



# Teachers' Perception of Identity: A Case Study of Singhania Public School

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## **Abstract:**

This qualitative case study investigates how teachers at Singhania Public School perceive their identity, focusing on the interplay of personal, professional, and social aspects as they progress in their teaching careers. The research involved 20 educators and utilized semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and self-appraisal forms for data collection. Results reveal a predominance of professional identity over personal and social identities. Novice teachers displayed transitional perceptions regarding their identities; mid-career teachers showed signs of solidification; while senior educators demonstrated well-defined and confident professional identities. The study offers actionable insights for teacher development and educational leadership that emphasize a comprehensive understanding of teacher identity without dependence on statistical analysis.

**Keywords:** Teacher Identity, Professional Development, Case Study, Qualitative Research, Teacher Experience

## **Introduction:**

Identity encompasses an individual's self-concept shaped by various experiences, values, beliefs, and memories. For educators, this sense of identity closely relates to their professional roles alongside social responsibilities and personal values—factors that significantly impact classroom techniques, motivation levels, and student involvement (Beijaard et al., 2004). Although prior studies have highlighted the formation of identity during the early stages of a career, there exists limited insight into how these identities transform within a singular institutional framework. This research aims to fill that gap through qualitative methods.

## Literature Review:

Teacher identity is fluidly constructed through interactions with others, ongoing professional growth, and contextual factors within institutions:

Bolivar et al. (2014) found that Spanish teachers faced challenges to their professional identities due to relational dynamics in schools.

Sadovnikova et al. (2016) identified that crises in identity provoke reflection leading to shifts in perspectives among teachers.

Wang et al. (2021) reported that sociocultural influences significantly affect novice teachers in China.

Vanegas et al. (2021) noted that prospective language instructors often struggle with confidence due to inadequate guidance.

## Research Gap:

There is a scarcity of qualitative case studies conducted within single schools which incorporate interviews along with observational data and self-reflective assessments.

## Objectives of the Study:

1. Investigate teachers' perceptions of their identities relative to their teaching experience.
2. Examine the personal, professional, and social facets of identity.
3. Evaluate how organizational environments influence teacher identity.
4. Provide practical recommendations aimed at enhancing teacher development and school leadership practices.

## Methodology:

1. **Research Design:** Qualitative case study.
2. **Participants:** 20 teachers from Singhania Public School located in Fort Songadh, Tapi District, Gujarat.
3. **Data Collection:**
  - **Semi-structured Interviews:** To delve into aspects related to personal, professional, and social identities.
  - **Classroom Observations:** Utilizing structured rubrics for documenting teaching methodologies.
  - **Self-Appraisal Forms:** Enabling teachers to reflect on strengths as well as challenges encountered during their professional journey.
4. **Data Management and Analysis:**
  - Interviews were transcribed verbatim while participants were assigned unique identification codes (T1–T20).
  - Classroom observations included descriptive notes complemented by rubric assessments.
  - Self-appraisals were analyzed for recurring themes using thematic coding which produced categories such as "Professional Confidence," "Mentorship Role," "Identity in Transition," and "Work-Life Balance."
  - Triangulation was employed to enhance credibility and depth in insights gathered.

Findings: Table 1: Participant Codes, Experience, and Observed Behaviours

| Participant Code | Experience Group | Professional Identity | Classroom Management | Student Interaction | Reflection and Adaptation | Communication and Collaboration | Contribution to School and Society | Summary Notes / Self-Appraisal Highlights                                                                |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T1               | <5 yrs           | Evident               | Partially Evident    | Evident             | Partially Evident         | Evident                         | Partially Evident                  | Adjusting to teaching role; seeks feedback; reflective on classroom strategies                           |
| T2               | <5 yrs           | Evident               | Evident              | Evident             | Evident                   | Evident                         | Partially Evident                  | Novice teacher; balancing professional and personal responsibilities; eager to learn                     |
| T3               | 5–10 yrs         | Strongly Evident      | Evident              | Strongly Evident    | Evident                   | Evident                         | Evident                            | Mid-career; reflective; mentoring peers; adapts teaching methods based on feedback                       |
| T4               | 5–10 yrs         | Evident               | Evident              | Evident             | Strongly Evident          | Evident                         | Evident                            | Focused on professional growth; integrates school values into teaching; reflective on student engagement |
| T5               | >10 yrs          | Strongly Evident      | Strongly Evident     | Strongly Evident    | Strongly Evident          | Strongly Evident                | Strongly Evident                   | Senior teacher; confident; mentors colleagues; contributes to school culture and society                 |
| T6               | >10 yrs          | Strongly Evident      | Evident              | Strongly Evident    | Evident                   | Evident                         | Strongly Evident                   | Senior teacher; promotes civic responsibility; adapts teaching for struggling students                   |

