Teachers' Professional Identity and its Impacts on Teachers' Pedagogical Practices: A Comparative Review of Two Counties of Kenya

Gathondu, M.[1] & Kagema, J.[2] & Wanderi, A.[3]

[1,2,3] Karatina University, Department of Education, Kenya
Correspondence: Gathondu, M., Karatina University, Department of Education, Kenya.
Email: mgathondu20@gmail.com

Abstract

Quality education outcomes are the driving force of society's development and this has been the quest for various local, national, and international frameworks including Kenya's Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals. Nevertheless, an examination of their pedagogical practices reveals gaps in the achievement of quality education outcomes. This study examined a comparative review of teachers' professional identity and its impact on teachers' pedagogical practices in two counties of Kenya. Social Constructivism Theory, which theorizes how social learning occurs, guided the study. Through a comprehensive review of literature, the study identified gaps in teachers' pedagogical practices that motivated the present study. The study purposively sampled 24 principals and systematically randomized 80 teachers and 144 students. The key research instruments were questionnaires for teachers and students, while interview guides were used to collect data from principals from the selected public secondary schools. Validity was enhanced by the piloting of the instruments before collecting the final data. To enhance credibility, an adjustment of the tools was done according to the opinion obtained from respondents and the advice provided by university supervisors. The reliability of the instruments was calculated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and found to be $\rho = .77$, hence considered reliable. To test the internal consistency of reliability within the questionnaire items, Cronbach alpha based on the standardized items was used, which yielded $\alpha = .759$. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 25 for both descriptive and inferential statistics. Measures among variables were described using standard deviations, SD. The test generated Chi-square coefficients of $\chi(1) = .87.685, 176.153$ with corresponding significant levels of p=, .000 for teachers and p= .000 for learners which were both equal to the already determined level of significance of 0.05, that is p values of 0.00 and 0.00 are equal to 0.00. The reporting of the quantitative data was in percentages, tables, and charts. Qualitative data was analyzed through identification, categorization of data into concepts, and interpretation of patterns and themes in textual data, which determined how these patterns and themes helped answer the research questions. The study findings indicated that teachers are pivotal in determining educational outcomes through their pedagogical practices as corroborated by the respective research objectives and findings. The study is significant to education policymakers as they design effective curriculum delivery strategies and to school administrators and wider educational stakeholders. The study also concludes that a pedagogical practice among teachers plays a great role in quality educational outcomes. The study recommends that teachers should undergo

continuous professional development to improve curriculum delivery. Also, the government should enhance quality assurance and monitoring strategies in schools to ensure that the school curriculum is highly implemented to achieve the educational goals in Kenya and beyond.

Keywords: Curriculum, Professional Identity, Pedagogy, Policy, Teachers

Introduction

Teachers' professionalism is used to determine and enhance teacher efficiency, maintenance, and teaching practices in the classroom. Practices that are relevant in teaching are transmitted by the teacher to the learners in a professional way. Hamman et al. (2010) argues that teachers' self-identification studies in the field of education have generated some attention. Renee (2013) posits that the professionalism of teachers' work is of great impact, on retention, and performance. Beijaard (2004) defines the identity of a teacher's work as "an ongoing process of integrating professional aspects of being a teacher".

Kostogriz & Peeler (2007) argued that the formation of teacher performance is not a stable process; rather the ongoing discussion of teachers in the current situation leads to quality education outcomes. Indeed, researchers and practitioners, in general, agree that the formation of identity continues unabated. Through professional ownership, the teacher passes on to students the knowledge, skills, and values they find relevant to teaching and learning.

