

N. TUNGATOVA<sup>1</sup>, MEHMET AKIF SÖZER<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University (Kyzylorda, Kazakhstan)*

<sup>2</sup>*Gazi University (Ankara Province, Republic of Turkiye)*

\*Address of correspondence: Tungatova Nurgul, Educational program of «Pedagogy, psychology and methods of primary education», Kyzylorda University named after Korkyt Ata, Tole Bi Str., 36, Kyzylorda, 120000, Republic of Kazakhstan, E-mail address: nurgul\_t\_88@mail.ru/Tel.:+77781906106

## PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *Abstract*

The article examines the theoretical foundations of professional identity formation among future primary school teachers. Based on scholarly literature analysis, professional identity is defined as an integrative personal formation characterized by conscious acceptance of pedagogical values, professional norms, and behavioral models. The paper presents a comparative analysis of three key theoretical approaches to studying this phenomenon: Personal Interpretative Framework (PIF) theory, Korthagen's "Onion Model" concept of professional development, and Day & Kington's theory of professional, situational, and personal identity. Through comparative analysis, common conceptual provisions and specific features of the examined theoretical constructs are identified in the context of primary education teacher preparation. The significance of this work lies in the potential application of the identified theoretical principles in developing methodologies for forming professional identity of future primary school teachers during their professional training.

*Keywords:* professional identity, future primary school teacher, theory of Personal Interpretative Framework (PIF), theory of the "Onion Model" Korthagen, theory of professional, situational and personal identity Day & Kington, theoretical framework.

**Introduction.** The study of professional identity formation among future primary school teachers has emerged as a critical area of research that demands thorough investigation. The significance of this topic is multifaceted and intersects with several crucial aspects of modern education, professional development, and societal needs. Teachers are no longer mere transmitters of knowledge but are expected to be facilitators, mentors, technology integrators, and agents of social change. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) emphasized that such expansion of roles necessitates a strong and well-developed professional identity, which begins forming during pre-service teacher education. Understanding how this identity develops is crucial for improving teacher preparation programs and ensuring the success of future educators (Beauchamp, 2009).

Research by Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) demonstrated that teachers with a strong professional identity show greater resilience,

job satisfaction, and effectiveness in the classroom. They are better equipped to handle the complex demands of modern teaching, including adapting to new pedagogical approaches, managing diverse classrooms, and implementing educational innovations. The formation of professional identity in future primary school teachers is intrinsically linked to the quality of education they will provide (Beijaard, 2004). According to Flores and Day (2006), primary education serves as the foundation for all subsequent learning, making it essential that teachers at this level possess not only the necessary skills and knowledge but also a clear understanding of their professional role and identity (Flores, 2006).

Hong (2010) found that high rates of teacher attrition, particularly among early-career educators, underscore the importance of developing a strong professional identity during teacher preparation. Teachers with a well-developed professional identity are more

likely to remain in the profession and continue developing their expertise, which has significant implications for educational stability and quality. Given current educational challenges, research into the professional identity of future primary school teachers carries both academic relevance and practical implications for educational policy, teacher education programs, and primary education quality. Insights from such research can contribute to enhanced teacher preparation and support systems, ultimately benefiting educators and students alike (Hong, 2010).

The investigation of theoretical frameworks regarding professional identity of future primary school teachers is crucial for several fundamental reasons. Beijaard et al. (2004) emphasize that understanding theoretical frameworks helps identify key components and processes involved in professional identity formation, providing a structured approach to studying this complex phenomenon. A clear theoretical foundation allows researchers to systematically examine how various factors interact and influence the development of teacher identity during pre-service education (Beijaard, 2004). According to Sachs (2005), theoretical frameworks serve as analytical tools for understanding the multiple dimensions of professional identity development (Sachs, 2005). They help reveal how personal beliefs, professional knowledge, and social contexts interconnect in shaping a teacher's professional

self-concept. Studying theoretical foundations is essential for establishing methodological approaches. As Izadinia (2013) points out, understanding conceptual frameworks guides researchers in selecting appropriate research methods and tools for investigating professional identity development. This theoretical grounding ensures research validity and reliability while contributing to the broader body of knowledge in teacher education (Izadinia, 2013).

Kelchtermans (2009) argues that theoretical frameworks provide the necessary structure for analyzing how professional identity evolves over time and across different educational contexts. This understanding is crucial for developing effective teacher education programs that support identity formation. The examination of theoretical foundations also helps bridge the gap between theory and practice (Kelchtermans, 2009). Day et al. (2006) demonstrate that understanding conceptual frameworks enables teacher educators to design more effective interventions and support systems for pre-service teachers, directly impacting their professional development (Day, 2006).