| Participant Code | Experience Group | Professional Identity | Classroom Management | Student Interaction | Reflection and Adaptation | Communication and Collaboration | Contribution to School and Society | Summary Notes / Self-Appraisal Highlights                                           |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T7               | <5 yrs           | Evident               | Partially Evident    | Evident             | Partially Evident         | Evident                         | Partially Evident                  | Novice teacher; reflective; adjusting to classroom routines                         |
| T8               | 5–10 yrs         | Strongly Evident      | Evident              | Evident             | Evident                   | Evident                         | Evident                            | Mid-career; consolidating professional identity; mentors students in group projects |
| T9               | >10 yrs          | Strongly Evident      | Strongly Evident     | Strongly Evident    | Strongly Evident          | Strongly Evident                | Strongly Evident                   | Senior teacher; confident, mentoring, engages students in societal projects         |
| T10              | 5–10 yrs         | Evident               | Evident              | Evident             | Evident                   | Evident                         | Evident                            | Mid-career; reflective and collaborative; balances multiple roles                   |
| T11              | <5 yrs           | Evident               | Evident              | Evident             | Partially Evident         | Evident                         | Partially Evident                  | Novice teacher; adapting to classroom environment; reflective                       |
| T12              | >10 yrs          | Strongly Evident      | Strongly Evident     | Strongly Evident    | Strongly Evident          | Strongly Evident                | Strongly Evident                   | Senior teacher; leadership role; mentoring; legacy-focused                          |
| T13              | 5–10 yrs         | Evident               | Evident              | Evident             | Evident                   | Evident                         | Evident                            | Mid-career; balancing teaching and personal responsibilities; reflective practice   |
| T14              | >10 yrs          | Strongly Evident      | Strongly Evident     | Strongly Evident    | Strongly Evident          | Strongly Evident                | Strongly Evident                   | Senior teacher; confident; supports school initiatives; mentors peers               |

| <b>Participant Code</b> | <b>Experience Group</b> | <b>Professional Identity</b> | <b>Classroom Management</b> | <b>Student Interaction</b> | <b>Reflection and Adaptation</b> | <b>Communication and Collaboration</b> | <b>Contribution to School and Society</b> | <b>Summary Notes / Self-Appraisal Highlights</b>                                                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>T15</b>              | <5 yrs                  | Evident                      | Partially Evident           | Evident                    | Partially Evident                | Evident                                | Partially Evident                         | Novice teacher; identity “in transition”; seeks guidance                                           |
| <b>T16</b>              | 5–10 yrs                | Strongly Evident             | Evident                     | Evident                    | Evident                          | Evident                                | Evident                                   | Mid-career; consolidating professional identity; reflective on classroom management                |
| <b>T17</b>              | >10 yrs                 | Strongly Evident             | Strongly Evident            | Strongly Evident           | Strongly Evident                 | Strongly Evident                       | Strongly Evident                          | Senior teacher; mentoring; leadership; professional confidence evident                             |
| <b>T18</b>              | 5–10 yrs                | Evident                      | Evident                     | Evident                    | Evident                          | Evident                                | Evident                                   | Mid-career; reflective; encourages student participation; balances professional and personal roles |
| <b>T19</b>              | >10 yrs                 | Strongly Evident             | Strongly Evident            | Strongly Evident           | Strongly Evident                 | Strongly Evident                       | Strongly Evident                          | Senior teacher; confident; fosters professional development; mentoring role                        |
| <b>T20</b>              | <5 yrs                  | Evident                      | Partially Evident           | Evident                    | Partially Evident                | Evident                                | Partially Evident                         | Novice teacher; adjusting to professional responsibilities; reflective approach                    |

Table 2: Emergent Themes and Patterns

| Theme                                        | Description                                                       | Representative Participants |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Professional Identity</b>                 | Dominant across all teachers; increases with experience           | T5, T6, T12, T14, T17, T19  |
| <b>Identity in Transition</b>                | Novice teachers adjusting to professional role                    | T1, T2, T7, T11, T15, T20   |
| <b>Mentorship Role</b>                       | Mid-career and senior teachers mentoring peers/students           | T3, T4, T8, T9, T16, T18    |
| <b>Work-Life Balance / Personal Identity</b> | Personal and social identity secondary but impacts teaching style | T2, T4, T13, T18            |
| <b>Reflection &amp; Adaptation</b>           | Teachers reflect on practice and adapt methods                    | T3, T4, T12, T16            |

### Summary of Results:

- **Novice Teachers (<5 yrs):** Transitional phase characterized by adaptation to routines under institutional expectations; reliance on feedback from experienced colleagues was common.
- **Mid-Career Teachers (5–10 yrs):** Displayed consolidation in their professional identities while managing classroom duties alongside reflective practices; mentoring relationships began forming at this stage.
- **Senior Teachers (>10 yrs):** Exhibited stable professional identities marked by confidence; acted as mentors contributing positively toward broader community engagement initiatives.
- Triangulation confirmed recurring themes across different data sources—interviews validated findings through observations while self-appraisals provided deeper insights into individual experiences.

