

## Self-Represented Personal Qualities Toward Career Identity Among Teachers In Higher Education

**Stephen Samuel**

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore

### ABSTRACT:

Every individual before and now aim to work hard and smart to create an identity for themselves. The new idea of a career is by being individually strong-minded, multi-directional, dynamic, and fluid (Hall, 1986; Hall and Mirvis, 1995; Baruch, 2004) and are associated intimately with the image of self and felt identity (Hall 1986; Sullivan, 1998). This study aims to identify one's perceived personal qualities in one's career identity. One's career identity is based on expressing one's qualities. To perform the functions of his job, the person needs to have certain qualities, and develop and exercise them on a day-to-day basis. The data collection was done by semi-structured interviews and transcripts were made and member checking was done. The narratives were read to collect the codes and themes were identified. The themes that emerged were being trustworthy, being willing to take feedback from students, being Self-evaluative, doing my responsibilities, being sympathetic, having Communication skills, being Approachable, Confidence, and active Listener. On the contrary when they were indicated by the students were being role models, giving facts, upscaling, handling classroom responsibilities, drawing boundaries, having Critical thinking ability, being able to build trust and confidence, being self-reflective, and being able to give feedback to students.

**KEYWORDS:** Personal Qualities, Professionalism, Career identity, University teachers.

### Introduction

Career development is described as the construction of work identity of career judgments or events influenced by life or work experience, education, training, and other factors (American Psychological Association, 1988). The concept of "identity" is widely, concerns as a standard of psychological organization. From Erikson's point of view, identity is in due course the capacity to recognize oneself as a totality (Erickson, 1970) When the concept of identity is transferred to the field of research, career identity refers to how essential one's career to one's identity (London, 1983).

In context to career development and career identity, the National Policy for Education (NPE) in 1986 and 2020 recognized the need for improving the career status of the teacher and proposed to provide opportunities and initiatives for professional and career development so that teachers in the higher education could fulfill their roles and responsibility within the system of higher education. The objectives set were on par in creating a career identity for the teachers by mandating them to various programs and workshops to keep them updated on the latest trends related to their subjects so that there will be lifelong learning at every level, active involvement in decision making and leaders in higher education.

### Who is a teacher?

As Colbeck in 2002 and Gravestock in 2011 in their studies view the way faculty understand their profession. In this context, the work is evaluated in a separate category where the individual jointly generates activities that are related to teaching, research, and services to others and the institution.

University teachers' views of how their organization defines, evaluates, and rewards affect the role of how one does their work.

### Definition of teacher's identity

Goodson and Cole 1994 state that identity is an ongoing process of integration of the personal and professional sides of becoming or being a teacher. The teacher's life and work are influenced and considered important by the qualities and conditions within the classroom and outside the classroom (p88). It is a multifaceted, dynamic symmetry where professional self-image is even-handed with a range of roles teachers must play (Volkmann & Anderson, 1998). According to Coldron and Smith in 1999 it is a pressure between the individual's view and the societal view. It is a matter of being a teacher by themselves, but rather it is a concern whether to argue with your identity or to redefine the socially valid identity.

### Background Of The Study

The identity provides "an estimate of the clarity and stability" (Holland, 1997, p.5) of a person's identity or goals, interests, and talents. Like other constructs in Holland's theory, differentiation, consistency, and identity are used to describe both individuals and environments. Career progress is the process of improving and developing one's self-concept. Since the self-concept becomes more practical and static, so do the choice and plans. Individuals select jobs that have an agreement that allows them to direct their self-concept.

In the Super's development stages, the theory mostly describes the exploration of the major realistic tasks which are to improve an accurate self-concept and to execute a vocational preference

### Significance Of The Study

This study focuses on providing the teachers, administrations, and institutions about how the teachers form their identity in higher education. Many times, the teachers of higher education experience a disparity and discord between idealism and realism. This affects them in forming their identity in their career (Abbott & Chapman, 2005). Going by this kind of discord the focus of this study is to recognize how an individual career has been shaped and they have gained their identity personally. In context to situations like culture and institutions that may also play a role in their identity.

### Objectives

- To understand how the qualities of individuals lead to developing one's identities are integrated into one's career identity.
- To understand how the qualities of an individual lead to developing one professional identity that is integrated into one's career identity.

