

Article

Cultivating Professional Identity: The Vital Role of Practical Teaching Experience for Future Educators

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Abstract: This article endeavors to investigate the impact of three years of teaching experience acquired during student teaching training on the professional identity of aspiring educators. The ensuing literature review expounds upon the concepts of identity and professional identity. To scrutinize this subject comprehensively, a quantitative study was conducted, the details of which are elucidated in the subsequent section devoted to research methodology. The findings of this study underscore the paramount significance of fostering a sense of belonging and mission as integral components that underpin the means of support, adaptability, and PI development, particularly pertinent to student teachers and, especially, those immersed in the practical experience phase, as discerned through their self-perceptions. The principal conclusions and insights drawn from the cumulative body of research evidence underscore that, despite the recent recognition accorded the pedagogical training processes and their multifaceted impact on various aspects of a student's life as a future educator, the teaching profession still remains underappreciated. The finding that emerged during this study underscores the heightened significance of teaching practices as an essential element in the preparation of a prospective graduate who aspires to become a pioneering educator in shaping the future of generations to come. The investigation surveyed 216 students pursuing teaching degrees, analyzing their professional identity development throughout their academic journey. Results revealed a positive association between the students' advancement in their training curriculum and the enhancement of their professional identity. Specifically, as students progressed further in their studies, there was a discernible growth in their identification with the teaching profession.



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1. Introduction

The shifts in how work is perceived in one's life have turned the career one chooses (and the work associated with it) into a significant factor in shaping personal identity. While there is limited mention of the term 'professional identity' (PI) in the research literature, there is extensive use of phrases such as "professional maturity", "making a professional choice", and "occupational commitment". These terms relate to an individual's career choice, their attitudes toward their chosen profession, the activation of decision-making processes in their professional life, and the sense of belonging to their profession. There are positive correlations between occupational maturity and both self-awareness and "self-identity", both of which revolve around feelings of belonging and identification [1].

The principal conclusions and insights derived from the entirety of the research findings elucidate that, despite the contemporary acknowledgment of the pivotal role played by teacher training processes and their multifaceted influence on various aspects of the life of a student teacher (ST), the teaching profession remains inadequately valued. The prominence of training within this context emerged as an unforeseen discovery within the research, underscoring an additional layer of significance regarding the imperative nature of active engagement in teaching experiences as an integral component of cultivating and molding a prospective graduate who is equipped to assume a leadership role in shaping the future landscape of education.

This article discusses the question of the development of PI from the perspective of the experience throughout the learning of the ST and the importance of increasing the practical experience for the development of the PI of the future teacher.

2. Literature Review

Personal identity is a subjective perception of continuity and compatibility between the various components of a person's personality, experiences, and memories. Identity begins to develop already in childhood as part of emotional development. Personal identity does not stop forming as long as the person lives and it can change, but it is common to assume that the critical stages of identity formation are during one's youth [2].

The notion of identity encompasses various interpretations in the social sciences, yet all of these conceptualizations share the fundamental idea that identity is a dynamic construct that is continually reshaped throughout one's life. The development of identity is influenced by how a person is recognized by the broader community and their interactions with different elements within that community. Identity delineates how one perceives oneself in relation to others, how one is influenced by social processes, and one's perceived role within organizations. Furthermore, individuals possess multiple identities (e.g., parent, mentor, researcher, teacher), each of which may assume varying degrees of significance at different junctures in their lives and careers [3].

Erikson's theory of the stages of personal identity development suggests that each developmental stage has distinct attributes. Each stage signifies the level of both physical and psychological maturity and development, taking into consideration the individual's relationships with their environment. Similarly, this theory explores the concept of 'identity' in close connection with 'self'. Generally, the development of one's own identity is an ongoing process, involving conscious and unconscious negotiation with social situations and roles that the individual internalizes. Defining the term 'identity' often revolves around answering the question, "Who or what is the person?" The individual's response to this question can encompass various answers and interpretations, including those attributed to them by others [4].

Professional identity has been proven to be important for a variety of professions; however, no clear conventions have been formed regarding the concept. However, it is clear to those who deal with the concept of PI that it involves a set of values, actions and behaviors, knowledge and skills, beliefs and ethics, context, and socialization, as well as group and personal identity [5].

