



The crisis of the professional identity of the teacher in the context of the formation of a new information and communication educational paradigm: Aspect of research and publication activity

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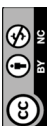
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Abstract:

The problem of the study – the genesis of the problem of the crisis of professional identity of a teacher in the context of the formation of a new information and communication educational paradigm in the second half of the twentieth century – early twenty-first century. The analysis of the scientific and pedagogical literature of the second half of the twentieth century – the beginning of the twenty-first century demonstrates that the transition to a new paradigm of education was marked by the emergence of a crisis of professional identity, which is also emphasised by the ambiguity of definitions of the concept of professional identity. In the modern scientific and pedagogical discourse, a teacher is seen as a person with numerous roles. The scientific, theoretical and philosophical foundations for considering research activities and publication activity as key indicators of the level of professional identity of a teacher are identified and substantiated. An empirical study of the opinions of practicing teachers in Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Sweden on research and publication activity is carried out. The results of the international empirical research state the presence and reveal specific manifestations of the professional identity crisis.

Introduction

The emergence of the Internet in 1991 at the end of the twentieth century marked a decisive shift in the functioning of education as a social system, and the rapid spread of the global network at the beginning of the twenty-first century has led to the fact that today the processes of teaching, upbringing, and socialization of children are taking place not just with the help of new tools – information and communication technologies – but in a completely new educational environment – in cyberspace. Back in the 80s and 90s of the twentieth century, a child developed mainly in a small or specific society – a family, class, immediate environment, peers, while today, from preschool and primary school age, a child is in a huge, open social space of the Internet and the media, where his or her mind is literally pressed by a chaotic flow of information, opening an endless field for various forms of relationships, connections, and actions. Obviously, the emergence of a new educational environment, which is the Internet and the media, requires a change in pedagogical thinking and, accordingly, the formation of completely new roles for the teacher and the student. Accordingly, the problem of the professional identity of the teacher in recent decades has become extremely relevant from the point of view of openness to the transformation of the role strategies of the modern teacher.



The problem of the crisis of the professional identity of a teacher in the context of the emergence of a new information and communication educational paradigm has been the subject of close scientific attention since the second half of the twentieth century. The emergence of a new type of society in this period requires not just the introduction of information technology in education, but a new methodological basis for the entire education system, a radical renewal of its goals and content, forms, methods and means of teaching, and thus a rethinking of the role of the teacher in the process.

The spread of the term “identity” and a broad analysis of the phenomenon of “identity crisis” is associated with the works of the American psychologist E. Erikson (Erikson, 1959). Philosophers of education have made a significant contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon of professional identity of a teacher: R. Merton (Merton, 1973), D. Bell (Bell, 1973), Paulo Freire (Freire, 1998), Carl Rogers (Rogers, 1993) and others.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the problem of studying the professional identity of a teacher is gaining new relevance and is considered in the works of many scientists from around the world (Coldron et al., 1999; Antonek et al., 1997; Beijaard et al., 2004; Beijaard, 2006; King & Zeta, 2015; Beatty, 2000; Boyd & Harris, 2010; Amott, 2018; Olsen & Buchanan, 2017; Olsen, 2008; Ulferts, 2021; Viac & Fraser, 2020; Murray, 2020 and many others). Scientists are unanimous in their opinion: professional identity is one of the main indicators of professional development of a teacher’s personality.

In recent years, there have been comprehensive studies that present the results of experimental research on the development of teachers’ professional identity at the regional level of individual states (Krantz & Fritzén, 2021; Erdem, 2020; Suarez & McGrath, 2022). However, the scientific community emphasizes the importance of conducting international research. For example, Cordingley et al. (2019) present the results of a comparative analysis of the experience of seven countries: Canada, Chile, Germany, Kenya, Scotland, Singapore, and Sweden. The study by Day, Elliot and Kington (2005) summarizes the Australian and English experience. Since teacher identity is context-specific, representative international data are of high scientific interest because they allow for a comparison of different educational strategies used around the world.

The current scientific and pedagogical discourse clearly demonstrates the difficulty of unifying the concept of “professional identity” due to the lack of a single line of understanding. The variety of constructs within this problem leads to the expansion of the criteria for its interpretation. As many scientists recognize, the crisis of the education system, the essence of which is the inadequacy of the goals, content, forms and methods of education to the new conditions of the information and communication society, leads to a crisis of the professional identity of the teacher and today covers almost all countries of the world community.

