

The Development of Teacher Professional Identity at the University of Dar es Salaam: Perceptions and Influencing Factors

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Abstract

The success of quality assurance in higher education depends on how well it is organised and the extent to which the stakeholders accept and own it. Indeed, how academicians perceive themselves, their profession, and others in the profession is reflected in their practice which in turn affects the quality of education being provided. This research investigated how various categories of university lecturers perceived their identity, and how the inception of professional development program has influenced the construction of professional identities. To achieve its research objective, the study deployed a mixed methods research of interviews and questionnaire design to collect pertinent information from 67 faculty members of the University of Dar es Salaam. The study established that the formation of teacher professional identity (TPI) has largely been influenced by the level of training in pedagogy, academic training, and practical experience as an academician. Continuing professional development programs have had little impact because of their sporadic occurrences. Similarly, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment that is undertaken under the name of quality assurance is negatively perceived by some respondents as an imposition and encroachment on teacher autonomy. Four of the five dimensions of teacher professional identity identified by Wenger (1998) were observed in the respondents' narratives, namely identity as negotiated experiences, identity as community membership, identity as learning trajectory, and identity as nexus of multi membership. The research findings suggest the need for more and systematic sensitisation of academic staff; sharing of a common understanding; use of professionals in curriculum, psychology and educational management; and systematic induction of newly-recruited staff.

Introduction

In recent years, universities in East Africa under the umbrella of the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) have seen the need to harmonise and ensure the quality of the programmes they offer (IUCEA, 2008). Towards this end, a regional Quality

Assurance initiative was introduced for quality assurance co-ordinators in East African universities at the IUCEA headquarters. The primary aim was to support the universities in implementing good practices for quality assurance, application of standards and criteria as formulated by competent authorities, development of an adequate internal quality assurance (IQA) system in sync with international development frameworks, and promotion of quality through the use of self-assessment instruments for IQA in the teaching and learning process. In fact, the training of quality assurance co-ordinators is based on a model for the self-assessment of teaching and learning which requires professional expertise in education, for example, curriculum design, programme specifications, formulation of expected learning outcomes, organisation of the programme, didactic concept, student assessment and/or evaluation. Programs for teacher development in the areas of pedagogy and the use of ICT in teaching and learning have been mounted for academic staffs.

However, the success of this intervention in higher education generally depends on how well it is organised and the extent to which the stakeholders accept and own it. Equally important in this process is how academicians perceive themselves and their profession as well as how they perceive others in their own professions, attitudes reflected in their practice, which in turn affect the quality of the education delivery. It is assumed that the teacher professional development program has an influence in the development of professional identity of staffs at the university. However, there has been no systematic study that examined how the staff perceive such a program and what influence the program and other factors have in the development of teacher professional identity. As a consequence, our understanding about how different factors influence university lecturers' self-perception is limited and remains unsupported by empirical evidence. The controversy surrounding teacher preparation models in Tanzania (Levira & Mahenge, 1996; Dasu, 2001; Galabawa, 2001; Kalugula, 2001; and Wangeleja, 2003; as well as the unsettled relationship between pedagogy and content (Mosha, 2000; Rajabu, 2000), and the triple roles of the university lecturers as well as lack of lecturers' professional bodies in higher learning institutions pose more questions than answers on how to characterize teacher professional identity in Tanzania at a general level and in higher learning institutions in particular.

This research aimed at investigating how various categories of university lecturers perceive their identity, and how the inception of professional development program has influenced the construction of professional identities. This study established that the formation of teacher professional identity has largely been influenced by the level of training in pedagogy, academic training, and practical experience as an academician, Continuing professional development programs have had little impact because of their sporadic occurrences. Similarly, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment that is undertaken under the name of quality assurance is negatively perceived by some respondents as an imposition and encroachment on teacher autonomy. Such sentiments could be a reaction against the managerialist conditions imposed under the

university's institutional transformation program that began in the mid 1990s (Mukandala, 2012). Four of the five dimensions of teacher professional identity identified by Wenger (1998) were observed in the respondents' narratives, namely identity *as negotiated experiences*, identity *as community membership*, identity *as learning trajectory*, and identity *as nexus of multi membership*.

Research Objectives and Questions

This research undertaking focused on the construction of teacher professional identity in higher learning institutions in Tanzania and how the inception of teacher professional development initiatives and quality assurance practice influenced the construction of professional identity in these institutions. The following research questions were used to realise the research objectives:

- How do university lecturers perceive their professional identity? Which factors define teacher professional identity?
- How does professional identity vary across time?
- What institutional factors have influenced the construction of teacher professional identity?