According to the Vermont & Donche (2017) student learning project, several personal and contextual factors influence the learning patterns students use. Personal factors include age, story knowledge, and educational experience. Key contextual factors that influence learners' learning, for example, are the teaching methods used, the type of assessment, and the opportunities for interaction with other learners. Professionalism is a powerful equation in which your image is equated with various roles. Manifestation is largely linked to the concept of identity (Dontato, 2003). Non-showing assumes personal growth as a teacher. Manifestation is largely linked to the concept of identity (Dontato, 2003). According to Namagi (2009), non-reflection affects a person's development as a teacher, as self-reflection creates a link between the teacher's experience and their knowledge and feelings.

Deci and Ryan (2005) say that teachers have an opportunity and freedom to choose. This positive and independent position can reflect a person's interest, determination, and values that can lead to a person's well-being. Educational contexts teach teachers to behave in a certain way, such as obtaining information, disseminating information, and implementing outsourced programs. They do not have the opportunity to communicate effectively in their teaching and practice skills. They are therefore distinguished by their identity and personality (Namagi, 2009).

According to Muhanga-Zek (2010), not only are teachers constantly developing teaching skills and teaching methods but, they are also more willing and anxious to learn

and construct ideas to improve their skills. In addition, researchers Alexander, Van Wyk, and Moreng (2014) showed that a teacher's attitude toward creativity and innovation is consistent with the ability. The researcher criticized traditional education methods and has shown that constructivist theories encourage students' teachers to think independently, think actively, and express themselves clearly and freely. A positive environment established by the advice of teachers and school principals could make student teachers more creative and develop their art as professionals.

Other strategies can enhance creative guidelines for teachers to develop professional identities such as student-centered activities, multimedia support, classroom management in real-life situations, teaching communication materials, promoting open-ended questions, and critical thinking that have a connection with skills (Horst & McDonald, 1997). The sociological theorist, Bernstein (2000) refers to the above phenomenon as the regionalization of disciplinary knowledge fields, such as psychology and economics, which, in a singular form, are protected by strong boundaries and hierarchies. It is through the higher education curriculum process of modularization that regionalization is facilitated. Bernstein positions regions as the interface between disciplines (singulars) and the technologies they make possible, in that they operate both in the intellectual field of discipline and in the field of external practice. Thus, he argues professional fields such as engineering, medicine, and architecture are regions.

Desimone (2009) presents the main features of professional development based on a broad research consensus. Key features which are important to increase teacher knowledge and skills and improve their practice, and which promise to increase student achievement [are] (a) focus on content, (b) active learning, (c) coherence, (d) duration, and (3) collective participation. For content focus, Decimon (2009) supports the link between activities that focus on content and how students learn that teachers increase knowledge and skills, improve practice, and, to a more limited extent, increase student achievement. Active teaching includes teachers observing or observing expert teachers, followed by mutual feedback and discussion; reviewing student work in subject areas, and leading discussions and other activities where teachers passively listen. Instead, they are engaged in learning.

Consistency includes teacher learning that is (a) consistent with teachers' knowledge and beliefs and (b) consistent with school, district, and state reforms and policies. Periods of professional development sessions include both time periods in which the activity extends (eg, a day or a semester) and the number of hours spent in the activity. Collective participation sets up potential interactions and discourse, which can be a powerful form of teacher learning. Along with critical core features, Beijaard (2004) stated that technological ownership is not something teachers have, but something they use to be able to do well. Beijaard and de Veries (2005) view the teaching aspect of teacher work as more important than others. Pearl (2000) believe that knowledge of topics is central to a

teacher's ability to change programs, develop functional tasks, define high-level materials, and assess students' understanding and sufficiently erroneous ideas. The teacher's knowledge of prescribed traditional teaching models (Joyce & Weil, 2000) urges teachers to put into consideration appropriate and effective teaching materials. They emphasize on it knowing well that it may not be fair enough in real and the complications of the teaching/learning process (Beijaard, 2004).

Intrator and Kunjman (2006) stated that "dynamic teaching" is associated with academic excellence that empowers, strengthens, and motivates students and is not restricted to the curriculum or method. According to Cavner (2014), teacher vitality is the teacher's energy that is present in classrooms and their profession, high vitality educators are purposeful, competent in improving the current environment, and view prevention as a learning opportunity.