The analysis of the scientific and pedagogical literature of the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century shows that the transition to a new paradigm of education is carried out mainly with the possibilities of communicative rationality in mind. In society, work with information is of particular importance, which activates work with meanings. The implementation of the new educational paradigm is associated with the need to change the basic principles of organizing one’s activities: the effective “knowledge” concept of learning is being replaced by a processual “humanistic” one. This change significantly affects the professional identity of the teacher, the main indicator of which in modern conditions is the research work of the teacher and his or her publication activity.

The connection between technology and communication was most fully demonstrated in the works of M. McLuhan (McLuhan, 1964). He was one of the first to reveal the potential of the phenomenon of communication, including in the activities of a teacher (McLuhan, 1977). Particular attention in the context of the analyzed problem deserves the works of L. Masterman (Masterman, 1985; 1997; 1998), who created the concept of media education aimed at developing critical thinking of children and adolescents as a way to overcome the negative impact of mass communication. The works of M. McLuhan and L. Masterman form the basis of the study.

A number of works by such researchers as S. Bazalgette (1992), D. Buckingham (2003), D. Considine (1999), B. Duncan (1989), J. Johnson (2001), R. Kubey (1997), T. Hart (1991), R. Hobbs (2020), K. Tyner (1998; 2009), Ch. Worsnop (1996; 1999) and others. These works discuss the processes of mass informatization and computerization that created the prerequisites and conditions for the transition to the information society.

Some aspects of this problem have already been covered in the author’s previous works (Blaszczyk et al., 2021; Loboda et al., 2023).



Modern pedagogy is characterized by eclectic methodological foundations and often refers to philosophical correlates to establish key concepts of educational activity. The change in the educational paradigm is primarily associated with a change in its philosophical foundations. Reforming the education system around the world is based on the philosophy of structuralism. The structuralist interpretation of man and the world as a text (sum of texts) reflects a new principle of understanding human nature, from the standpoint of which man is seen not only as transforming the natural world into the sphere of cultural things, but also as creating and using symbols, living in the world of signs, meanings and senses. The meaningful nature of human consciousness determines the set of its discursive practices, and the texts generated in this process are phenomena of human existence (C. Levi-Strauss, J. Lacan, M. Foucault, etc.).

Consideration of the problem of professional identification in the coordinate system of culture as a text is a theoretical prerequisite for understanding the research activity and publication activity of a teacher as key indicators of the level of professional identity of an educator.

Noting the achievements of scientists on this issue, we can state that in the context of the rapid development of information and communication technologies, the problem of the crisis of professional identity, especially its research and publication aspect, remains relevant and requires the expansion of research at the international level in order to strengthen comparative elements and develop general recommendations.

Thus, the relevance of our study is determined in the scientific and theoretical aspect by the need to critically analyze the transformation of the role of the teacher in the world in the course of the formation of a new information and communication educational paradigm in the context of reforms of different scale and content taking place in different countries in order to substantiate holistic theoretical knowledge and determine its place in modern pedagogy; in the social and practical aspect – by the need to outline the place and role of research competence in the structure of a teacher's professional identity, justifying the need to build constructive conditions for the teacher's scientific and publication work.

Scientists have proven that a teacher's research activity develops not only his or her professional skills but also actively influences the quality of education in general. In the modern world, one of the most important results of a teacher's research activity is recognized as publication activity. However, the aspect of research activity and especially publication activity as its main result have not been the subject of a special comparative study, so the study of this aspect is relevant today.

The purpose of the article is to carry out a historiographical analysis of the genesis of the problem of the crisis of professional identity of the teacher, confirming the theoretical conclusions with the data of an empirical study of the attitude of practicing teachers in Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Sweden to research and publication activity as key indicators of the level of professional identity of the teacher in the context of the formation of a new information and communication educational paradigm.

Research methodology

Instruments and procedures

The study used a set of theoretical and empirical methods. Theoretical methods: historiographical and problem-genetic provided retrospective coverage of the problem of professional identity of a teacher in the scientific and pedagogical literature and created opportunities for determining the role types of a modern teacher and key indicators of professional identity of a teacher, namely research and publication activity.

Empirical methods: focus groups to find out the position on research and publication activity of students of the second (master's) level of higher education of pedagogical specialties of part-time education who have experience in teaching.

Sample

The study uses data obtained after a series of focus group interviews with students of the second (master's) level of higher education in pedagogical specialties of part-time education who have experience in teaching. The experimental basis of the study was formed by 4 higher education institutions: Institute of Social Sciences

and Pedagogy of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (Poland), University of Security Management in Košice (Slovakia), Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Ukraine), Stockholm University (Sweden).