**Materials and Methods.** The research methodology of professional identity theories for future primary school teachers is based on a systematic approach to analyzing theoretical foundations.

According to Creswell & Poth (2018), this methodology includes several interrelated analysis components (table 1).

Table 1 – *Analysis Components of Professional Identity Theories for Future Primary School Teachers*

Component	Description	Key Sources/Authors
A systematic review of primary sources	- content analysis of the theoretical foundations - historical analysis - comparative analysis of approaches	Creswell & Poth (2018)
Data collection methods	- analysis of fundamental works - study of empirical research - meta-analysis	Cooper (2018)
A structured approach to analysis	- identification of key constructs - evaluation of theories - study of practical application	Cooper (2018)
Critical Analysis Tools	- theoretical comparison - validity and reliability analysis	Day & Kington (2008), Kelchtermans (2009)
Reflexive analysis	- evaluation of theories in the context of teacher training	Kelchtermans (2009)

The first component is a systematic review of primary sources, including content analysis of theoretical foundations, historical analysis of theory development, and comparative analysis of various theoretical approaches to understanding teacher professional identity. Data collection methods cover analysis of fundamental works on teacher professional identity development, examination of empirical research testing existing theories, and meta-analysis of research results related to theoretical foundations.

Cooper (2018) proposes a structured approach to analytical work, beginning with identifying key theoretical constructs and building connections between different theories. This is followed by evaluating theoretical assumptions and studying their practical application in teacher education. Special attention is given to analyzing modern applications of theories in primary teacher preparation context (Cooper, 2018).

An important methodological aspect is the use of critical analysis tools, including theory mapping, conceptual framework analysis, and inter-theoretical comparison. Day & Kington (2008) emphasize the need to evaluate theoretical constructs' validity and reliability in modern education (Day, 2008). Kelchtermans (2009) supplements the methodology with the necessity for reflective analysis of theoretical positions in practical teacher preparation context (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Thus, the research methodology of professional identity theories for future primary school teachers represents a comprehensive approach, combining various analysis methods aimed at deep understanding of theoretical foundations in teacher professional identity formation.

**Results.** The Personal Interpretative Framework (PIF) theory, developed by Kelchtermans (1993, 2009), provides a fundamental conceptual foundation for understanding teachers' professional development and identity. This theoretical framework is based on a narrative-biographical approach to studying teacher professional development and emphasizes the dynamic nature of professional identity (Kelchtermans, 1993; Kelchtermans, 2009).

The PIF theoretical framework consists of two interrelated components: professional

self-understanding and subjective educational theory. Professional self-understanding, according to Kelchtermans (2009), includes five interconnected aspects that form a holistic view of teacher professional identity. The first aspect is self-image, reflecting how teachers describe themselves through their professional stories and experience. The second is self-esteem, characterizing the evaluative component of self-understanding and closely linked to teaching effectiveness. The third aspect – work motivation – encompasses the motives that drive people to choose, maintain, or leave the teaching profession. The fourth aspect – task perception – reflects teachers' understanding of their professional duties and work program. The fifth aspect – future perspective – includes teachers' expectations about their professional future (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Subjective educational theory, the second key component of PIF, represents a personal system of knowledge and beliefs about teaching that teachers use in their professional practice. Kelchtermans (1993) emphasizes that this system is formed through the interaction of formal pedagogical education, practical experience, and personal reflection (Kelchtermans, 1993).

PIF theory places special emphasis on the contextuality and temporality of professional development. Kelchtermans (2009) argues that teacher professional identity is formed and transformed within specific institutional contexts and through the temporal perspective of career development. The theory also emphasizes the importance of professional vulnerability as an inherent characteristic of the teaching profession that influences professional identity formation (Kelchtermans, 2009).

In the "Onion Model" theory, Korthagen (2004) presents a detailed characterization of each level of teacher professional development, where each subsequent level reflects a deeper aspect of professional formation. Analyzing the external level – environment, the researcher emphasizes its multi-component structure, including the physical space of the educational environment, social context of interaction with educational process participants, organizational aspects of pedagogical activity, cultural factors,

and economic conditions for implementing educational tasks (Korthagen, 2004).

At the behavioral level, the theory focuses on specific professional actions of educators, including didactic strategies, management decisions, communication practices, assessment activities, and professional interaction. Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) note that this level directly relates to the practical implementation of pedagogical competencies (Korthagen, 2005).