### Discussion

Professional identity emerged prominently across varying experience levels consistent with Beijaard et al.'s findings (2004), though its evolution differed according to career stage: novices sought guidance while mid-career professionals began mentoring others; senior educators represented confidence coupled with leadership responsibilities. Although secondary dimensions like personal or social identities influenced teaching approaches through empathy or role modeling efforts remained evident throughout the study's exploration.

### Recommendations

- For novices: Implement structured mentoring programs alongside shadowing opportunities led by veteran educators.
- For mid-career teachers: Foster communities focused on reflective practice paired with peer learning opportunities.
- For senior teachers: Acknowledge expertise via formal roles promoting policy engagement while allowing avenues for sharing best practices within educational settings.

Schools should establish ongoing frameworks dedicated specifically towards developing teacher identities employing holistic evaluation methods inclusive of varied assessment tools along with balanced workloads fostering innovation alongside collaboration opportunities tailored according to differing career stages.

**Conclusion:**

Teachers primarily conceive their identities through workplace roles which evolve over time—novices grapple with transitional issues whereas mid-career personnel reinforce established identifications beginning mentorship processes culminating eventually in senior staff who show stability accompanied by strong leadership traits contributing positively toward overall school advancement efforts rooted deeply within community relations strengthening both individual educator growth trajectories along communal bonds alike promoting sustained progress moving forward continuously driven contextually based evaluations integrating multiple perspectives ensuring comprehensive developmental enhancements persistently pursued effectively throughout educational journeys undertaken collectively together towards shared goals envisioned collaboratively ahead!

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**Appendices: Qualitative Data Collection Tools****Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide Appendix**

**Purpose:** To investigate personal/professional/social identity perceptions among Singhania Public School

**Instructions for Researcher:**

- Ask all participants the core questions; allow probing for elaboration.
- Record responses (with participant consent).
- Ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

**Core Interview Questions:**

1. How do you perceive your role as a teacher within this school?
2. In what ways does your teaching role shape your personal identity?
3. How do you balance your professional responsibilities with personal and social roles?
4. Can you describe moments when your professional identity felt particularly strong or challenged?
5. How has your teaching experience influenced your perception of yourself as an educator?
6. How do interactions with colleagues, students, and the school environment affect your professional identity?
7. What practices or experiences have helped you develop as a teacher?
8. How do you see your role contributing to society, community, or national development?
9. How do you reflect on your teaching performance and professional growth?
10. What support or changes would enhance your professional identity further?

**Appendix B: Classroom Observation Rubric Appendix**

**Purpose:** To systematically observe teachers' classroom practices and interactions.

**Instructions:**

- Observe each teacher during one lesson (30–45 minutes).
- Rate behaviours and interactions on a **descriptive scale** (e.g., Strongly Evident, Evident, Partially Evident, Not Observed).
- Include qualitative notes for examples or explanations.

| Domain                       | Indicators                                                       | Observation<br>Notes /<br>Examples | Rating                                                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Professional Identity</b> | Teacher demonstrates expertise and confidence in subject matter. |                                    | Strongly Evident /<br>Evident / Partially<br>Evident / Not Observed |
| <b>Classroom Management</b>  | Maintains discipline while encouraging student engagement.       |                                    | Strongly Evident /<br>Evident / Partially<br>Evident / Not Observed |

|                                             |                                                                        |  |                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Student Interaction</b>                  | Shows empathy, guidance, and mentorship toward students.               |  | Strongly Evident /<br>Evident / Partially<br>Evident / Not Observed |
| <b>Reflection &amp; Adaptation</b>          | Adapts teaching methods based on student needs and responses.          |  | Strongly Evident /<br>Evident / Partially<br>Evident / Not Observed |
| <b>Communication &amp; Collaboration</b>    | Engages with students and colleagues effectively.                      |  | Strongly Evident /<br>Evident / Partially<br>Evident / Not Observed |
| <b>Contribution to School &amp; Society</b> | Encourages civic responsibility, social awareness, and ethical values. |  | Strongly Evident /<br>Evident / Partially<br>Evident / Not Observed |

### Appendix C: Teacher Self-Appraisal Form Appendix

**Purpose:** To promote reflective practice concerning individual teacher's evolving sense

**Instructions:**

- Teachers respond honestly; reflections are confidential.
- Use qualitative responses (paragraphs or bullet points).

**Self-Appraisal Prompts:**

1. Describe your professional growth over the past year.
2. What achievements or contributions in your teaching make you proud?
3. Reflect on challenges you have faced as a teacher and how you addressed them.
4. How do you perceive your role in shaping students' learning and development?
5. Describe ways in which your personal values influence your teaching style.
6. How do you balance personal, professional, and social aspects of your life in your role as a teacher?
7. Identify areas where you would like to improve or grow further.
8. Share examples of mentorship or guidance you have provided to colleagues or students.
9. How do you engage with the school environment to enhance your professional identity?
10. Any additional reflections on your identity as a teacher.