across Indonesia, with students living in remote and disadvantaged areas consistently facing greater learning challenges. The report also emphasizes the importance of well-trained and motivated teachers and sustained professional support for improving student learning. Against this backdrop, reflective practice may provide an important means for teachers to evaluate their instructional practices, respond to students' needs, and adapt their teaching to local educational realities. Previous studies have shown that reflective practice can help teachers reconsider their teaching in response to students' needs and improve their professional awareness and instructional strategies (Wahyuni, 2020; Watulingas & Cendana, 2020). However, teachers' engagement in reflective practice may be constrained by limited time, the absence of structured approaches, administrative workload, and insufficient institutional or professional support (Aam et al., 2025; Sinaga et al., 2025). Teachers' reasons for engaging in reflection may nevertheless differ across professional circumstances. For some, reflection may be connected to personally valued concerns, including professional commitment and efforts toward self-improvement. For others, institutional expectations, formal professional requirements, or community

demands may provide an important impetus for reflective engagement. These different sources of motivation become particularly relevant in educational contexts where access to professional opportunities and resources is uneven, making it necessary to examine what encourages teachers to initiate and sustain reflective practice.

These broader educational challenges are further compounded in Papua by structural and material constraints. In this study, structural challenges refer to constraints within the educational and professional system, including limited teacher capacity, uneven access to professional development, restricted professional support and supervision, and geographical barriers that make regular institutional support more difficult, particularly in remote areas. Material constraints also affect the conditions under which teachers carry out their professional work, including limited learning resources, infrastructure, technology, and access to professional support. Qualitative studies of remote and underserved educational settings similarly report challenges related to teacher competence, professional development, learning materials, technology, and institutional collaboration (Harini et al., 2021; Robertson et al., 2018). Evidence also suggests that sustained collaborative professional development and professional learning communities can strengthen teachers' pedagogical knowledge and self-efficacy (Sugandhi et al., 2025). These conditions may limit teachers' opportunities to engage in formally supported professional learning and collaborative reflection, particularly where access to sustained professional support is uneven. Under such conditions, teachers' own professional orientations and motivations may assume a more central role in sustaining reflective engagement.

Beyond structural and material constraints, EFL teachers in Papua also work in classrooms marked by substantial linguistic and cultural diversity. Students may draw on multiple local languages alongside Indonesian and English, requiring teachers to consider diverse linguistic repertoires and locally embedded communicative practices when planning, conducting, and reviewing their teaching. Studies in Papua have documented ethnolinguistic diversity and the use of locally relevant cultural resources, such as Papuan folktales and proverbs, to connect students' linguistic and cultural realities with English literacy instruction (Ningsih et al., 2025). Research on teacher professional development in Papua has likewise identified cultural and linguistic issues as part of the challenges addressed through collaborative inquiry and ongoing professional support (Robertson et al., 2018).

These classroom conditions can complicate pedagogical decision-making because instructional choices must account for how students communicate, understand, and participate across diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Reflection, therefore, may involve more than evaluating the technical effectiveness of particular teaching strategies. Teachers may also need to interpret classroom interactions, reconsider pedagogical decisions, and respond to the linguistic and cultural diversity that shapes students' learning experiences. Evidence from broader Indonesian contexts further highlights the importance

of intercultural, sociolinguistic, socio-humanistic, and pedagogical competences for adapting English language teaching to culturally specific settings (Anas et al., 2025). Within these conditions, reflective practice becomes closely connected to how teachers make sense of their everyday teaching in relation to the particular sociolinguistic and educational environment in which they work. Taken together, these structural, material, linguistic, and cultural conditions provide an important contextual basis for examining why teachers engage in reflective practice and how different motivational factors sustain that engagement.

Against this contextual background, recent studies have demonstrated that reflective practice can contribute to teachers' professional development, professional identity, agency, and pedagogical adaptation. Reflection has been associated with teachers' efforts to examine their professional identities and tensions (Yazan, 2022), student engagement through reflective pedagogical practices (Sadigzade, 2025), and the development of context-sensitive teaching practices in Indonesian EFL settings (Rozimela et al., 2025). Systematic and theoretical reviews have likewise highlighted reflection as an important resource for professional learning and the improvement of teaching practice (A. Farrell, 2022; Wang & Xu, 2020). Recent research in Papua has also begun to document how EFL teachers enact reflective practice through classroom reflection, reflective writing, and dialogic reflection (Sahib & Aulia, 2025). Collectively, these studies establish the value, forms, and potential outcomes of reflective practice. However, they provide less insight into why teachers are motivated to engage in reflection and what sustains that engagement over time.