The competencies level encompasses professional knowledge and skills, including subject expertise, pedagogical abilities, methodological literacy, psychological-pedagogical competence, and research and digital skills. According to Meijer et al. (2009), this level forms the foundation of a teacher's professional effectiveness (Meijer, 2009).

The deeper level of beliefs reflects the system of pedagogical values, educational philosophy, views on learning nature and teacher's role, understanding of educational goals, and beliefs about student abilities. Korthagen (2004) emphasizes that this level significantly influences pedagogical decisions and choice of educational strategies (Korthagen, 2004).

The professional identity level involves processes of professional self-determination, formation of professional roles, development of personal-professional qualities, and professional self-assessment. Researchers consider this level determinant for sustainable professional development of educators.

The central mission level reveals the profound aspects of the teaching profession: personal calling, professional ideals, moral obligations, social responsibility, and vision for education's future. Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) note this level as fundamental for forming a teacher's holistic professional personality. Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) emphasize that all model levels constantly interact and influence each other. Changes at external levels can transform internal levels and vice versa. Deeper levels (mission, identity) determine professional development stability and fundamentally influence external manifestations of teacher's professional activity (Korthagen, 2005).

This theoretical model's particular significance lies in its ability to integrate various aspects of teacher professional development into a unified system, enabling more effective planning and implementation of teacher training programs. Korthagen (2017) notes that the model can serve as a foundation for reflective practice in pedagogical education and promote deeper understanding of teacher professional development processes (Korthagen, 2017).

The theory of professional, situational, and personal identity developed by Day & Kington (2008) provides a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding teacher identity's multidimensional nature. Researchers assert that teacher professional identity forms through interaction of three distinct but interconnected dimensions: professional, situational, and personal identity. According to Day & Kington (2008), professional identity reflects social and political expectations of a "good teacher" and includes educational policy, social trends, workload, and professional roles. This identity aspect forms under influence of long-term political and social trends in education, professional standards, and societal expectations of teachers (Day, 2008).

Situational identity, the theory's second component, relates to specific school context, including local environment, administrative support, colleague relationships, and student behavior. Day et al. (2006) emphasize that this identity aspect can vary depending on specific school and may change with workplace changes or shifts in school context. Personal identity, the third component of the theory, encompasses the teacher's life outside school, including family roles and social relationships. Researchers note that this aspect of identity is closely connected to the teacher's personal history, values, and beliefs, which influence their professional practice (Day, 2006).

Day & Kington (2008) argue that these three dimensions of identity are in constant interaction and can be in a state of balance or imbalance. The stability of a teacher's professional identity depends on their ability to manage tensions between different dimensions of identity (Day, 2008).

The theory pays special attention to the dynamic nature of teacher identity. Day et al. (2007) emphasize that identity is not fixed but is constantly formed and reformed under the influence of personal experience, professional relationships, and organizational context. The theory also examines the influence of the emotional aspect on teacher identity formation. Day & Kington (2008) argue that emotional well-being is closely linked to identity stability and professional effectiveness of the educator (Day, 2006).

**Discussion.** A comparative analysis of theoretical concepts of professional identity for future teachers, including Kelchtermans’ Personal Interpretative Framework (PIF) theory, Korthagen’s “Onion Model”, and Day & Kington’s theory of professional, situational,

and personal identity, enabled a SWOT analysis that reveals the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each theoretical model (Table 2).

A comparative analysis of teacher professional identity theories, including Kelchtermans’ Personal Interpretative Framework (PIF), Korthagen’s “Onion Model”, and Day & Kington’s theory of professional, situational, and personal identity, reveals both significant commonalities and differences in their conceptual approaches. All three theories show fundamental similarity in recognizing the dynamic nature of teacher professional identity, the importance of personal-professional interaction, the multi-component structure of identity, the significance of context in its formation, and the key role of reflection in professional development.

