THE IMPACT OF PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

ВПЛИВ ПЕДАГОГІЧНИХ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ НА РОЗВИТОК ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ ВЧИТЕЛІВ

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The paper explores the critical role of professional identity development in the preparation of educators within master's programs. Drawing on a comprehensive review of existing literature and empirical research, we investigate how the formation of professional identity influences teaching practices, educator effectiveness, and overall career satisfaction. The findings highlight that professional identity is not static; it is shaped through experiences, reflections, and interactions within educational contexts. Our research indicates that a strong professional identity enhances teachers' commitment to their roles, fosters resilience in the face of challenges, and promotes a culture of continuous improvement. In addition, we identify and describe six types of research commonly conducted by educators and master's students during their practical training: action research, practical research, reflective practice, collaborative research, inquiry-based research, and critical research. Specifically, action research focuses on identifying and studying practical classroom problems and finding solutions, proving particularly beneficial for novice teachers. Practical research evaluates the effectiveness of specific methods and approaches used in teaching, ultimately helping educators enhance their instructional quality. Furthermore, we discuss the implications for curriculum design in master's programs, suggesting that integrating reflective practices, collaborative learning, and mentorship can significantly contribute to the development of educators' professional identities. This paper aims to provide insights for policymakers, educational institutions, and teacher educators on the importance of cultivating professional identity in teacher preparation programs, ultimately enhancing the quality of education.

Key words: *professional identity, teacher training, master's programs, action research, teacher development, continuous improvement.*

У статті досліджується важливість формування професійної ідентичності у підготовці майбутніх педагогів на магістерських програмах. Ґрунтуючись на комплексному огляді існуючої літератури та емпіричних досліджень, ми з'ясували, як формування професійної ідентичності впливає на методи викладання, результативність роботи вчителя та задоволення від кар'єри в цілому. Отримані результати вказують на те, що професійна ідентичність не є статичною; вона формується через досвід, рефлексію та взаємодію в освітніх контекстах. Результати нашого дослідження свідчать, що сформована професійна ідентичність підвищує мотивацію вчителів до виконання своїх обов'язків, виховує стійкість перед викликами та сприяє розвитку культури неперервного самовдосконалення. Крім того, у дослідженні визначено й описано шість типів досліджень, які зазвичай проводять вчителі та магістранти під час практичної підготовки: дослідження дії, практичні дослідження, рефлексивні практики, спільні дослідження, дослідження на основі запитів і критичні дослідження. Зокрема, практичні дослідження зосереджуються на виявленні та вивченні практичних проблем у класі та пошуку їх вирішення, що є особливо корисним для вчителів-початківців. Практичні дослідження оцінюють ефективність конкретних методів і підходів, що використовуються у навчанні, і, зрештою, допомагають педагогам підвищити якість викладання. До того ж, в статті ми аналізуємо вплив на розробку освітніх і навчальних планів у магістерських програмах, зазначаючи, що інтеграція рефлексивних практик, методів взаємонавчання та наставництва може зробити значний внесок у розвиток професійної ідентичності педагогів. Ця стаття має на меті надати політикам, освітнім установам і викладачам педагогічних навчальних закладів розуміння важливості розвитку професійної ідентичності в програмах підготовки вчителів, а відтак - підвищення якості освіти.

Ключові слова: *професійна ідентичність, підготовка вчителів, магістерські програми, практичні дослідження, розвиток вчителів, професійне зростання, неперервний розвиток.*

Introduction. Considerable changes in the strategic priorities of education development at the beginning of the 21st century have led to improvements in many dimensions of higher education institutions. In particular, university education shed its elitist status to become more accessible, taking third place among the country's export industries. The rapid advancement of digital technologies and innovations increased the competitiveness of the higher education market on the international level, prompting universities to modernize teaching methods and develop new educational and research programs for master's degree training, including in the field of education.

Our research on teacher training in master's programs in education has shown that in developed countries, such programs have a solid research foundation. The selection of content and teaching methods is based on scientifically proven effectiveness, and future teachers are required to acquire research competencies and develop their professional identity through systematic reflection on professional activities. Education faculties regularly create research programs and, together with students, contribute to the professional knowledge base. Providers of master's programs integrate theory and practice by building close relationships between universities and schools, offering future teachers opportunities to gain practical experience and conduct individual pedagogical research under the guidance of experienced mentor-teachers. Experts unanimously agree

that providing master's students with the opportunity to explore aspects of teaching and student learning during practical training is a key element of the educational program. Research can help future teachers understand the effectiveness of their work, identify strengths and weaknesses, and find new ways to improve it. Overall, an effective educational program for preparing master's students in education should aim to create conditions for continuous professional development and provide them with the tools necessary for successful work in the modern educational environment.