### Methodology

The participants were selected through purposive sampling. The criteria for including them in the sample was that they should have worked in the university or college with a doctorate between the age of 30 to 40 with more than five years of experience in the organization., the researcher uses the semi-structured interview method. The semi-structured is used to obtain information about specific areas of concern to teachers' identity. The rationale for using the tool is to obtain information in parts that help the researcher in developing the relevant questions based on the research objectives of the study. This, in turn, would assist to get accurate data in agreement with one's research objectives. In this context, the researcher will be developing an interview guide based on previous studies, literature present on the topic, and objectives. Based on that the researcher develops a threshold of items under each factor and then the lines of inquiry are made, and questions are developed for each factor. These questions are presented for validation from experts. The suggested modifications are incorporated and then administered to the sample.

The participants are selected per the criteria. The researcher explains the objective of the study and the purpose of the interview. After that, they are required to give their consent to participate in the study.

After they are requested to fill in personal data or demographic details and then the semi-structured interview is used to determine their perceptions and the various factors that determine their personal and professional identity.

### Analysis Of Data

First, the data was transcribed and the fieldnotes were organized in the appropriate files for the data analysis. First, the data is transcribed, and data management was done. Then the researcher read the text, makes margin texts and notes, and forms initial codes. Then the data were classified by breaking data into analytic units, then categories and themes. The analytical process involves careful interpretation of the texts to formulate themes and reveal the important information from the data concerning research objectives (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p.780). The initial part was familiarizing the data where the researcher reads and re-read the transcripts to get a clear understanding of its content. Then inductive codes are developed by reading the data in a bottom-up process to develop an in-depth analysis and relevant data are combined to assess the practicality of each emerging theme that constitutes the basic theme. (Boyatzis, 1998). Once the codes are made the researcher describes the story or the objective set of experiences. Based on the coding the researcher recognized themes that are combined as a significant set of these coding (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p.780). These themes form a comprehensive portrait of the participants which is the collective experience of the individual. These themes capture the important data about the research questions. The themes were validated Once it is validated the researchers start classifying by identifying the themes and sub-themes. Based on that the researcher identifies the contextual materials and group the statements which makes a meaningful statement to identify the self-representation of their identities.

### Ethical considerations

The Consent of the participant was taken before administering the questionnaires and Interviews. The Confidentiality of the results was maintained. For the qualitative purpose, the individual experiences were audiotaped and transcribed. The participants were free to withdraw from the study at any point in time. The participants were debriefed about relevant details of the study. The doubts about the interview participants were answered post the interview and for some over an email and telephonic call.

### Results And Discussion

*Table 1: Showing the themes for the area of personal qualities of self-representation of one career identity.*

| Keywords/<br>themes   | Basic themes                                         | Narratives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Personal<br>Qualities | Trustworthy                                          | <i>The trust they have in you, the belief how much they believe in you is what I feel is the best evaluation for us as a teacher.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                       | Feedback from students and Others                    | <i>“Based on feedback that we receive from the students, we give a lot of importance to feedback”<br/>“Personally introspective at times, sometimes at the end of the year, I ask the student to give an evaluation of me. I will prepare a questionnaire for them or give them what they will answer and I will find out using that to compare whether I come to that level”.</i> |
|                       | Self-evaluation as a tool for searching for identity | <i>“I evaluate my work with other departments of my college and other departments of other colleges in the same department. So further colleges what they have achieved in their departments and what they have done and how they have progressed and what I have we have done as ahead. I</i>                                                                                     |

|                        |                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                        |                                  | <p><i>have to look into the inter-department”</i></p> <p><i>“Well, I derive a lot from what I see around me. My students make me think they are the one which make me the most. I tend to get Anonymous feedback because I think they tell me what they feel. That made me the most excellent. So every time I get anonymous feedback, I know where I'm going wrong, and what I'm doing, right. I tune myself every time”</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                        | <b>Doing responsibilities</b> my | <p><i>“Express the sense of physical, maybe being regular, and class-oriented not just whiling away time in the class and also being equipped for the class when you go to class with full preparation.</i></p> <p><i>“I just want to do justice to my teaching career teacher”</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                        | <b>Sympathetic</b>               | <p><i>“I think I tend to be more sympathetic to students”.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                        | <b>Communication skill</b>       | <p><i>“It is Communication skills.... Now that is a skill that one needs to learn with being in this profession”.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                        | <b>Approachable</b>              | <p><i>“I want to be more simple, I want to be an approachable person”.</i></p> <p><i>“I would like to be a little more approachable”.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                        | <b>Confidence</b>                | <p><i>“My personal qualities, that motivates means that is nothing but my confidence, I am very confident”,</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                        | <b>Listener</b>                  | <p><i>“we are playing actually multiple roles, because we teach in the class, we are the counsellors outside the class, and we are the research guides in a very minimal way because we help the student to write papers and sometimes we are good listeners, some people they just need only a listener, I simply sit and listen, they don't expect anything”</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Professionalism</b> |                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                        | <b>Being a Role model</b>        | <p><i>“There are a lot of students who take us as model and then when we teach give them morals and values”</i></p> <p><i>“I want to be a role model for the students. My speech and my appearance have to be interesting to them”.</i></p> <p><i>“students to deliver what they require, if the courses that I teach have an impact on the students”.</i></p> <p><i>“I didn't want to be certain of the kind of teachers that I had primarily, you see the people who are like always come to the class and they like Keep shouting at the students. You didn't want to be that. But initially, I think I was like that Intended purpose”,</i></p> |
|                        | <b>Giving Facts</b>              | <p><i>“I should be very careful what I'm talking about because it has to be based on facts that is one response. Give them the facts then to teach them how to think about those controversies connected as history has lots of disagreements.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