This gap becomes particularly significant in the Papuan context because teachers' engagement in reflective practice is situated within distinctive professional and educational conditions. EFL teachers in Papua work in settings characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity, geographical distance, and uneven access to educational and professional resources (Ningsih et al., 2025; Robertson et al., 2018). Studies in Papua have documented challenges related to cultural and linguistic diversity, professional development, learning resources, and the adaptation of English language teaching to local educational realities (Ningsih et al., 2025; Robertson et al., 2018). Broader research in Indonesia also highlights the importance of intercultural, sociolinguistic, socio-humanistic, and pedagogical competences for teaching English in culturally specific contexts (Anas et al., 2025). Within these conditions, teachers may need to consider curriculum requirements, students' diverse linguistic repertoires, local cultural expectations, and available professional and material resources when making pedagogical decisions. These circumstances provide important context for examining teachers' engagement in reflection, including reflection on improving their teaching, responding to students' learning needs, and adapting instruction to local realities. Papua, therefore, offers a context for examining how different motivational

orientations are experienced alongside the linguistic, geographical, sociocultural, and institutional conditions of teachers' professional work.

To account for these different motivational orientations, this study draws on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci; E. L., 2000). SDT provides a useful framework for distinguishing motivation according to the source and degree of self-determination underlying an individual's engagement in an activity. Within this framework, intrinsic motivation refers to engagement driven by inherent interest or satisfaction in the activity itself. In contrast, extrinsic motivation encompasses engagement oriented toward outcomes or demands external to the activity. SDT further recognizes qualitatively different forms of extrinsic regulation, including more autonomous forms such as identified regulation, in which individuals recognize and value the importance of an activity, and more controlled forms associated with external pressure or internalized social demands (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci; E. L., 2000). This framework is particularly relevant to the present study because reflective practice may simultaneously be experienced as a personally meaningful professional activity and as a response to institutional or social expectations. Although the empirical focus of this study is on intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, SDT provides a broader conceptual basis for interpreting the quality and source of those motivations. Applying SDT, therefore, enables the study to move beyond asking whether teachers reflect to examining what motivates them to do so and how different motivational orientations are manifested within their professional context.

Building on this contextual and theoretical gap, the present study examines the motivational factors underlying EFL teachers' engagement in reflective practice in Papua. Although previous research has established the forms and potential benefits of reflective practice, less is known about the motivational factors that sustain teachers' engagement, particularly in multilingual and geographically remote educational contexts. The study, therefore, explores how institutional expectations and personally valued professional concerns relate to teachers' engagement in reflection within Papua's sociocultural, linguistic, geographical, and professional conditions. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research question: What motivational factors influence EFL teachers' engagement in reflective practice in Papua?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Reflective Practice**

Reflective practice refers to teachers' systematic examination of their teaching experiences to develop insights and improve pedagogical practice (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983). In EFL education, reflection extends beyond technical evaluation to include professional learning, teacher agency, and responsiveness to students and their sociocultural contexts (T. S. C. Farrell, 2016, 2022; Mann & Walsh, 2017). Reflection may occur individually through journaling and self-observation, dialogically through peer or

collegial interaction, or collaboratively through professional learning activities (T. S. C. Farrell, 2019; Mann & Walsh, 2017). In Papua, Sahib & Aulia (2025) similarly identified reflective teaching activities, reflective writing, and dialogical reflection, suggesting that teachers' reflection may operate across individual, social, and institutional dimensions.