From the reviewed studies, it is evident that inadequate research has been conducted to determine the influence of professionalism on quality educational outcomes in public secondary schools. This study sought to determine whether teachers' professionalism has an impact on quality educational outcomes in the Laikipia and Nyeri Counties of Kenya.

Conceptual Framework

The framework suggests that the independent variable is conceptualized as teachers' professional identity determining quality teaching outcomes. This refers to the knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes, behavior, and philosophies that students acquire during their study studies. This includes classwork work and end-of-year examinations. The government intervenes in various ways in secondary school for instance, by giving directives to the principals in secondary schools every year. Stakeholders' influence in various ways such as support in motivating teachers and good interaction with the community
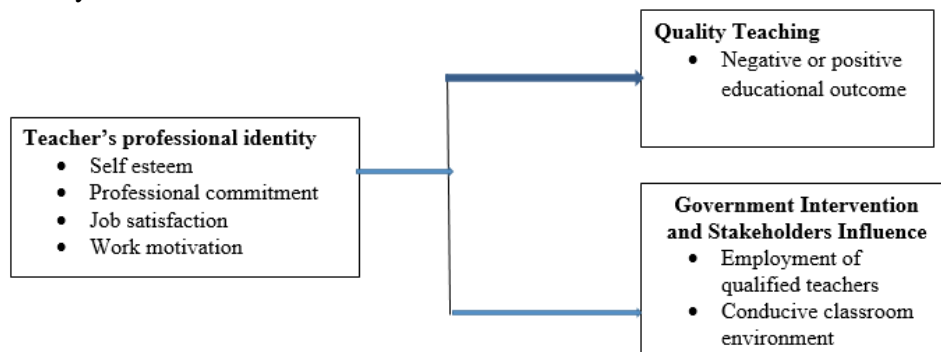

Figure 1: Conceptual framework on teachers' professional identity

Research Objective

The purpose of this study was to establish how teachers' professional identity impacts teachers' pedagogical practices in Nyeri and Laikipia Counties.

Methodology

Research Design

A research design is a conceptual structure within which research should be conducted (Kothari, 2012). Research design provides the glue that holds all elements of a research study together (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This indicates how all major parts of the research project work to address central research questions. It is the plan or outline that is used to generate answers to research questions. It is a system of conditions for the collection and analysis of data. The task of research design is to provide for the collection of relevant information.

Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, and Zechmeister (2012) opine that there are different types of research designs. Nevertheless, historical research design, case and field research design, descriptive research, correlational research design, ex post facto research design, experimental research design, and quasi-experimental research design are the most preferred for research in social sciences. However, every design has its own merits. This study used a descriptive research design because the research is concerned with the gathering of facts or obtaining pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of a phenomenon and whenever possible, drawing possible conclusions.

Participants

A sample is a small portion of the target population. According to Orodho (2006), a sample should be 10% of the population when the population is large and 20% when the population is small. Therefore, a sample size of 20% was adopted for this study to increase generalization. Considering the target population is large, the researcher selected the sample size to be representative of the whole population of principals, teachers, and learners. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to draw a sample. Stratified sampling technique was used to ensure that the target population was divided into substrata and that each subgroup was represented by a sample in a proportion equivalent to its size in the accessible population. This ensured that each subgroup characteristic was represented in the sample, thus raising the external validity of the study.

Twenty (20%) percent of each category of respondents from different sub-counties was randomly obtained. Each member of the selected population had an equal chance of being selected. The sample consisted of twenty-four (24) principals, eighty (80) teachers,

and one hundred and forty-four students (144). The advantages of using stratified sampling are that there is a smaller error of estimation than would be produced by a simple random sampling of the same size. This result is particularly true if the measurements within the strata are very homogeneous.