Review of Relevant Literature

Conceptual Overview

The literature on teacher professionalism suggests an intricate relationship between teacher professionalism, teacher professional standards, teacher professional development and teacher professional identity. John Craig and Catherine Fieschi (2007) define teacher professionalism as a set of collectively held norms that regulate the teaching profession according to values and practices that are embedded in the experience of shared professional goals and relationships. Similarly, teacher professionalism is described as comprising the focus on teachers' work; becoming professional in one's outlook, knowledgeable and committed; developing professional judgment, professional ethics and ethos that pervades schools; and teacher identity (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2012). In both the definitions we can see the interconnection between professional standards (e.g. norms and values), commitment to the standards (i.e. teacher professionalism), and ability to develop within the profession (i.e. teacher professional development). According to Epstein (1978), identity is essentially a concept of synthesis, integration and action that "represents the process by which the person seeks to integrate his (sic) various statuses and roles, as well as his diverse experiences, into a coherent image of self" (p. 101). Indeed, it is a result of practice, reflection on that practice, and continuous professional development. In particular, identity has five dimensions: (i) identity *as negotiated experiences* where we define who we are by the ways we experience our selves through

participation as well as the way we and others reify our selves; (ii) identity *as community membership* where we define who we are by the familiar and the unfamiliar; (iii) identity *as learning trajectory* where we define who we are by where we have been and where are going; (iv) identity *as nexus of multi membership* where we define who we are by the ways we reconcile our various forms of identity into one identity; and (v) identity *as a relation between the local and the global* where we define who we are by negotiating local ways of belonging to broader constellations and manifesting broader styles and discourses (Wenger, 1998, p. 149).

A professional is a person who has completed a programme of rigorous initial preparation involving specialised knowledge as decided by the profession, and who has been approved by the profession as a registered practitioner with the right to exercise autonomous, professional judgment” (Hooley, 2007, p. 50). Thus, professional identity is reinforced by the existence of a regulatory body. Usually, the use of the term “professional” helps to make distinction between professionals and non-professionals. In this respect, professional identity is linked to “the concept of profession and of the professional” (Munoz Palm, 2008, p. 113). In the teaching context, professional identity depends on three-pronged main characteristics: (a) expertise in one’s area of specialisation, (b) moral integrity, and (c) expertise in didactical terms. Of course, other significant attributes include specialised knowledge, code of professional ethics, professional autonomy, organisation and regulation, and public service provision (Carr, 2000; Shon, 2006). These characteristics are central in all professional undertakings; they act as a framework within which every professional works; and they are instrumental in the attainment of the goals of professional communities.

Overtime, scholars have been revisiting the concept of teacher professional identity. For example, Marcelo (2009, pp. 9-10) highlights four revised characteristics that are relevant shaping teacher professional identity. First, professional teacher identity is an evolutionary process that draws on the interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences. In this perspective, *professional teacher identity is continually being defined and redefined*. Second, professional identity is not global in character. Indeed, the conduct of professional teachers depends on the environment or context, or local particularities to which they are responding. In other words, teachers—as a professional group—are not homogenous; they differ considerably. Third, closely related to the second characteristic, professional teacher identity is a function, or a result, of sub-identities which are not necessarily related. Fourth, professional identity is instrumental in making teachers motivated, committed, satisfied, or in short, making them good teachers. We opine that these attributes have implications for quality issues in educational institutions.

The Role of Professional Identity

Scholars share the view that professional identity is important in the education sector (Marcelo, 2009). Through professional identity teachers perceive themselves, hence

creating a sense of camaraderie and professional connection and recognition. As such, professional identity is a function of teachers' efforts to define themselves and others (Marcelo, 2009, p. 9). The definition is geared towards marking a distinction between professionals and other groups of people. Professional teacher identity is also shaped during pre-service preparation, as new recruits are initiated into the basics of professional teaching. The other identity shaping factor is the professional context in which teachers assume work in their post-training professional undertaking. Nevertheless, the world of work for a teacher is not an end in itself; rather, it constitutes a beginning towards teachers' re-education programmes in their respective areas of specialty. Continuing professional growth is a necessary condition for enriched professional teacher identity. Similarly, the available literature reaffirms the importance of professional identity in reinforcing quality issues in the education sector. Quality in higher education refers to effective teaching and learning, resulting from adequate resources, including teachers' competence (Okebuka and Shabani, 2007). Adequate and quality resources facilitate quality teaching and learning. It has also been established that competent teachers in their respective areas of specialty help to produce quality graduates. Indeed, professional identity and quality are inseparable. "Quality assurance and enhancement are essential processes in all learning environments" (Bardi, 2009, p. 6). Thus, as Bardi points out, "any work on quality assurance needs to start from teachers' own perceptions and opinions about what quality means in their specific teaching contexts" (p. 6).