The method of sampling was continuous cluster sampling. The total number of participants in the study is 60 people. The participants were divided into 4 focus groups: 15 – students majoring in School Pedagogy at the Institute of Social Sciences and Pedagogy of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (Poland); 15 – students majoring in Professional Pedagogy at the University of Security Management in Košice (Slovakia); 15 – students majoring in Social Work at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyi (Ukraine); 15 – students majoring in Pedagogy at Stockholm University (Sweden). The size and method of forming the sample population does not allow us to evaluate it as representative, but at the same time allows us to identify the main trends and judgments of practicing teachers regarding research activities, publication activity and pedagogical identity.

Data Analysis

The size and method of forming the sample population does not allow us to evaluate it as representative, but at the same time it allows us to identify the main trends and judgments of practicing teachers regarding research activities, publication activity and pedagogical identity. The attention of the participants of the experiment was focused on two problematic issues: “Which statement about research work do you agree with?” and “Career aspirations of a teacher”. After the analysis, the most common statements were identified.

Results

Based on the analysis of the scientific literature on the philosophy of education, it can be concluded that in modern society, a teacher is seen as a person with numerous roles. Each role type aims to implement certain role strategies on the part of the teacher. Scientists are unanimous in their opinion that in the modern field of education, the dominant role types are managerial and innovative.

R. Merton, analyzing the role of a teacher, suggests the following set of his role strategies: researcher, teacher, administrator and gatekeeper (Merton, 1973, p. 419). The status of the teaching scholar is not limited to a single role, but includes a number of additional roles to varying degrees. Thus the role of the researcher, responsible for the growth of scientific knowledge, is central and the others are functionally subordinate to it (Merton, 1973, p. 124).

D. Bell believes that in the modern information society the role of professionals will increase, who, being experts, are more inclined to planning than others. In this case, society will calculate the trajectory of its development more consciously and purposefully (Bell, 1973). Since services mean the interaction of people guided by experts, the quality of this interaction is accordingly emphasized. Consequently, the role strategies of both the teacher and the university lecturer have expanded considerably.

P. Freire also insists on the role of an expert. The teacher is an expert in the issues of education, in the issues of the student’s search for his/her authenticity, an expert in the issues of collective activity, collective planning and decision-making (Freire, 1998).

No less interesting in the modern field of education is the role of a teacher as a facilitator. A facilitator can be a teacher, a parent, a human resource manager, i.e. a person who is able to create a worthy humanistic environment: “The values, attitudes and the very way of being of a facilitator form a safe space for the participant (student, client, child, etc.) to take an emotional risk: to make a journey into the land of authenticity” (Rogers, p. 65). The facilitator takes on the role of aiding decision making by enhancing the collaborative process.

However, the new educational paradigm is unthinkable without reference to creative rationality. This type prepares the transition from design to the formation of innovative thinking based on openness to multi-criteria solutions, tolerance to dissent and moral responsibility for one’s actions. Creativity grows as a result of creative rationality and acts as a mechanism of personal adaptation to the ongoing social changes. A modern teacher should be able to use project technologies aimed at developing creative potential, at forming creative abilities both personal and in his/her charges. The use of project technologies in educational strategies is also caused by the shift in the modern paradigm of education towards a personal understanding of subjectivity, towards the desire to penetrate into the essential understanding of a person.



In an innovative society, a person emerges as an active creator of social reality, a generator and conductor of new ideas. At the same time, qualitative changes in the internal characteristics of a person occur due to the transformation of his or her consciousness. Innovative consciousness is the creative consciousness of a person to realize (reproduce and evaluate) innovative activity, which contains goals, motives, orientations, psychological attitudes aimed at implementing innovative changes.

A new innovative form of thinking also corresponds to innovative consciousness. At the same time, innovative consciousness and innovative thinking are associated with fundamentally different levels of cognition of social reality: innovative thinking is associated with cognition of the functioning and development of social and economic laws of society, and innovative thinking is associated with the inclusion of people in socio-economic practice. Innovative thinking is the activity of innovative consciousness aimed at cognition and reflection of innovative relations, needs and interests, innovative activity in general and its transformation in the course of socially useful practical activity.

A person with a new innovative type of consciousness and thinking, capable of implementing social, cultural and technological programs of the future, is formed primarily within the education system. In the subject area of pedagogy, the innovation process develops as individual creative intentions of a particular teacher's consciousness caused by the solution of socially significant tasks, and as a process of assimilating innovative teaching experience and comprehending it in the pedagogical scientific tradition.