Table 2. *SWOT Analysis of Teachers’ Professional Identity Theories*

Category	PIF (Kelchtermans)	Onion Model (Korthagen)	Day & Kington Model
Strengths	1. Emphasizes the dynamic nature of professional identity.	1. Integrates all levels of professional development.	1. Accounts for the multidimensionality of identity (professional, situational, personal).
	2. Focuses on biographical analysis.	2. Universal applicability for reflective practices.	2. Highlights the role of context and emotions.
	3. Considers the influence of context and temporal changes.	3. Serves as a foundation for designing educational programs.	3. Suitable for analyzing teachers’ emotional well-being.
Weaknesses	1. Limited application for quantitative research.	1. Complexity of integrating all levels into teaching practices.	1. Difficulty in identifying and managing the three dimensions of identity.
	2. Requires deep biographical information.	2. The model may be challenging to implement without adequate preparation.	2. High dependence on context, making generalization difficult.
Opportunities	1. Development of teacher training programs based on biographical analysis.	1. Adaptation for individual and group training.	1. Creation of programs for emotional support of teachers.
	2. Application for adapting to changing educational conditions.	2. Use of the model to design career trajectories for teachers.	2. Use in analyzing stress resilience in the teaching profession.
Threats	1. Challenges in data interpretation due to the subjectivity of analysis.	1. Limited application in contexts where deeper levels are difficult to identify.	1. Imbalance between professional, situational, and personal identities may lead to professional burnout.
	2. Potential lack of reliability in the collected data.	2. Inability to account for unique cultural characteristics.	

The theories differ significantly in component structure including professional structural organization: PIF presents a two-self-understanding and subjective educational

theory; the “Onion Model” builds six concentric levels from environment to mission; Day & Kington’s theory operates with three dimensions of identity. Methodological approaches also show substantial differences: PIF relies on narrative-biographical method, the “Onion Model” uses a level-based approach, and Day & Kington’s theory applies dimensional methodology. Notable differences exist in context interpretation, where PIF views it as part of professional experience, the “Onion Model” as an external development level, and Day & Kington’s theory designates it as a separate identity dimension. Special emphases also vary: PIF focuses on professional vulnerability, the “Onion Model” emphasizes mission and calling, and Day & Kington’s theory concentrates on emotional well-being and stability. In practical application, PIF targets understanding professional development, the “Onion Model” aims at practical reflection, and Day & Kington’s theory focuses on managing professional identity. These theoretical approaches, complementing each other, create a comprehensive foundation for researching and understanding teacher professional identity formation processes.

**Conclusions.** Theoretical analysis of professional identity concepts for future primary school teachers, examining Kelchtermans’ Personal Interpretative Framework (PIF), Korthagen’s “Onion Model”, and Day & Kington’s theory of professional, situational, and personal identity, yields significant conclusions about teacher professional identity development. The research shows that all three theoretical models, despite differences in structure and

methodology, recognize professional identity’s dynamic nature and emphasize the importance of personal-professional interaction in its formation. The analysis reveals theoretical unity in understanding professional identity’s multicomponent structure and context’s key role in its development.

Comparative analysis shows each theory’s unique contribution: Kelchtermans’ PIF emphasizes narrative-biographical approach and professional vulnerability, Korthagen’s Onion Model offers holistic understanding of external-internal development aspects, and Day & Kington’s theory focuses on identity dimension balance and teacher emotional well-being. SWOT analysis revealed their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, enabling more effective model application in research and practice. Methodological analysis indicates that combined application of these approaches can provide deeper understanding of future primary teachers’ professional identity formation. The potential for integrating various aspects of these theories to create effective teacher training programs is particularly valuable. Analysis results confirm the need to consider both individual teacher development characteristics and contextual factors affecting professional identity formation. The theoretical research also demonstrates the importance of reflective practice in teacher professional development and the need for a supportive educational environment. Overall, the analysis confirms the complexity of this phenomenon and justifies the need for a comprehensive approach to its study and development in modern teacher education.

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*Z. UTEMISOVA**Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University (Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

\*Address for correspondence: Utemisova Zhanna, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Dostyk Avenue 13, Almaty, 050010, Republic of Kazakhstan,  
E-mail address: jan8821@mail.ru/ Tel.:+77781131724

## **FORMATION OF STUDENTS' SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES**

### *Abstract*

This research examines the correlation between volunteer activities and the formation of social responsibility among higher education students through a mixed-methods research approach. The investigation employs both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to analyze the multifaceted impact of volunteering on students' personal development and civic engagement. Through a systematic review of existing literature and original empirical research involving students across multiple institutions, the study identifies critical mechanisms through which voluntary service influences social consciousness and civic responsibility. The research methodology incorporated pre- and post-intervention assessments, semi-structured interviews, and longitudinal observations. Results indicate significant improvements in students' leadership capabilities, teamwork proficiency, and social awareness metrics. The study proposes an evidence-based framework for integrating volunteering into university curricula, encompassing structured motivation systems, competency-based training modules, and practical social project implementation strategies. The findings contribute to the growing body of literature on experiential learning and civic education in higher education, offering practical implications for institutional policy development and program implementation in university settings.

*Keywords:* social responsibility, volunteer activities, education, students, higher education, youth.