The Construction of Teacher Professional Identity

Many of the university lecturers have had no formal training in pedagogy. They were recruited to teach on the basis of their high GPAs. These will gain teaching experience as university lecturers through trial-and-error. Few of these lecturers recognise that their lack of professional teaching training constituted a challenge that needs to be addressed through exposure to pedagogical training. For the majority of these lecturers in Tanzania, possession of a strong basis in the academic disciplines such as Mathematics, Chemistry, Engineering, Political Science, Linguistics, or Geography is considered a sufficient teaching credential. However, some of the university lecturers in the schools of education and other faculties have had prior professional training in education in their undergraduate and even post-graduate university education (for some even diploma level education prior to joining the university) in addition to acquiring academic content in one or two disciplines. These often tend to have graduated with B.A.s/B.Sc.s. with Education or B.Ed. (Arts/Science), or PGDE prior to their employment at the university as TAs, assistant lecturers, or lecturers.

There has been much debate in Tanzania on which model of teacher preparation produces the right kind of teachers. At the primary and secondary school levels, conceptions about the best curriculum revolve around the primacy of knowledge of subject matter over pedagogy, and vice-versa. Levira and Mahenge (1996), Dasu (2001),

Galabawa (2001), Kalugula (2001) and Wangeleja (2003) have emphasised pedagogical competence in the preparation of teachers over knowledge of subject matter. On the other hand, Mosha (2000), Rajabu (2000) and the TDMS report (2007) emphasise knowledge of the subject matter over pedagogical competence; they see such knowledge as a critical ingredient in the preparation of teachers even as they are exposed to pedagogical issues. The replacement in 2000 of a Diploma in Education curriculum that had teaching subjects with one that had no teaching subjects was short-lived because in 2007 the Diploma in Education curriculum with teaching subjects was reinstated. This u-turn actually affirms the importance of both pedagogy and knowledge of subject content in the promotion of quality teaching. The lesson that can be drawn from this development is that the best curriculum in the preparation of teachers benefits from both aspects. Indeed, an ideal curriculum requires a combination of an academic component (Viebahn, 2003), a pedagogical component and some reflective and practical experience (Lewin & Stuart, 2003). Such a combination can make the teacher knowledgeable and effective as well as confident and efficient. And yet, over the years, at the University of Dar es Salaam, the conception of the professional teacher appears to lean towards either orientation. This study, therefore, sought to investigate lecturers' perceptions and influencing factors on their professional identity.

Research Methods

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to investigate the University lecturers' perceptions of their identity. In-depth interview and questionnaires were the research tools to collect the required information. The interview guide sought views of the respondents with regard to their perception of own identity, views on efficacy of the internal quality assurance system, involvement in the professional development programs at the campus, impact of the programs on professional development, and recommendations to the university management. The questionnaire required respondents to indicate the degree of agreement and disagreement to various statements by circling (or marking) the appropriate number 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Indifferent, 4 = Agree, 5 = strongly agree. The statements focused on perception of own identity, whether there was change in identity over time, what caused the change, views on the internal quality assurance system, how it was implemented, and views on professional development programs. The focus was on the meaning that lecturers attached to quality assurance, their role in it, and how they perceive themselves (Edson, 1997).

The University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), as a premier institution of higher learning in Tanzania, was used as a case study. The target population included all lecturers involved in the professional development programs at the University of Dar es Salaam. Purposive and random sampling procedures were used to identify lecturers with different levels of experience, academic qualifications and areas of specialisation. Each participant was seen as capable of expanding the variability of the sample. As this was only a case

study, the findings cannot be over-generalised to apply to all other university lecturers in the country without qualification, or considering their operational environment. The background and sample characteristics of research participants are summarised and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Background characteristics of participants in the study

Characteristics	Profile	Number of participants
Gender	Male	41
	Female	20
Academic rank	Assistant Lecturer	41
	Lecturer	04
	Lecturer Senior Lecturer	06
	Professor	04
Specialisation	Arts & Social Sciences	26
	Natural & Applied Sciences	13
	Education	22
	Others	05