Innovation in the modern socio-philosophical literature is considered in the categories of intersubjective communication, which occurs at the micro level of an individual's comprehension of his or her own universe and at the macro level – the appropriation by the public of individual innovative knowledge and its comprehension in the general tradition. Thus, innovation is an integral process that includes many stages, or rather implies a gradation of levels, the link between which is the text as a carrier of the “new”, i.e. knowledge, and at the same time the result of comprehending the “new”.

The innovation process of the individual level is a communicative act, within which there is not a transmission of meanings through sign exchange, but the initiation of individual meaning-making as a restructuring of the subjective universe. Thus, the creative act is dualistic: it can be viewed in terms of its productive value for society as a movement of new meaning, and in terms of its productivity for one's personal universe. The genius of the discoverer, who comprehended what no one had comprehended before him, and the average person, who comprehended the “wheel,” have one thing in common: they both discovered something new for their personal universe.

The priority is the initiation of meaning-making, not the transmission of meanings, because innovation is a movement of renewal, not a relay race of prescriptions (Mamardashvili, 1971). The modern sociolinguistic school considers the addressee of meaningful information not as a consumer, but as a producer of texts.

Like any other phenomena of human life, texts do not exist in isolation, they constantly intersect, reinforce or compensate for each other, and the process of their creation and functioning in society is subject to certain rules. The structuralist approach asserts the thesis that society is strongly governed by the speech practices of its members, and many individuals seek to make the text a form of expression of their individuality. Human consciousness and self-consciousness are like the sum of texts that make up the cultural continuum.

The individual in the process of creativity is in the situation of “subject-text” communication. However, the absence of “subject-subject” contact cannot lead to the movement of innovation, because the perception of an objective text requires external motivation for assimilation. Real assimilation occurs in the process of communication, where mutual problematization takes place. This also applies to scientific and theoretical texts. The process of learning, especially in higher education, is not only about the process of assimilating information through text, as understanding must be preceded by problematization.

This is the goal pursued by educational and scientific seminars and practices, where the burden of initiation lies primarily with the teacher, a subject participating in the dialogue, representing a social institution.

The same is true in the scientific sphere: the need for “subject-to-subject” contact is rooted in the concept of a scientific school, which implies the mediation of subjective experience in the contact between the subject and the objective text. However, this does not mean that the text provides only a basis for further communication. A text can perform communicative functions by forming a social institution. Such an institution is pedagogical periodicals, and the significance of its role in the innovative processes of public consciousness lies in its dual nature – to be social and to be an expression of subjective experience.



The semiotic paradigm implies an appeal to subjective components, systems of meanings and personal meanings. The semiosphere is a characteristic of the semiotic space of culture as a whole. The existence of the semiotic universe makes a certain sign act a reality (Lotman, 1990). Culture, in Lotman's understanding, exists in the form of a certain space-time that is organized as a semiosphere and, at the same time, with the help of the semiosphere, the entire space of which is crossed by boundaries. The concept of "boundary" is ambiguous: on the one hand, it divides, on the other hand, it unites. It belongs to both border cultures, "both adjacent semiosphere". The border, according to Yuri Lotman, is "a mechanism for translating someone else's semiotics into the language of 'ours', a place of transformation of the external into the internal" (Lotman, 1990).

In the context of the semiotic concept, culture as a sign system is a generator of structure, thus it creates a social sphere around a person, which makes social life possible. The source of structure is language.

The concepts of "linguistic personality" and "linguistic individuality" formulated within the structural-semiotic paradigm are also applicable in professional and pedagogical practice. The teacher is an active subject of speech activity, a creator and interpreter of texts, a highly developed "individual" who is able to generate linguistic expressions, texts that meet the highest cultural and pedagogical criteria. In the history of pedagogy, the term "pedagogical personality" has been established, which can be considered correlative to "linguistic personality".

The activity of pedagogical workers of vocational education has long ago and firmly entered such a direction as the publication of articles of scientific character. Publication activity is the level of pedagogical skills, which is characterized by the desire to develop, to study the experience of other teachers on the issues relevant to him/her, to share their achievements in the mastered professional field. The teacher acts as a researcher presenting the results of his/her activity to the general public.

The potential that lies in the possibilities of the publication as a leading form of highlighting the effective experience of pedagogical activity can provide a comprehensive representation of the teacher as a researcher, innovator, harmonious personality, endowed with the ability and desire to develop and realize professionally.

In order to understand the opinion of practicing teachers about participation in research and publication activity, let us turn to the results of the focus group survey.