### **Teacher Motivations**

Teacher motivation concerns the reasons that initiate and sustain engagement in professional activities. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) conceptualizes motivation in terms of the degree of self-endorsement rather than as a simple intrinsic-extrinsic dichotomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Motivation may range from externally regulated engagement driven by institutional requirements to more autonomous forms in which teachers perceive an activity as personally meaningful and consistent with their professional values (Deci & Ryan, 2012, 2017). Applied to reflective practice, this perspective allows examination of how institutional accountability may coexist with personally valued reasons such as professional improvement and responsiveness to students' needs. Thus, teachers may engage in reflection for multiple reasons, with differing degrees of external regulation and personal endorsement.

### **Social and Professional Context in Education**

Teachers' reflective practice is also situated within structural, sociocultural, material, and geographical conditions that shape their professional opportunities and constraints (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2020). In Papua, these conditions include linguistic and cultural diversity, geographical remoteness, and uneven access to educational and professional resources (Ningsih et al., 2025; Robertson et al., 2018). Such conditions may shape the circumstances in which teachers respond to institutional expectations, students' needs, and professional development opportunities. The socio-professional context is therefore treated in this study not as a direct determinant of motivation but as the context within which different motivational orientations toward reflective practice are experienced.

The relationship between context and teacher motivation is not linear or deterministic. Rather, institutional, sociocultural, material, and geographical conditions shape the circumstances in which different motivational orientations may emerge. Institutional requirements may encourage reflection through externally regulated forms of engagement. At the same time, supportive professional relationships, opportunities for development, and teachers' efforts to address students' needs may provide conditions in which reflection becomes more personally meaningful and self-endorsed. The socio-professional context of teaching is therefore relevant to reflective practice because it provides both the constraints and the opportunities through which teachers' motivations are developed, negotiated, and sustained.



**Fig. 1.** Conceptual Framework

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a qualitative interpretive case study design, considered appropriate for exploring the complex, context-dependent nature of EFL teachers' motivations to engage in reflective practice. According to Yin (2018), a case study is particularly suitable for investigating contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Likewise, Tisdell et al. (2025) argue that qualitative case studies are effective for generating an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perspectives, and meaning-making processes within a bounded system. Given that teachers' reflective practices are closely intertwined with the sociocultural, institutional, and geographical realities of Papua, a qualitative interpretive case study provided an appropriate methodological framework for examining how teachers construct and sustain reflective engagement in their professional lives.

The case study approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors driving EFL teachers to engage in reflective practice as part of their professional development. By situating the inquiry within authentic classroom and institutional contexts, the study captured the meanings teachers attached to reflection and the ways they negotiated its role in their everyday teaching practices. Furthermore, the qualitative interpretive orientation enabled the researcher to access participants' lived experiences, professional perspectives, and reflective narratives, thereby providing rich insights into why reflective practice is maintained, adapted, or constrained in geographically remote and socioculturally diverse educational settings such as Papua.

## Participants and Setting

The study involved five EFL teachers working at different educational levels in Jayapura, Papua Province. One participant taught at the elementary level (SD/MI), one at the junior secondary level (SMP/MTs), and three at the upper secondary level (SMA/MA/SMK). The participants were drawn from MI Yaa Bunayya, MTs Yaa Bunayya, MAPN Koya Barat, and SMAN 1 Jayapura. These schools represent different educational settings and enabled the study to examine teachers' experiences of reflective practice across several stages of English language education.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The selection focused on teachers who could provide relevant accounts of their engagement in reflective practice and the reasons associated with that engagement. Three criteria guided participant selection: (1) participants were actively teaching English at the time of the study; (2) they had at least three years of teaching experience; and (3) they had previous experience with reflective activities, including lesson evaluation, reflective journaling, self-assessment, or discussions with colleagues about teaching. These criteria ensured that the participants had direct and sustained experience of classroom practice and were familiar with activities through which they examined or reconsidered their teaching.

Participants' demographic profiles, including age, gender, teaching experience, educational background, and school level, are presented in Table 1. The inclusion of teachers from different educational levels and professional backgrounds was intended to provide variation in the experiences represented in the dataset. Rather than treating this variation as a basis for comparison across school levels, the study used it to capture a range of professional circumstances within which EFL teachers in Jayapura engaged in and articulated their experiences of reflective practice.