Information generated through the use of interviews was transcribed word for word to make it more readable and detailed. Then categories developed depicted different ways in which a certain phenomenon was conceived (Marton & Booth, 1997). This process is also known as coding done at three levels (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). *Open coding*, the first level, involved identifying, developing, labelling and grouping concepts to form categories of the phenomenon found in the data; *axial coding*, the second level, involved an intense analysis of each category; and *coding*, the final stage, entailed selective coding. A core category of qualitative information was determined and analysed in relation to other major categories. Quantitative data, on the other hand, was analysed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Research Findings

The results of the research findings arising from the interviews and questionnaire are presented and discussed under four major headings in light of the research questions: (i) what factors define teacher professional identity? (ii) How do university lecturers perceive their professional identity?; (iii) How does professional identity vary across time?; and (iv) What institutional factors have influenced the construction of teacher professional identity?

What Factors Define Teacher Professional Identity?

Professional identity

In this section, the focus was on how lecturers at the University of Dar es Salaam perceive their professional identity. A questionnaire was administered with the lecturers. The research findings suggest that the majority of the participants involved in the study largely tended to identify themselves primarily as teachers rather than as researchers or consultants.

Teacher professional identity

Participants were asked through in-depth interviews about a number of aspects that touched on the development of teacher professional identity. These included minimum requirements for one to qualify as a professional teacher, professional certification and experience, adherence to professional code of conduct and membership to professional bodies. The respondents provided several attributes as essential in defining and characterising professional teacher identity at the University of Dar es Salaam as narrated below.

Training and/or education: Training and/or education was identified as a crucial attribute for all professionals in the teaching enterprise. Every university teacher was expected to be knowledgeable and competent in not only the content of their specialised subject matter but also the pedagogical aspect. This finding is, indeed, in line with what other scholars indicate as knowledge base resulting from education or training in particular period in a recognised institution with an approved curricula (see, for example, Carr, 2000).

Professional certification: Certification assumes the existence of an authority responsible for certifying teachers with appropriate credentials on successful completion of their training programme and teaching probation. The respondents affirmed that professional certification was an indicator of qualification in a particular area of specialisation or programme. Indeed, certification is one of the gate-passes to the corridors of professional teachers' community.

Professional experience: The respondents also cited experience as an important attribute in cultivating professional teacher identity in Tanzania. They indicated that a certified teacher is supposed to work for some time before gaining the stature of a professional teacher.

Adherence to a professional code of conduct: The research participants acknowledged the importance of a code of professional teacher conduct. The enforcement of a

professional code of conduct by a professional body, they said, can preserve and sustain the sanctity associated with the teaching profession in addition to ensuring that its members rendered verifiable quality services. In fact, they were of the view that the code of professional conduct can serve as both a custodian of the values of the professions and deterrent for members bent on contravening the code through, for example, indecency, fraud in student assessment, or abuse of their authority as teachers by getting involved in sexual liaisons with their students.

Membership in a professional association: The respondents also indicated that every teacher must be a member of a professional association. Such membership to a professional association was seen as central to cultivating teacher professional identity. As one of the respondents put it:

[...] Why do other professions like engineering have professional associations? If the person has training, has internship, why should someone practice without membership to a professional body? I think it is because they want to protect their profession from being tarnished by un-professionals; they want to maintain quality services (Senior Lecturer).

The inference is that professional associations do not only bring together individuals with shared common professional interests but also foster professional etiquettes and standards that improve and sustain the cherished image of a given profession.

Professional humility: The university lecturer respondents identified humility among teachers as vital in cultivating a positive professional teacher identity in Tanzania. The respondents said that teachers with humility should be self-critical, eager to learn, helpful and available to their students and colleagues, and devoid of arrogance, egotism and self-aggrandisement.

The other attributes the respondents identified as characterising teacher professional identity included loving the teaching job, loving the students and serving as role models to the students, other teachers and the community at large.

In other words, teacher professional identity is defined largely by both external and internal attributes. The external attributes include certification, teaching experience or membership to a professional association. And the internal attributes embody the drive to conduct oneself ethically. On the whole, these professional attributes draw upon a professional code of conduct and commitment to provide good service to the students.

How Do University Lecturers Perceive Their Professional Identity?

Differences in the perception of professional teacher identity were investigated

based on the categories of the research participants by rank, gender, or professional specialisation.

Gender: Gender was one of the characteristics that helped to determine the perception of the lecturers on the professional teacher identity from a gender-perspective. Information in Figure.1a is a summary of the research findings from a gender perspective based on response frequencies from the questionnaire.