Theoretical framework and research methods. Historically, teacher training focused primarily on practical and technical aspects, emphasizing acquiring hands-on skills over theoretical knowledge. However, in the 1980s, D. Schon and L. Shulman challenged this approach, leading to a shift from purely practice-oriented teacher training to a more comprehensive, foundational education [15, p. 88; 16, p. 10]. This shift in methodology resulted in the transfer of teacher training from colleges to universities, elevating the teaching profession to a complex, multifaceted discipline that integrates theoretical, moral, ethical, and practical elements. This process, known as the «universalization of teacher education,» was observed in many international educational systems. Today, effective teaching requires a solid theoretical foundation, with research playing a crucial role in developing and validating educational theories [3, p. 24].

These changes were driven by the need to establish teaching as a profession grounded in pedagogical research and a broad evidence base. It is expected that teachers become not only critical consumers of research but also creators of their knowledge about effective teaching and learning. According to J. Aspfors and J. Eklund, the modern educational context demands that future teachers be skilled researchers, as this can enhance the quality of education, improve the national economy, and boost professional autonomy, revealing the innovative potential of teachers [1, p. 435]. Consequently, research competence has become an essential component of teachers'professional skills, driving the growing demand for research-based teacher education programs.

Numerous studies conducted by educational researchers across various countries have demonstrated the significant positive impact of teachers'research skills on their professional practice and growth. For example, C. Castle, M. Dunn, L. Harrison, K. Coombe and J. Reis-Jorge have shown that well-developed research skills can help teachers succeed and have a lasting impact on their development as researchers and experts who support one another [5, p. 1094; 14, p. 310].

L. Darling-Hammond emphasises that teacher training programs must go beyond simply transferring knowledge to teachers. They should prepare them to handle diverse challenges that may arise from changing educational demands, shifting student demographics, and evolving social and cultural contexts [7]. One of the key values of research in the perception of teachers is its use as a tool for developing reflective practice at an individual level. Another value is the ability to make independent, well-reasoned decisions about various aspects of their professional work. Equipped with evidence-based theoretical knowledge, they can confidently justify these decisions and share new ideas with their colleagues. The primary motivation behind the growing interest in research-focused teacher education is the ability to meet future educational demands in a rapidly changing environment [8, p. 292].

J. DeMonte argues that research can play a crucial role in teachers'professional development, guiding and preparing them to acquire essential 21st-century skills for implementing new teaching strategies and assessment methods. Teachers should be able to utilize and integrate relevant findings and pedagogical research theories into their professional actions and decisions. Specifically, educational research aids in analyzing the perceptions and attitudes of students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders, offering potential solutions to various issues while considering the perspectives of all participants in the educational process [9].

According to M. Cochran-Smith, S. Lytle, and others, teachers need to be well-versed in research. They must be capable of understanding scientific reports in various formats, distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative studies, grasping basic statistics, and being familiar with the research process, its goals, and challenges. Developing research competence involves mastering several skills, such as technological, informational, verbal, numerical, visual, and statistical abilities. This combination of skills enables teachers to conduct research, address the issues that arise in their profession, guide their students towards success, and enhance their professional identity [6, p. 102].

The significance of the study lies in its contribution to understanding the critical role of research in shaping the professional identity and pedagogical practices of teachers, particularly within the context of master's education programs. By exploring various dimensions of teacher research, including action research, collaborative research, and reflective practice, the study highlights how engaging in systematic inquiry can empower teachers to enhance their teaching effectiveness and foster continuous professional development.

The aim of the study is to investigate the role of research in shaping the professional identity and pedagogical practices of teachers within the context of master's education programs. It seeks to explore how different types of teacher research–such as action

research, collaborative research, practical research, and reflective research–contribute to teachers'professional development and their capacity to engage in evidence-based decision-making.

Main results. The findings of this study reveal several critical insights into the relationship between teachers'professional identities and their engagement in research-oriented practices. The first significant finding indicates that teachers identified six key responsibilities that reflect the necessity of a research-oriented mindset. One primary task is to justify their teaching practices through empirical evidence, as emphasized by Bolhuis, who notes that pedagogical research serves as a foundation for demonstrating the effectiveness of teaching methods [3, p. 340]. Participants highlighted the importance of research in substantiating their instructional choices. Additionally, teachers expressed the need to stay informed about new methodologies and pedagogical approaches. Active participation in research enables them to remain current and relevant in their teaching practices. Baumann articulates that teachers must engage in research from the onset of their training to continually refine their goals and practices [2, p. 57].