**Table 1.**  
Demographic Profiles of EFL Teacher Participants

| Teacher | Age | Gender | Teaching Experience (Years) | Education        | School Level |
|---------|-----|--------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| NAY     | 25  | Female | 3                           | Bachelor (S.Pd.) | MI           |
| DN      | 27  | Female | 3                           | Bachelor (S.Pd.) | MTs          |
| HN      | 30  | Female | 6                           | Bachelor (S.Pd.) | SMA/MA       |
| YWP     | 25  | Male   | 5                           | Bachelor (S.Pd.) | SMA/MA       |
| MY      | 50  | Male   | 20                          | Bachelor (S.Pd.) | SMK          |

## Data Collection

Three complementary methods were employed to generate rich and triangulated data: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all five participants and served as the primary data source. Each interview lasted approximately 20–40 minutes, with the duration varying

according to the amount and depth of information provided by each participant. The interviews explored teachers' experiences of reflective practice and the reasons they associated with their engagement in reflection. Classroom observations were subsequently conducted to examine how reflective practices were enacted *in situ* and to complement participants' accounts with observations of their pedagogical activities. Document analysis provided a further source of contextual and practice-based evidence. In total, seven documents were examined, comprising five lesson plans and two reflective journals. These materials were used to identify how reflective activities were documented and represented within teachers' professional practice. The three sources were considered together during the analysis to develop complementary perspectives on teachers' reflective engagement. Interview accounts provided access to teachers' articulated reasons and experiences, observations offered evidence of classroom and professional practices, and documents provided additional information about how reflection was recorded in their work. Bringing these sources into dialogue enabled the analysis to cross-reference emerging interpretations and strengthened the credibility of the findings through methodological triangulation.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) to identify and interpret patterns of meaning related to EFL teachers' motivations for engaging in reflective practice (Braun & Clarke, 2021, 2022). The analysis combined inductive thematic development with theory-informed interpretation. The initial stage remained open to patterns emerging from the interviews, observations, and documents, allowing the analysis to identify the reasons, concerns, and conditions associated with teachers' engagement in reflective practice. Through this process, recurring patterns were identified regarding institutional accountability, professional self-improvement, responsiveness to students' learning needs, and relational and affective engagement with students. These patterns were subsequently interpreted through the conceptual lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Rather than treating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as fixed categories, the interpretation considered differences in the extent to which teachers' engagement in reflection was associated with external regulation, personally valued purposes, and more self-endorsed forms of professional engagement. This approach made it possible to retain motivations emerging from the participants' accounts while examining how they related to broader processes of regulation and internalization within teachers' reflective practice.

The analysis proceeded through the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis: (1) familiarizing with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) constructing initial themes, (4) reviewing and developing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the analytical account (Braun & Clarke, 2021, 2022). Interview transcripts, classroom

observation records, and relevant documents were repeatedly read to become familiar with the dataset. The materials were then coded to capture recurring meanings, reasons, concerns, and conditions associated with teachers' engagement in reflective practice. Initial codes were generated from the data and compared across interviews, observations, and documents to identify converging or complementary patterns. Codes that reflected related aspects of teachers' reflective engagement were subsequently grouped into broader candidate themes. These themes were reviewed against the coded extracts and the dataset as a whole to assess their coherence, internal consistency, and relevance to the research question. The resulting themes were then interpreted through Self-Determination Theory to examine differences in the extent to which teachers' engagement in reflection was associated with institutional expectations, personally valued purposes, and more self-endorsed forms of professional engagement. The final themes were then defined and interpreted in relation to the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation while also considering the contextual conditions in which teachers' reflective engagement occurred. The integration of interviews, observations, and documents enabled comparison across data sources and strengthened the credibility and contextual depth of the interpretation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

#### ***EFL Teachers' Motivational Orientations in Reflective Practice***

Reflective practice among EFL teachers in Papua was associated with both institutional requirements and personally valued concerns related to professional improvement and students' learning. Interview data showed that teachers engaged in reflection for different reasons, including maintaining required documentation, improving teaching, and responding to students' learning needs. The findings are presented first through the extrinsic motivational orientation of institutional accountability, followed by three autonomous motivational orientations: professional self-improvement, responsiveness to students' learning needs, and relational and affective engagement with students.