Distribution of answers to the question: "Which statement about research work do you agree with?" is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of answers to the question: "Which statement about the research work do you agree with?" (ranked from the most common to the least common)

Rating position	Judgment
1	The main thing for me is to work with children, not to do science
2	I can easily get information about opportunities to publish an article
3	Doing science is a way of creative expression for me
4	I like to give a presentation at scientific conferences

The data analysis allows us to draw the following conclusions.

The general position of teachers is that for most of them the main thing is to work with children, not to study science. The exception is the subgroup for whom teaching is a temporary stage in their professional career.

According to the interview data, the most common answer is an opinion: "Today, the teacher's 'monopoly on knowledge is over', and students have access to information in different formats. My task is to find the best ways to make students interested in learning, increase their mental activity, encourage creativity, educate students as a vital and socially competent personality capable of making independent choices and responsible decisions in various life situations, develop skills in practical and creative application of the acquired knowledge. The quality of my students' learning outcomes is the result of my research work".

Most teachers are practicing teachers who do not see science as a way of creative expression and generally do not feel satisfied with the process and results of scientific activities, such as giving a presentation or writing an article.



Teachers note that participation in scientific conferences and presentations at scientific and methodological seminars overload their work and insist on the need to create comfortable working conditions: “In my opinion, creating comfortable psychological and pedagogical conditions for the research work of teachers and students is one of the main directions of school development. It is very important to change the working conditions, to make everyone feel comfortable at the workplace, not to overload themselves and prevent “professional burnout” ... After all, a depressed teacher cannot work productively.”

Obtaining information about opportunities to publish articles in journals and collections is generally not a problem for teachers, but most respondents are not familiar with professional and scientific journals.

The career aspirations of teachers were also the subject of attention in the focus group survey (Table 2).

Table 2. Career aspirations of teachers (ranked from most to least common)

Rating position	Judgment
1	Get a higher category
2	Become an administrative and managerial employee at a school
3	Transfer to another school, gymnasium, lyceum
4	Go to a doctoral program
5	Go to work in a higher education institution
6	Change your profession

As can be seen, the majority of teachers do not have any pronounced career aspirations, which is quite expected, since the specifics of a teacher’s work involve self-realization in their students rather than career advancement.

In this regard, it is important that most teachers perceive the new requirements for research and publication activity positively, and they are ready to adapt to these requirements and build their careers without changing their jobs and the nature of their duties, but only expanding them.

Most of the teachers surveyed noted: “Teacher and successful career. In our system of coordinates, these words are not very related to each other. Perhaps because we associate a successful career with a rapid rise up the career ladder, high positions, salaries and external success, which is something that we have rarely seen in the life of a teacher. In my opinion, a teacher’s career is when a person reaches professional heights and becomes the best specialist in their field. It can look like this – a teacher, a mentor, an author of scientific developments, textbooks, teaching methods, an inventor of innovative teaching methods, a trainer for adults...”

The vast majority of interviewees understand career growth not so much as moving up the career ladder within their specialty, but rather as maximizing the disclosure and realization of professional potential. This, in turn, stimulates teachers to realize the importance of their own professional activities, master new methods of methodological work, research, and publication activity.

Conclusions

The historiographical analysis of the genesis of the problem of the crisis of professional identity of a teacher has shown that the complexity of the phenomenon of professional identity is due to the ambiguity of its definitions. The professional identity of a teacher in the second half of the twentieth century was considered: in the context of identity formation as a self-concept in students in the process of learning; as a structural component of personality; as a property or indicator of professional aptitude; as an element of social identity; as a criterion of successful professionalisation of a personality, etc. At the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the problem of the crisis of professional identity was clearly identified in scientific and pedagogical thought. In the modern scientific and pedagogical discourse, a teacher is seen as a person with numerous roles. The dominant role types, according to the vast majority of scholars, are managerial and innovative.

As can be seen from the results of the historiographical analysis, since the second half of the twentieth century, the development of the education system has been based on the philosophy of structuralism, which has become a theoretical prerequisite for considering the problem of professional identification in the coordinate system of culture as a text and the awareness of research and publication activity of a teacher as key indicators of the level of professional identity of a teacher.

The presented data of the empirical study states the presence and reveals specific manifestations of professional identity crisis. The study of professional identity crisis in the aspect of research activity and publication activity raises a number of questions and opens a wide perspective for further research.

One of the most important tasks is the integration of different views on professional identity, as well as the synthesis of data from various empirical studies of international level in the framework of a comprehensive approach to this problem.

A promising area of research into the professional identity crisis is also the study of new methods, forms, means of organizing the educational process aimed at the formation of conscious publication activity of a teacher, based on the desire and opportunity to share experience, accumulate and disseminate experience.

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