|  |                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |                           | <i>"I feel it is a rewarding job first of all, and secondly you feel you have a great responsibility on your shoulders. unless you are convinced of what you teach you don't open your mouth. So 100% you're convinced what you teach with all the essential data to supplement to augment whatever you have, So you should be very factual. So these are the responsibilities".</i> |
|  | <b>Upscaling</b>          | <i>"I always keep myself updated. I want to be abreast of whatever is happening and so very much into information. So I guess to keep abreast of myself".</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|  | <b>Drawing Boundaries</b> | <i>"I don't help students in other ways to gain their appreciation".<br/>"The first one is you need to have a certain decorum, which is very important and the student staff communication level".<br/>"It's like we keep the student a stone's throw away. So now the official personal decorum we maintain".</i>                                                                   |
|  | <b>Critical thinking</b>  | <i>"Basic thing is to make them think independently. Instilling certain things, indoctrinating certain things is very easy, very easy, but to develop a critical acumen, to make them think independently, to enable them to say no when it is needed to say no"</i>                                                                                                                 |

### **Trustworthy**

One of the participants believes that it is a great responsibility as a teacher to improve the academic skills of the students. The reason behind developing the academic skills of the students is that every student comes to a class trusting that they are here for the academic program and that the teachers will empower them and make them employable. Thus, student trust every teacher, and hence every teacher need to show commitment to developing the academic skills of the student.

### **Feedback from students and Others**

Feedbacks from students are an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Feedback allows the teachers to see it from a different perspective whereas it gives specific feedback about the teaching and learning, pedagogical practices and gives an assurance that where the return on investment has been achieved. Even Though the evaluation process regulates the process, modifications cannot be made as the process is over, hence periodical feedback generally helps to keep us on track. The teacher needs to develop a quality of accepting feedback from students, Higher authorities and from colleagues.

### **Self-evaluation as a tool for searching identity**

Evaluation is an integral part of one's career. It can be a self-evaluation or an evaluation done by others which could be students, colleagues, and higher authorities. The participant indicates self-evaluation; it is one of the methods he follows to reinforce his identity and commitment to the job he performs. For that, he develops a pattern of rubrics that includes his weakness and positives and moreover makes it anonymous so that there is an honesty in the way feedback is given so that the teacher could improve their caliber in the job that they do.

### **Doing my responsibilities**

The participants indicate that the commitment lies in giving the sense to students in the context of the physical presence in the classes, being regular and class-oriented. Handling the classes with full preparation and being equipped with adequate reading material is the best way to do the teaching. She



indicates by that way we do justice to the profession. Any teacher who brings in those ideologies to the class expresses a commitment to their profession.

### ***Sympathetic***

One of the Personal qualities of the teacher should be more sympathetic to students may come from different backgrounds and they needs are different hence she feels that as teachers we need to be more sympathetic to them and she also indicates that she loves teaching and that's one interest the most this could be e quality e that motivates a teacher to be successful in their career.

### ***Communication skill***

Communication is an essential skill to convey knowledge to students. Communication brings in motivation to listen and participate in classes. When the students don't understand from the given lectures they may lose interest in the subject.

### ***Approachable***

The participant indicates that approachable teachers are someone who has the personal qualities of being nice and polite to the students. They might be friendly, encouraging, cooperative with the students, caring, and show empathetic behaviour. These qualities always lead to human touch in the way one responds to work behavior. It is also the quality of a teacher. On the contrary, there is also an indication that we need to maintain decorum, and distance which will avoid misunderstanding in terms of career identity.

### ***Confidence***

To be accepted and to be a successful teacher you need to speak ok with a lot of confidence. a confident teacher will be able to convince the class and could give an opinion and make the student accept it. confidence appears only when there is a strong understanding of a concept and we believe in their ability.

