

# Professional Identity Among Pre-Service Teachers in Rwanda

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## Background

This study follows the 2023 Primary Teaching Residency Program (PTRP), a pilot program extending the standard three years of pre-service teacher training by one year, with the goal of improving Rwanda's primary education system. The first term included seminars focused on evidence-based pedagogy in the key subject areas of literacy, math and science, while the last two terms consisted of mainly hands-on Teaching Practice at primary schools. Pre-service teacher training is well-researched in high income countries, but it remains highly overlooked in low and middle-income countries. The PTRP provided an opportunity to improve the quality of teacher preparation in Rwanda while expanding research on pre-service teacher education.

## Research Questions

1. How do Pre-service Teachers (PSTs) in Rwanda construct their teacher profesional identity as they participate in the teaching practice?
2. How do PSTs' interactions with role models and other actors within the teaching practice shape the way they construct their professional identity?

We aim to uncover the most important elements of Teaching Practice that facilitate development in self-identity and emphasize the role of professional identity in educators' success in a global context. Education research related to teacher professional identity is scarce in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study contributes to creating a more contextually representative understanding of teacher professional identity.

## Methods

- Data was collected from the 100 pre-service teachers in the program in the form of **reflective journal entries** and **weekly open-ended questionnaires**.
- A sample of 30 pre-service teachers in the program was purposively selected to include the most information-rich cases.
- An inductive coding method was utilized and relied on several readthroughs to generate codes based on the values, beliefs, and attitudes expressed in the PSTs' responses.

## Demographic Information of 30 PSTs



Age  
18-21: 30



Teacher Training College  
De La Salle: 15  
Save : 15



Gender  
Male: 11  
Female: 19

## References

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## Preliminary Findings for RQ1

- PSTs expressed a belief that **modern teachers must understand, own, or use Information and Communication Technology tools** (ICT) and implement ICT in teaching strategies.
- PSTs associated **English proficiency** with the standards of being a well-educated teacher.
- **Self-reflection strategies** helped PSTs improve their teaching skills and understanding of their teaching ability.
- PSTs were confident in their **ability to learn and master any new approaches to teaching** despites challenges with the right mindset and continued practice.

## Implications

Deducing the values, beliefs, and attitudes expressed by the PSTs and what they reveal about professional identity is crucial for improving pre-service training and helping to build an educated and committed workforce in countries undergoing education development.

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