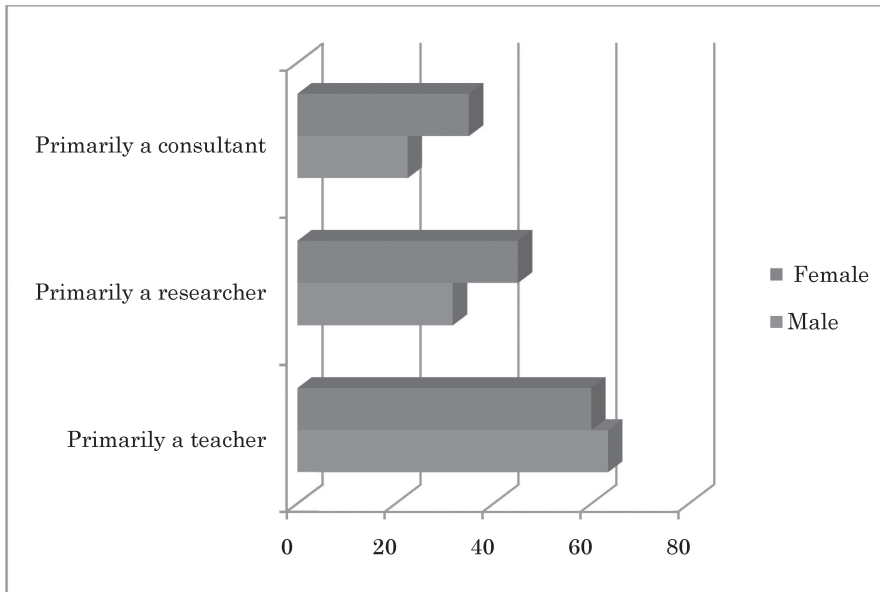


Figure. 1a: Gender-based Self-perception of Professional Identity

The findings show that male respondents tended to identify themselves more as teachers than anything else. Female respondents, on the other hand, tended to identify themselves as researchers and consultants. Nevertheless, for both male and female respondents, consultancy (and services to the community) featured last. One can deduce that the respondents were not as actively in consultancies as they were in other University roles—teaching and research.

Academic specialisation: The participants’ expertise or specialisation was also used as a parameter to determine their perception of professional teacher identity. Information in Figure.1b is a summary regarding their identity on the basis of faculty’s academic specialisation.

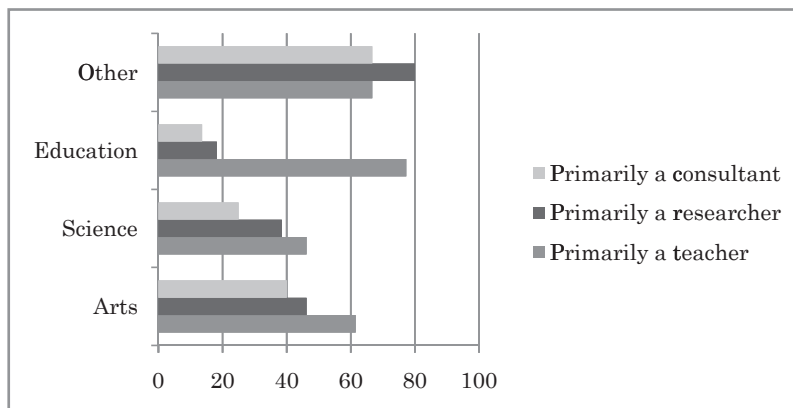


Figure. 1b: Academic Specialisation-based Self-perception

Data in Figure.1b suggests the following observations. Although there were slight variations across academic specialisation, the academic staff identified themselves first and foremost as teachers. Unlike other academic members of staff, the respondents from the Faculties and School of Education (77.3%) identified themselves more as teachers than as researchers (18.2%), or as consultants¹ (13.6%). This was also the case with the academic staff in the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) and College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CONAS). However, there was a significant change in perception among respondents from other disciplines, such as University of Dar es Salaam School of Business Studies (UDBS). In the UDBS category, the respondents identified themselves more as researchers (80.0%) than as teachers (66.7%) or consultants (66.7%). Note that even their identification with consultancy was far much higher than we witness with other categories of the University staff who took part in the study. One possible explanation is that academic members of staff in CASS and CONAS were generally initially trained as teachers. In fact, their academic units had components integrated in the BA and BSc with Education teacher education and training programmes.