Table 1: Research sample size

County	Principals		Teachers		Students	
	Target population	Sample size	Target population	Sample size	Target population	Sample size
Nyeri	60	12	200	40	360	72
Laikipia	60	12	200	40	360	72
Total	120	24	400	80	720	144

Instrumentations

This study used questionnaires and interview guides as the two main data collection tools. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers and students, while interview guides were used to collect data from principals. The selection of these instruments was guided by the nature of the data, the time available, the objectives of the study, and the simplicity of the means. The collected data was analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences Program (SPSS) version 22.

Findings and Discussions

Questionnaire Return Rate

The researcher administered 24 interview schedules to secondary school principals and 20 were successfully filled. At the same time, 80 questionnaires were given to the teachers, where 73 were answered. Moreover, a total of 144 students were issued with questionnaires of which 140 questionnaires were successfully filled out and returned.

Table 2: Questionnaire return rate

Respondent Categories	Sampled Respondents	Returned Questionnaires	Achieved Return Rate
Principals	24	20	83%
Teachers	80	73	91.0%
Students	144	140	97.0%
Total	248	233	90.0%

Data indicates that the total questionnaire return rate was 90%. The high return rate emphasized the point that the questionnaire response rate was good and above 75% of the suitable level to enable the generalization of the results to the target population (Creswell, 2014).

Demographic Information

The researchers analyzed the demographic characteristics of the respondents. These characteristics involved gender, age of respondents, academic qualifications, working experience, and type of school.

Gender of the Respondents

The following is a description of this study's analysis of the respondent's gender.

Table 3: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	121	52%
Female	112	48%
Total	233	100

Table 3 shows the gender of respondents. Based on the analysis, 52% of the total respondents were male while 48% of the total respondents were female. This indicates that male respondents were more than female respondents.

Findings for Various Methods of Teaching to Enrich the Use of Instructional Methods

The researchers sought to determine from principals and teachers whether the methods used in teaching to enrich the use of instructional practices affects quality education outcomes. The responses are presented in the figure below.
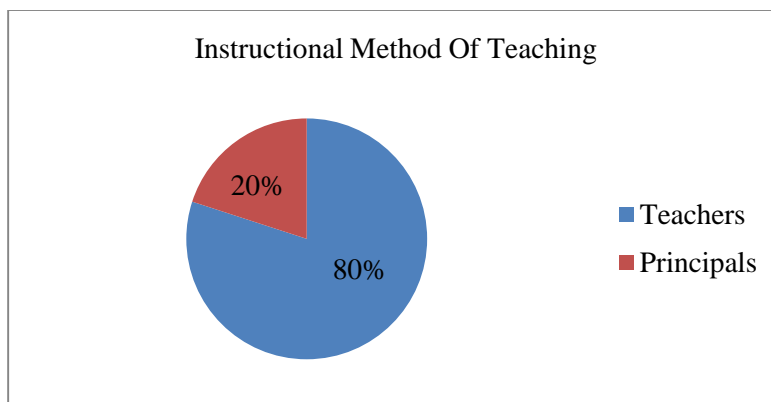
Figure 2: Instructional method of teaching

80% of the teachers and 20% of the principals use the teaching practice which gives different work to students who have difficulties learning and/ or to those who can advance faster. Therefore, the findings concluded that most secondary school teachers and principals could use differentiated instruction. This kind of instruction is used regarding the different levels of students. According to this result, they can teach their subjects by connecting everyday life experiences. This is a very useful teaching practice in the constructivist learning classroom.

Teachers' Professional Competence Scores and Students' Academic Achievement Scores

The researchers inquired from the respondents whether teachers and principals are more competent in ensuring good performance among the students. The responses are presented in the table below.