#### ***Extrinsic Motivational Orientation***

##### **Institutional Accountability**

The interview data showed that reflective documentation was associated with institutional accountability, particularly supervisory oversight and school accreditation requirements. HN described the teaching journal as "one of the teachers' administrative documents that will be requested by the supervisor." At the same time, NAY explained that completing the journal was "an obligation for all teachers" because it was required for the school accreditation report and "must be completed accurately."

**Table 2.**

Extrinsic Motivational Orientation in EFL Teachers' Engagement in Reflective Practice

| No. | Motivational Theme           | Data Excerpt (Interview)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Social/Professional Context                                                                                   | Motivation Indicator                                                          |
|-----|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Institutional Accountability | <p><b>HN:</b> "The journal is one of the teachers' administrative documents that will be requested by the supervisor."</p> <p><b>NAY:</b> "It is an obligation for all teachers, not only English teachers, because it is required for the school accreditation report. The journal has a very significant role in the accreditation process, so it must be completed accurately."</p> | Institutional accountability mechanisms involving supervisory oversight and school accreditation requirements | Compliance with externally imposed supervisory and accreditation requirements |

These accounts indicate that teachers' reflective documentation was maintained partly in response to formal institutional expectations. HN linked the journal to supervisory oversight, whereas NAY associated it with accreditation requirements. Thus, the data identified two related forms of institutional accountability: supervisory accountability and accreditation-related accountability.



**Fig. 2.** Supervisory review of an EFL teacher's lesson plan in a formal professional setting

The observational data provided contextual evidence of supervisory oversight. During the observation, a supervisor was seen reviewing an EFL teacher's lesson plan in a formal professional interaction (Figure 2). Although the document reviewed was a lesson plan rather than a reflective journal, the observation showed that teachers' instructional documentation was subject to actual supervisory examination. Together with the interview accounts, this evidence indicates that institutional requirements formed one basis for teachers' engagement with reflective documentation.

### ***Autonomous Motivational Orientations***

The findings indicate that EFL teachers' engagement in reflective practice was associated not only with institutional expectations but also with professional and pedagogical concerns that teachers regarded as meaningful. Three autonomous motivational orientations emerged from the interview data: professional self-improvement, responsiveness to students' learning needs, and relational and affective engagement with students.

**Table 3.**

Autonomous Motivational Orientation in EFL Teachers' Engagement in Reflective Practice: Professional Self-Improvement

| No. | Motivational Theme            | Data Excerpt (Interview)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Social/Professional Context                                                              | Motivation Indicator                                              |
|-----|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Professional Self-Improvement | <p><b>HN:</b> "This is intended as a reference for improving our teaching as teachers. From the different responses, we can assess our strengths and weaknesses in delivering the material to students."</p> <p><b>YWP:</b> "It is clearly a form of self-reflection because, after all, teachers need feedback. It is so that there is development and so that the way we teach does not remain static."</p> | Continuous professional development and the use of feedback to improve teaching practice | Commitment to continuous professional and pedagogical improvement |

The interview data indicate that teachers engaged in reflection to examine and improve their teaching. HN described reflection as a "reference for improving our teaching" and as a means to assess teachers' "strengths and weaknesses," while YWP emphasized the need for feedback to support continued development. Across these accounts, professional self-improvement emerged as a motivational orientation associated with examining current practice, identifying areas for improvement, and developing teaching through feedback.

**Table 4.**

Autonomous Motivational Orientation in EFL Teachers' Engagement in Reflective Practice: Responsiveness to Students' Learning Needs

| No. | Motivational Theme                         | Data Excerpt (Interview)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Social/Professional Context                                                                  | Motivation Indicator                                                   |
|-----|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Responsiveness to Students' Learning Needs | <p><b>HN:</b> "To monitor students' focus when delivering the material."</p> <p><b>MY:</b> "To ensure that the students understand the material being taught."</p> <p><b>YWP:</b> "Making the students understand what is being taught... what kind of approach can be given to the students so that they do not fall asleep... because the learning objectives have to be achieved."</p> | Responsiveness to students' comprehension, attention, engagement, and diverse learning needs | Commitment to understanding and responding to students' learning needs |

The interview data further show that teachers reflected on whether students were able to follow and benefit from instruction. HN focused on students' attention, MY on their understanding, and YWP on selecting approaches that could maintain engagement and support learning objectives. Across the accounts, responsiveness to students' learning needs emerged as an orientation in which students' comprehension, attention, and engagement informed teachers' evaluation and adjustment of instruction.