### ***Listener***

A teacher should be a listener. Listening inside the class and outside the class is very important because they also want to express their views and we could help them to develop and modify their views, for this reason, we need to develop the habit of listening. Sometimes we may just need to listen and remain not give any solution but rather just be a listener.

### ***Being a Role model***

In the journey of one student, teachers play a significant role as a mentor. Teachers act as role models for many students not only in their academics and in their co-curricular activities. It is the responsibility of the teacher to influence students' lives. Every teacher as they begin their career there may be a reason behind, in this context participant indicates that their idea of becoming a teacher is because of the teachers in their life, The participant had a role model who was their teacher, and one of the reasons why they wanted to become a teacher. The second reason was that they loved the subject and when thinking about this discipline.

## **GIVING FACTS**

In the context of professionalism as quality every teacher should be careful about what he or she talks about in the classroom. Every student listening to your lecture has to understand and comprehend, In their specialization, they may have to present facts. Giving them the facts and teaching them about the history behind it has been part of the job. If we must be professionals, we need to give them the right facts and explain the controversies and disagreements and teach them how to think in those circumstances. One of the professionalisms he also indicates in the context of spreading knowledge, the teacher needs to be convinced of the information that you want to say.

## **UPSCALING**

Every individual needs to update themselves in their academic aspect. The participants indicate that every teacher in their career needs to be abreast of the information. The awareness of updating on the

concepts and trends will make a teacher more professional. This quality is one is important in the context of professionalism.

### **DRAWING BOUNDARIES**

Treating each student at the same level whether they achieve or not achieve. Treating them at the same bar would ensure the professionalism of the teacher. Professionalism is an integral part of any occupation. This indicates that the first professional aspect that is required in the job is to maintain decorum in the workspace. This indicates in context to the student and staff interaction. To maintain the right identity indeed, we need to communicate with the students in a dignified way.

### **CRITICAL THINKING**

One of the professionalism every teacher should be cautious of installing is to make students think independently. It is easy to be Traditional But very difficult to develop critical acumen and to think independently. One of the professional responsibilities of a teacher is to develop independent thinking and also an ability to be assertive.

### **FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Personal qualities are very essential, that determine the way one performs their career. One's career identity is based on expressing one's qualities. To perform the functions of his job, the person needs to have certain qualities. Based on the narratives it is found that a teacher needs to have the qualities of being trustworthy and feedback from students and other teachers. The self-evaluation one makes in his life helps to identify and develops one's identity. It is also expressed that one needs to express his or her commitment by doing one's responsibilities. The teacher has to be very sympathetic, should have good communication skills, needs to be approachable, good listener, and also express his confidence.

In context to professionalism, every teacher should be careful about what he or she talks about in the classroom. The teacher should be able to express their behavior in their job very appropriately. We do have the responsibility to give essential facts and information because every teacher is in the business of spreading knowledge and that knowledge needs to be factual. one of the professionalism he also indicates in context to spreading the knowledge, the teacher needs to be convinced in the information that you want to say. We need to be role models to the students, as they observe our behaviors and they imitate them in their life in the future hence they had to be role models. There needs to be upscaling themselves in their life, which means they need to be a constant learner and they need to be upgrading themselves. They also need to be acting them responsibly in their classrooms. They need to express themselves in terms of teaching, pedagogy, and portions, teach and be on time for class. As part of being a teacher in expressing their professional behavior, one needs to understand their boundaries and they need to interact with the students. It is also important to develop their thinking skills, and build trust and confidence as only through this the teacher can make them learn the subject and imbibe it in their career choice and life. Self-reflection is one of the ideal modes to work being a professional because introspection and reflection enable one to act professionally and understand whether they cross their boundaries. The feedback taking is also important in identifying their role as to whether we are working professionally or not.

As there are different identities for a teacher where the participants indicate teaching as a primary role. Even though they have various identities, is there a preference to have teaching as a primary role she would be interested to do? Teaching has been the primary role for building all professionals. Every professional and career an individual chooses has been part of the college and the university. As an individual teachers play different roles in the institution, however, the primary role of a teacher is to teach. The positions may come and go. However, the teacher will retire and always be identified for their teaching skills.

Student fraternity may expect a teacher to be friendly in their approach towards them however as teachers we need to realize that we can be friendly, but we cannot become their friends. As teachers, we have different roles we need to play according to the situation. Apart from being a teacher,

sometimes we need to act as Guardians, we need to help them as friends, and also some extra roles like a counselor.

### **Recommendations for the further research**

The study can be enhanced by the identification of factors that leads them to continue their career as teachers and identify themselves with the career.

The study could be further researched in the male and female patterns of identifying career identities.

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