Table 4: Teachers' professional competence scores and students' academic achievement

Responses	Frequencies	Percentage
Agreed	182	78 %
Not agreed	51	22%
Total	233	100%

Figure 3 shows the scores obtained on teachers' regulations to improve quality education outcome
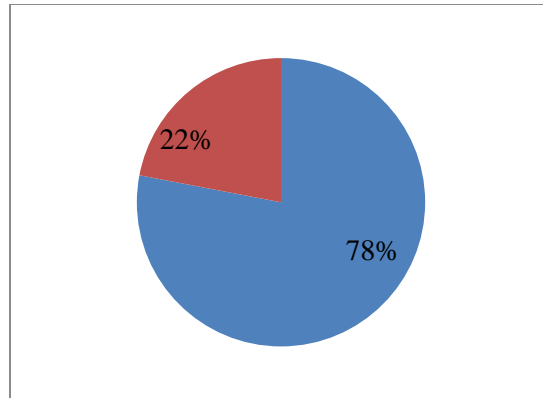
Figure 3: Teacher regulations to improve quality education outcome

Figure 3 shows the results of teachers about suggestions to improve students' achievement. A majority of teachers, 78% suggested that teachers' regulations help in the performance of students as they provide a framework of operations and benchmark standards expected of teachers in the profession. On the other hand, 22% of the teachers argued that teachers' regulations which are developed and implemented by the regulatory body Teachers Service Commission in Kenya do not help much in the performance of learners.

Evaluation Techniques and Academic Performance

Learners are expected to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes through learning. It is the responsibility of teachers to regularly assess the extent to which learners are moving forward with their studies. This should be related to the attainment of the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Therefore, the study tried to examine to what extent teachers give adequate assessments to their students. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Evaluation techniques and academic performance

Evaluation techniques	Percentages
Use of oral questions	29.4 %
Written questions	17.4 %
Comprehensions	6.5%
Speaking	3.3 %
Remedial learning	1.1 %

The results show that there were different methods applied by teachers in the process of learning assessment: use of oral questions 29.4%, written questions 17.4%,

comprehension 6.5%, listening to and speaking 3.3%, and remedial learning 1.1%. The application of the mentioned assessment techniques can have a significant impact on learning in the classroom and ultimately on the educational outcomes of the learners.

Teachers' Professional Identity on Quality Educational Outcomes

The study sought to establish how teachers' professional identity impacts teachers' pedagogical practices teaching in Nyeri and Laikipia counties. To verify the relationship between teachers' professional identity and quality educational outcomes, data were analyzed on whether teachers maintain full responsibility for students under their care, guiding students where necessary and whether teachers do not absent themselves from their duties to provide quality educational outcomes as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Significant influence of teachers' professional identity on quality educational outcomes

		Teachers do not absent themselves from their duties					
	Teachers						
		SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	4	1	5
	Disagree	0	0	0	2	0	1
	Neutral	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Agree	0	0	0	20	17	37
	Strongly Agree	0	0	0	4	24	28
Teacher maintain full responsibility for students under their care and guide students where necessary	Total	0	0	1	30	42	73
	Learners						
	Strongly Disagree	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	1	3	0	0
	Neutral	0	4	2	1	1	0
	Agree	0	3	5	9	8	2
	Strongly Agree	0	2	14	26	8	7
Total		13	30	50	30	18	140

Table 6 shows the data that teachers take full responsibility for the students under

care, and guides students where necessary. The Chi test values are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Teachers are fully responsible for students' welfare who are under their care and teachers do not absent themselves from their duties to provide quality educational outcomes

Teachers				Learners		
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	87.685a	8	.000	176.153a	25	.000
Likelihood Ratio	27.553	8	.001	39.592	25	.032
N of Valid Cases	73			140		

* Association is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Association is significant at the 0.00 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 7, the data were presented in a matrix. A Chi-square was run to establish whether teachers maintained full responsibility for students under teachers' care, guided students where necessary, and teachers do not absent themselves from their duties to provide quality educational outcomes. The test generated Chi-square coefficients of $\chi (1) = .87.685$, 176.153 with corresponding significant levels of p=, .000 for teachers and p= .000 for learners which were both equal to the already determined level of significance of 0.05, that is p values of 0.00 and 0.00 are equal to 0.00. These findings demonstrate that teachers' educational professional identity has a significant effect on teachers' educational influences on teaching. The null hypothesis states that teachers' professional identity has no significant effect on quality educational outcomes in Nyeri and Laikipia County, Kenya.