Staff academic rank: As already indicated, the faculty respondents were drawn from tutorial assistants, the lowest ranking teaching staff, with professors, being the highest

¹ According to the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) (2007, p. 104), the concept of consultancy embodies service to the public. In this regard, “consultancy (and service to the public) generates income supplements to staff and therefore helps to retain them at the University and reduce the brain drain from the University. It enhances linkage of the University with the productive sector. Through University-industry collaboration, the University comes in contact with the society and the real drawbacks hindering productivity. Consultancy also maintains contact with industrial and political developments relevant for the various academic fields”. From the foregoing, there is little doubt that consultancies are a source of revenues and income to the University and individual lecturer. Specifically, in addition, every University don is expected to undertake “consultancy” alongside research and teaching. As such, this conceptualization is ‘parochial’ in character; and therefore its use in this paper does not indeed intend to demean what other scholars hold about it.

ranking faculty at the University. The academic rank helped to establish the perceptions of university lecturers from all the academic categories. Information in Figure.1c provides a summary of the perceptions of these respondents on the basis of their academic rank.

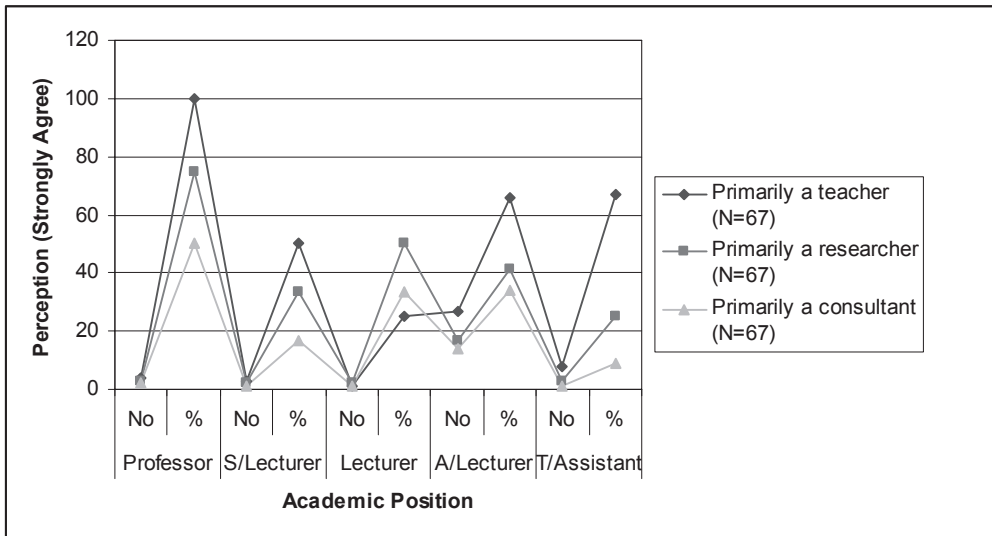


Figure. 1c: Academic Rank-Based Self-perception of Professional Identity

From Figure 1c, we can make the following observation. Regardless of the academic rank, the university lecturer respondents tended to consider themselves primarily as teachers. The reasons they provided varied according to the teaching experience and academic specialisation. The professors and senior lecturers in their responses regarded themselves more as teachers than researchers or consultants because they spend more time teaching and less time undertaking research and consulting activities.

Also, the faculty respondents specialising in natural and applied sciences tended to regard themselves more of teachers than researchers and consultants. In addition to having a heavy teaching load, this perception can be attributed to the research environment in the university and the country at large, which is generally not conducive for promoting and sustaining research among these science-based teaching professionals. For example, there are no chemical industries, to enable them to provide consultancy and put their research ideas into practice. Another stumbling block, as senior academics indicated, was limited research funding, with proposals submitted to solicit for funding not even getting any feedback:

I am more of a teacher and I like the teaching part. Concerning research, we are writing proposals on very important research topics with significant implications in our society but we don't get any feedback, so why should I keep on writing research proposals? I know it is important that we should research for us to publish [and gain academic promotions]; some of the proposals are not even being implemented.

There is no research without funding as research requires money for it to be effected. So, I would say, research is hindered by the fact that we don't get funding, let alone feedback on our proposals (Associate Professor Interviewee).

The respondents also raised the issue of lack of transparency in the allocation of research funds. With regard to consultancy, senior academics complained that the 25 percent consultancy fee, set by the University Consultancy Bureau for every consultancy undertaken, was too high.

As for Assistant Lecturers and Tutorial Assistants, they indicated in their responses that they regarded themselves primarily as teachers. Unlike other categories of University faculty, this junior faculty had even less research and consultancy opportunities due to their inexperience and the fact that they had yet to establish themselves in their field to have useful contacts and recognition. At the University of Dar es Salaam, such lower ranking academics tend to draw on limited research endeavours that were part of their fulfilment of the research component of their undergraduate or Masters Studies.