**Table 5.**

Autonomous Motivational Orientation in EFL Teachers' Engagement in Reflective Practice: Relational and Affective Engagement with Students

| No. | Motivational Theme                                | Data Excerpt (Interview)                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Social/Professional Context                                                                   | Motivation Indicator                                                               |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Relational and Affective Engagement with Students | <p><b>MY:</b> "The reason is to find out the students' opinions and feelings about the material being taught and about the teacher."</p> <p><b>NAY:</b> "They are happy... sometimes they ask, 'Miss, when are you coming to our class?'"</p> | Teacher-student relationships and attention to students' emotional and relational experiences | Concern for students' perspectives, feelings, and positive classroom relationships |

The interview data also show teachers' attention to students' perspectives and affective experiences. MY described reflection in terms of understanding students' "opinions and feelings" about the material and the teacher, while NAY recalled students' positive responses to her presence in the classroom. These accounts indicate that students' perspectives, feelings, and relational responses were part of the classroom experiences that teachers attended to in their reflective practice. The data do not, however, establish that students' positive responses directly prompted reflection.

Across the three autonomous motivational orientations, the findings show that teachers' reflective engagement was associated with improvements in their teaching, responses to students' learning needs, and attention to students' perspectives and affective experiences. These patterns represent distinct empirical orientations in the participants' accounts and provide the basis for their further interpretation through SDT in the Discussion.

## **Discussions**

The findings suggest that teachers' engagement in reflective practice was organized around different but related professional purposes. Institutional accountability provided an externally oriented basis for maintaining reflective documentation. At the same time, teachers also described reflection as meaningful for improving their teaching, responding to students' learning needs, and attending to students' perspectives and classroom experiences. Rather than indicating a single source of motivation, the findings point to a multidimensional motivational configuration in which institutional requirements and personally valued professional and pedagogical purposes operated within the same reflective practice. This configuration provides a basis for interpreting teachers' engagement through Self-Determination Theory, particularly in terms of the different forms of regulation through which professional activities may be experienced and enacted.

From an SDT perspective, the findings are better understood in terms of different forms of motivational regulation than in terms of a simple extrinsic–intrinsic distinction. Institutional accountability reflects a more externally regulated orientation because teachers associated reflective documentation with supervisory and accreditation requirements. The other orientations, however, should not automatically be classified as intrinsic motivation. Teachers' accounts of professional improvement, responsiveness to students, and attention to students' experiences indicate that reflection was valued in relation to personally meaningful professional and pedagogical purposes. These orientations are therefore more appropriately interpreted as autonomous forms of motivation. However, the present data do not allow us to determine the degree of internalization or reliably distinguish among identified, integrated, and intrinsic regulation. This interpretation is important because it shifts the analytical focus from whether motivation is "extrinsic" or "intrinsic" to how teachers relate to the reasons for engaging in

reflection. The findings also do not indicate a developmental movement from controlled to autonomous motivation, since the study did not examine motivational change over time. Instead, different forms of regulation may operate concurrently within teachers' reflective practice.

The Papuan context further helps explain why these motivational orientations need to be interpreted in relation to teachers' professional environment. The participating teachers worked within conditions characterized by geographical distance, uneven access to educational resources, multilingual classrooms, and diverse sociocultural contexts. Such conditions do not determine teachers' motivation, but they shape the professional circumstances in which reflective activities are undertaken and given meaning. In this setting, reflection may function simultaneously as an institutional responsibility and as a means of addressing locally situated pedagogical concerns. This contextual dimension extends research on reflective practice by showing that teachers' reasons for reflection are embedded not only in individual motivational orientations but also in the professional conditions through which those orientations are enacted.

The findings both confirm and extend recent research on teacher motivation, reflective practice, and professional development. Recent studies have shown that teachers' engagement in professional development is shaped not only by individual motivation but also by the institutional conditions in which professional learning takes place. For example, Lyu (2025), drawing on Self-Determination Theory, found that a supportive school culture characterized by collaborative practices, learning-centered leadership, innovation, and resource support created conditions that facilitated teachers' autonomous motivation for professional development. Similarly, Ding et al. (2025) showed that teachers participating in formally required professional development could experience multiple motivational orientations simultaneously, with externally imposed requirements coexisting with personally meaningful professional benefits.