Research establishing the effect of teacher professional attainment on student math achievement in American K–6 schools have shown mixed results. Some studies examined that the math performance scores of learners whose teachers had post-grad knowledge were significantly higher than those of learners whose teachers did not have a post-graduate degree. Akinsolu (2010) conducted a study in Nigeria and established that the quality of any education system depends on the quality of teachers. Assessment of related research suggests that the most important school-based defining factor of students' performance is teacher quality. A qualified teacher is one who holds a teaching certificate and/or is licensed by the nation, who has at least a graduate certificate from a four-year institution and is well qualified in his or her area of specialization. In addition, a competent teacher knows subject of human development, subject matters, communication and advocacy,

collaboration and partnership, instructional planning, ethical values and strategies, assessment, continuous professional development, learning environment, code of conduct, and efficient use of information communication technologies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

Teachers have an important role to play in the development of any nation. It is the teacher who builds the pillars of nation-building in the form of student development. For this purpose, teachers need professional training in which to measure their performance. For an effective learning process teaching a skilled teacher is considered the key. The researchers found that there is a relationship between professional identity and quality educational outcomes in Kenya whereby the results found indicated relationships. This clearly shows that competent teachers are determining persons with better educational outcomes. Self-image refers to the normative beliefs professionals hold about the purpose, goals, values, norms, and interaction patterns associated with being a member of their institutionalized collective. It relates to the "real life" day-to-day practice of "enacting a job and making sense of the work. Professionals construct their self-image through elaborate socialization processes in which they try on provisional roles. In turn, these roles are guided by behavioral repertoires that stem from self-image. Acknowledging individual variation, the literature shows the link between self-image and role is especially strong for those professionals who are members of highly institutionalized occupations, whereas they commonly express who they should be in terms of what they do in practice.

It was concluded that teachers were skilled in almost every aspect of teaching planning. Most high school teachers know the purpose of their lessons. Teachers organize lessons using details of previous results, their strengths, and weaknesses. They organize additional classes and have learner-centered activities, share ideas with colleagues, keeping in mind the students' interests and resources during lesson planning. It turned out that the teachers were proficient in the field of subject knowledge. They had a command over the content; incorporate irrefutable knowledge and knowledge of students by providing solid examples related to current problems and active health.

Teachers take into account the needs of students during teaching and offer a variety of learning activities, allocate more time to weaker learners, and make challenging tasks for gifted students. They encourage students to participate in the class, express their ideas, and work individually and collectively. Teachers can use different strategies in the classroom to give students a better understanding. It is concluded that teachers can teach strategically. The teachers were skilled in using methods, and techniques to better understand the concepts based on the nature of the content, appropriate questioning process, interview process, collection process, and information technology. Teachers are

able to impact communication skills and motivational strategies to encourage students to learn and share their learning problems.

Teachers have the experience of assessing students' learning through continuous internal assessment using formal and informal assessment methods. Teachers discuss students' learning success with their parents, guide their self-assessment, and give students feedback on their performance, helping students discover, correct their mistakes, and improve their self-esteem. Teachers monitor students to understand and reteach the concept if students have difficulty understanding and changing their teaching according to the test response.

Recommendations

The study recommends that school management can take the necessary steps to ensure that all teachers have access to a variety of teaching-learning resources to enhance their general knowledge of the subject and vocational education. To help teachers improve their learning and teaching methods, the government can provide information-related resources in all schools so that teachers can use them in their teaching. Frequent examinations of teachers by academic supervisors are encouraged to improve their proficiency and skills.

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