The perceptions on teacher professional identity held by academic staffs at UDSM correspond to a dimension in Wenger's (1998) identity typology *as negotiated experiences* where we define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation as well as the way we and others reify ourselves. However, analysis of the respondents' narratives suggests the existence of other dimensions as well, as the following quotations illustrate.

I am not seeing those who excel in teaching benefit from ... what do we call it...? Professional development...? Yes ...upward mobility. The emphasis is there... you have to teach well, examine students well, and all that stuff...which is good. But I don't see how these people are rewarded. I am sure there are good teachers around. I don't know, I can be corrected, but most good teachers don't move upward very rapidly. While people who may not be doing good work in teaching but may be focus more on research and consultancy they move up very rapidly. That is what I see that the University needs to consider (Senior Lecturer in Science Interviewee).

The preceding comment illustrates a dimension described by Wenger known as identity *as learning trajectory* where we define who we are by where we have been and where we are going. However, the comment below intimated by a professor from Arts and Social Sciences illustrates another dimension called identity *as nexus of multi membership* where we define who we are by the ways we reconcile our various forms of identity into one identity.

To me as a professor, I'm an institution; supposed to be an institution and that is why they give us parking spaces and so on. But so far in the UDSM, professors are not institutions. We are not mentoring the students the way we are supposed to mentor them. In terms of consultancy, yes I can say I'm doing consultancy, because the consultancy of two thousand dollars that is not consultancy. It must

be good money to hire many people, go to the field and produce viable findings for development. (Professor interviewee from Arts and Social Sciences).

How Does Professional Identity Vary Across Time?

The majority of respondents believed that their professional teacher identity had changed over time as the data in Figure.2 illustrates.

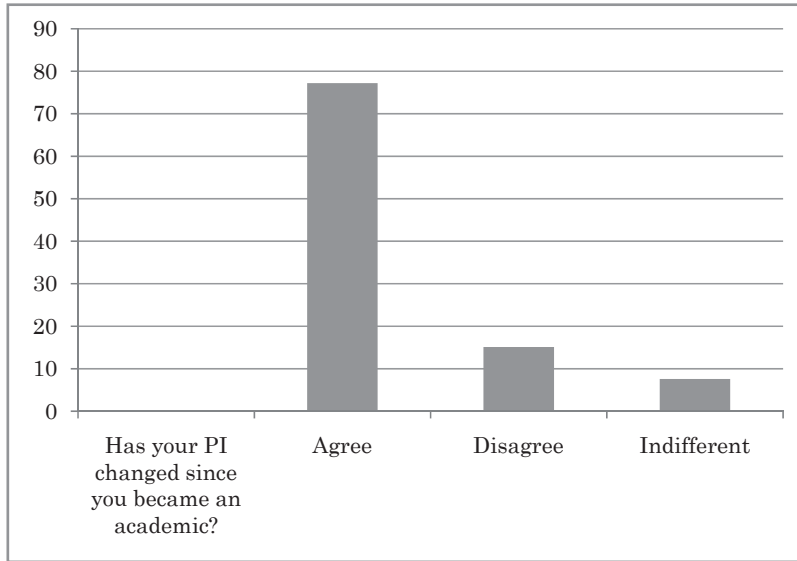


Figure.2: Change of Professional Identity

As the data suggests, 77.2 percent of the respondents expressed the view that their professional identity had changed. Ranked according to the frequency of occurrence, factors which contributed to the change of identity were seen as exposure to new challenges, interaction with colleagues, interaction with students, experience in teaching, training in content, training in pedagogy, interaction with mentors, access to and use of new educational technology, and short professional course attendance. In particular, the respondents identified training in pedagogy, access and use of educational technology and attending short courses as significant influencing factors that had helped to make a difference. On the whole, however, most of the respondents acquired their professional teaching identity through practice, that is, in the process of carrying out their teaching duties. The opportunities to benefit from meaningful short courses on teaching and new teaching media, which the respondents identified as helping to make a difference, were rather limited for the large number of faculty across the huge establishment of the University of Dar es Salaam. The respondents also said that professional identity was moulded by self-discipline, personal effort, and international exposure.

Which Institutional Factors have Influenced the Construction of Professional Identity?

The academic staff respondents were also asked to share their views on the concept of quality assurance at the University of Dar es Salaam, its relationship to fostering professional teacher identity and the three cardinal academic roles. The goal was to gauge whether quality assurance promoted or hindered professional teacher development. The outcome based on their responses suggests that the members of faculty had positively embraced the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) as illustrated by Figure. 3.