These studies support the present finding that institutional requirements do not necessarily operate independently of teachers' personally valued professional purposes. At the same time, the present study extends this literature by showing that such motivational plurality is evident specifically in teachers' engagement in reflective practice, where institutional accountability coexists with orientations toward professional self-improvement, responsiveness to students' learning needs, and relational engagement. This interpretation is also consistent with recent research on reflective practice among Indonesian EFL teachers, which demonstrates that reflection can be embedded within professional development and involve different forms of individual, dialogic, and contextual engagement (Rochsantiningsih et al., 2025; Rozimela et al., 2025). Rather than treating reflection as either an externally imposed activity or an intrinsically rewarding professional practice, the present findings suggest that teachers may attach different meanings to the same reflective activity depending on the professional purposes they associate with it. In

this respect, the study extends existing research by locating motivational plurality within the everyday practice of reflection and by showing how institutional and personally valued purposes can operate concurrently in a geographically and socioculturally distinctive EFL context.

The findings also contribute to debates concerning the institutionalization of reflective practice. (Effendi & Triastuti, 2022) caution that reflection may become problematic when reduced to a bureaucratic requirement rather than experienced as meaningful professional activity. The present findings partly confirm this concern because institutional accountability was clearly evident in teachers' accounts of supervisory and accreditation requirements. However, they also qualify a purely bureaucratic interpretation: teachers described reflection in relation to professional improvement, students' learning, classroom relationships, and institutional obligations. The significance of institutional requirements, therefore, appears to depend not only on their regulatory function but also on the professional meanings teachers attach to reflective activity. This finding suggests that institutional structures may provide the conditions for reflective engagement without fully determining its meaning or motivational orientation.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that EFL teachers' engagement in reflective practice in Papua is shaped by a multidimensional motivational configuration in which institutional accountability coexists with personally valued professional and pedagogical purposes—rather than reflecting a simple movement from external to intrinsic motivation, reflective engagement involved different reasons that operated concurrently within teachers' everyday professional practice. The main contribution of the study is to show that the meaning of reflective practice depends not only on institutional requirements but also on the professional purposes teachers associate with reflection, including improving their teaching and responding to students' learning and classroom experiences. In the Papuan context, these motivational orientations were situated within particular geographical, sociocultural, and multilingual conditions, highlighting reflective practice as a contextually situated dimension of teachers' professional work.

The findings suggest that reflective practice may be more meaningful when institutional expectations are connected to teachers' professional and pedagogical concerns. Rather than treating reflection primarily as administrative documentation, educational institutions may consider providing opportunities for teachers to examine their teaching and students' learning within existing professional structures. Such opportunities may include guided reflection, collegial feedback, or peer learning where these forms of support are feasible within the local context. The implication is not to remove institutional accountability, but to ensure that formal reflective requirements can accommodate teachers' professional purposes.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. The study involved five EFL teachers within a particular institutional and geographical context; therefore, the findings provide contextualized insight rather than statistical generalization and should not be assumed to represent the diversity of educational settings across Papua. Although classroom observations and document analysis complemented interviews, the study examined teachers' motivational orientations within a specific setting and cannot capture their full variation across contexts. The cross-sectional design also does not permit conclusions about changes in motivational orientations over time. Future research could involve larger and more diverse groups of teachers, examine reflective engagement longitudinally, and compare urban, rural, and remote contexts. Further studies could also incorporate perspectives from supervisors, school leaders, and other institutional actors to examine how professional expectations and institutional conditions relate to teachers' engagement in reflective practice.

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#### **DECLARATIVE OF AI USE**

During manuscript preparation and revision, the authors used Gemini AI for English-language editing, grammatical refinement, and to improve clarity and coherence in selected sections. Gemini AI was not used to generate or analyze research data, determine findings, or develop interpretations and conclusions. All AI-assisted text was critically reviewed and revised by the authors, who remain responsible for the manuscript's accuracy, originality, and integrity.

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