Moreover, teachers acknowledged their responsibility for ensuring the quality of their work, aligning it with established educational standards. Many reported implementing feedback mechanisms based on research outcomes to make necessary adjustments. Participants also emphasized their role as role models for student-teachers, demonstrating professional habits, including a commitment to research. This aligns with findings from Kincheloe, who asserts that engaging in research enhances teachers'professional identities [12, p. 18]. Furthermore, the importance of contributing to the educational research community was frequently mentioned. Teachers expressed a desire to share their findings and collaborate with peers, reinforcing their professional identities as active contributors to knowledge generation. Lastly, teachers recognized the importance of fostering a positive learning atmosphere that encourages student development and individuality, aligning with the broader goals of pedagogical research aimed at improving educational outcomes [3, p. 339].

The necessity for teachers to actively engage in research throughout their careers was another prominent theme. Teachers highlighted that research participation fosters reflection on their practices, leading to improvements in teaching effectiveness. Baumann emphasized that this engagement is crucial for teachers to assess and question their pedagogical goals, making it an integral part of their professional journey [2, p. 270].

Respondents reported numerous benefits from engaging in research as part of their pedagogical practice. They noted that conducting research allowed them to evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional methods critically. Kincheloe posits that through research, teachers can gain deeper insights into their experiences and reflect on their professional needs [12, p. 18]. Furthermore, engaging in research provided teachers with the tools to make informed decisions about their teaching practices, enhancing their ability to address the diverse needs of their students. Participants highlighted personal and professional growth as a significant outcome of research engagement, reporting increased confidence in their abilities as teachers and a greater understanding of their roles within the educational community.

Additionally, a survey conducted as part of Project Q highlighted six characteristics of effective research use in schools. Teachers emphasized that research should be woven into the fabric of school processes and practices, and successful research utilization involved collaboration among all staff members, reinforcing a sense of shared responsibility for educational outcomes. Clear intentions and strategic goals guided teachers in their research efforts, aligning with their professional aspirations. Participants noted the importance of dedicating sufficient time to research activities. They also identified genuine curiosity about teaching and learning as a key motivator for engaging in research. Finally, effective research use reflects their commitment to professionalism and continuous improvement in their teaching practice.

The study also identified six common research types that teachers and master's students engage in during their practical training. Action research emerged as a prominent approach for identifying practical problems in the classroom and finding solutions, particularly beneficial for novice teachers [3]. Participants reported using practical research to assess the effectiveness of specific teaching methods, thus improving the quality of their instruction. Collaborative research was highlighted as essential for cooperation among teachers, students, and stakeholders in addressing shared educational challenges [13, p. 128]. Participants explored social justice and equity issues within the learning context through critical research, underscoring the need for a more inclusive educational environment [11, p. 13]. Self-study emerged as a means for teachers to reflect on their pedagogical practices and aspirations, enhancing their professional identities [10. p. 201]. Reflective research was noted for its role in ongoing self-observation, helping teachers develop a deeper understanding of their roles as both teachers and learners.

The findings indicate that fostering a research-oriented mindset among teachers is crucial for their professional development. Engaging in research enhances teaching practices and strengthens teachers'professional identities, contributing to improved educational outcomes for students. These insights provide a strong rationale for incorporating research

skills and reflective practices into master's education programs, ultimately supporting the growth of teachers as reflective practitioners and active contributors to the field of education.

Conclusions. The study underscores the critical importance of integrating research competence into master's teacher training programs, highlighting its significant impact on the professional identity and pedagogical practices of teachers. Engaging in research not only enhances teachers'effectiveness but also fosters a culture of inquiry and reflection essential for navigating contemporary educational challenges. As teachers actively participate in research activities, they develop a stronger sense of professional identity, which influences their teaching beliefs and practices. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of research within these programs encourages the sharing of knowledge and best practices, contributing to the collective growth of the teaching profession. To maximize the effectiveness of teacher training, educational institutions must prioritize research engagement as a fundamental component, providing ongoing support for teachers to implement evidence-based practices in the classroom. Future research should further explore the long-term impacts of research-oriented teacher training on student outcomes across diverse educational contexts, offering valuable insights for refining teacher education programs.

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