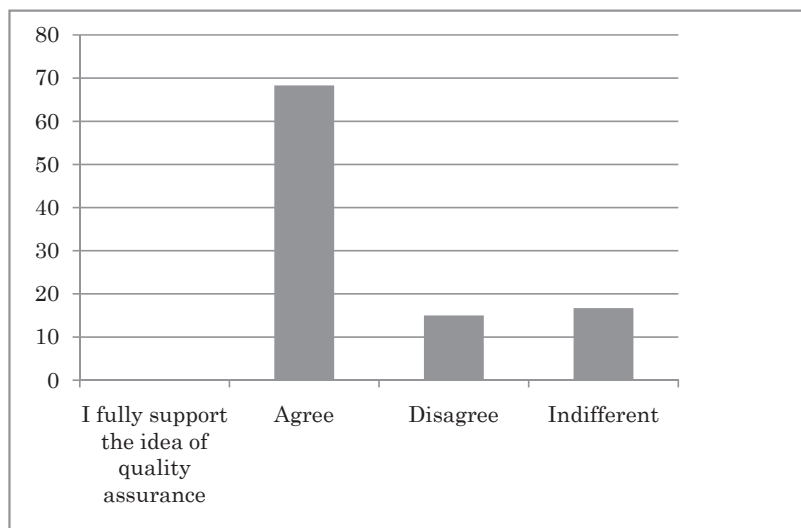


Figure. 3: Support for Internal Quality Assurance

The idea of internal quality assurance is associated with control of the quality of products, standardised performance, accountability to stakeholders such as students, parents, and the general public. And yet, some respondents had some misgivings about IQA. In fact, these respondents were hostile to how IQA was being enforced by the University. As one of the respondents explained from experience:

The idea of quality assurance is definitely good because you need to control the quality of whatever products or programme you are offering. But it is equally important that whenever you do it you should be systematic. I know during the 1990s we also had quality assurance whereby heads of section or departments or tutors would come and sit-in at the back of the class and listen to what one was teaching. After attending to you, they would call you and tell you about your teaching or approach; they would tell you where to improve and that sort of things. These checks were not like people coming in secretly, and listening to whatever you are doing without notifying you, like auditing. It was something like volunteering,

and it was handled in a friendly atmosphere. That was something that I liked very much. ...there has to be quality assurance, but, the thing is, it sounds like catching them when unaware. I feel very uncomfortable when someone walks in while I'm teaching, and standing at the back of my class without notifying me beforehand. I don't like that. The use of students' evaluation forms is also subjective because whenever you are strict they are not going to get negative assessments. They will not give you the marks that you deserve. ... I really don't like the classroom testing way of observation... (Professor Interviewee).

In fact, the implementation of IQA at the University is generally adversely affected by incompetence of some of the officers appointed to undertake the job, as some of the respondents pointed out. To redress the situation, the respondents recommended that a more systematic University-wide sensitisation of academic staff at all levels be undertaken. The respondents also said that there was need to incorporate issues of common understanding of professional teaching and use of professionals well-versed in curriculum issues, psychology and educational management in these IQA. On the whole, the general consensus was that the IQA approach at the University should be research-based and more innovative, with systematic induction being provided to newly-recruited staff.

Conclusion and Implications

This study sought to investigate factors influencing the development of teacher identity and how academic staff perceived their professional identity. The research findings show that academic members of staff at the University of Dar es Salaam identify themselves primarily as teachers rather than researchers. The research and consultancy components are generally secondary. The perceptions vary according to gender, academic specialisation, and seniority. The respondents said teacher professional identity is defined by both external and internal attributes. External attributes include certification, teaching experience or membership to a professional association, while internal forces draw on the internal drive for one to conduct oneself ethically as guided by commitment to teaching and adherence to established professional code of conduct. Also, it was established that changes in professional teacher identity are associated with exposure to new challenges, interaction with colleagues, mentors and students, teaching experience, training in content and pedagogy, as well as access to and use of new educational technology, and short courses. On the whole, the respondents fully supported the idea of internal quality assurance (IQA) because it helps to enhance education quality. Their reservations focused on how IQA was being implemented at the University, which they want improved to make quality assurance more meaningful in the definition of one's professional teaching identity. In line with the suggestions of the respondents, this study concludes that there is a need for a more systematic University-wide sensitisation of academic staff, sharing

of a common understanding of professional teaching, and use of professionals well-versed in the curriculum, psychology and educational management in the IQAs, as well as systematic induction of newly-recruited staff.

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