2.1. Work and Career as Indicators of Identity

The workplace holds a significant place in our lives, as suggested in the saying "work is our life". This sentiment reflects the fact that work is far more than merely a central function; it also shapes our sense of meaning and identity. In essence, work is a substantial component of our identity. When people who are unfamiliar with each other first meet, they frequently inquire, "What do you do for a living?" Work not only defines our actions but also influences who we engage with, why we do so, and, of course, how we do so [6]. Hence, our profession and character serve as a foundation for how others perceive us. The career we pursue, coupled with the work we engage in, plays a pivotal role in constructing our personal identity. Even though work was traditionally viewed primarily as a means of livelihood, Freud recognized long ago the importance of the dual concepts of "love and work" as criteria for mental well-being. For most individuals, work fulfils multiple roles across various aspects of life. It provides a means of sustenance, serves as a social arena, establishes daily routines, instils habits, imparts meaning to existence, and significantly contributes to shaping one's identity [7]. The subject of careers itself emerged as a concern about a century ago, with sociologist Frank Parsons pioneering the counselling profession aimed at assisting individuals in selecting a vocation, pursuing relevant studies, securing a job, and charting a path toward a fulfilling career [8].

Tal and Rheingold (2021) claim that the factors that impact the development of one's professional inclination and identity are rooted in early life experiences from childhood to adulthood. These experiences wield substantial psychological influence, with gender identity also carrying weight in the decision to pursue a lifelong career. Another influential factor in the formation of PI is the "internalization" of significant figures in one's life. These figures embody and represent value concepts related to career preferences. Learning about the characteristics of various professions occurs in parallel with the development of one's self-concept. This process establishes a connection between the needs and values that express self-identity development and the evolution of PI. PI is dynamic and aspires to align with the attributes of the chosen profession [9].

A study conducted by Shishon and Popper-Givaon (2016), aimed at exploring the motivations and expectations of students and graduates, particularly those in the 'excellence' program, regarding their choice of teaching as a career path, revealed that most students were driven by altruistic motives that were rooted in a sense of mission and a desire to contribute to society. Intrinsic motivations, such as a genuine passion for the profession, also played a significant role. Many embarked on teaching studies and entered the profession with lofty ambitions to positively influence the education system. However, the research findings revealed that these motivations, alongside the aspiration to make an impact, began to diminish, particularly among graduates and those in their first year of teaching. This decline was primarily due to their encounters with a reality marked by tensions and unresolved dilemmas. This challenging reality had repercussions on various aspects of their PI, which is a crucial element in sustaining the motivation to continue working with a strong drive to effect change [10].

2.2. Teachers' Professional Identity

The term 'professional identity' is scarcely mentioned in the research literature. Conversely, there is an extensive body of literature that references terms such as "professional maturity", "formation of professional choice", and "occupational commitment". While there are distinctions among these terms, they all encompass the individual's professional decision-making, attitudes toward their chosen career, and sense of belonging to the profession.

The concept of "formation of a professional choice" has been elaborated by Fisherman (2016), with a clear focus on professional preference. In contrast, the concept of "professional maturity" is defined in terms of research planning, skills related to employment decisions, and information acquisition [1].

Various studies cited in Fisherman's (2016) article indicate that, despite differences in terminology, they all pertain to an individual's professional decision-making, their attitudes toward their chosen profession, the activation of professional decision-making, and the sense of belonging to their profession. Additionally, these studies reveal positive associations between occupational maturity and both self-awareness and "self-identity," with both terms involving feelings of belonging and identification [1].

Specifically concerning teachers, Steinert and colleagues (2019) emphasize that the prevailing assumption in the research literature is that teachers' professional identities are shaped not only by external perceptions and expectations but also by the reasons teachers themselves find regarding the significance of teaching. Their PI is grounded in their real-life experiences and personal backgrounds. Furthermore, rather than being something teachers possess, PI serves as a framework through which they understand themselves as educators. It is the lens through which they explain and justify their actions in relation to others and various contexts, thereby expressing their PI [3].

As per Fisherman's findings, a teacher's PI has a profound impact on various aspects of their professional life, including their effectiveness, behavior, thought processes, beliefs, aspirations, and working methods. Furthermore, PI plays a pivotal role in shaping teachers' sense of fulfillment regarding their commitment, abilities, motivation, and overall sense of achievement.

When a teacher experiences a weakened, unstable, or unclear PI, it becomes a warning sign that can predict a likelihood of burnout and subsequent exit from the teaching profession. Therefore, it becomes crucial to emphasize the importance of raising awareness of PI among teachers in the broader teaching community [1].

The study conducted by Xiaojing et al. (2023) identified interactions within teacher–student relationships as having a significant influence on teachers’ PI development. Notably, it became evident that favorable teacher–student relationships played a pivotal role in fostering positive outcomes in the formation of teachers’ PI. Furthermore, the research findings underscored the importance of challenging and difficult-to-manage students as a noteworthy factor in shaping teachers’ comprehension of pedagogical processes. Such encounters with challenging students served as a foundational element for the development of prospective teachers, particularly in terms of enhancing their capacity for reflection on their pedagogical practices and elevating their PI [11].

A study conducted by Arslan (2023) to investigate the impact of informal learning environment experiences on the formation of teachers’ PI yielded significant outcomes. Specifically, the research revealed that such experiences facilitated a heightened comprehension of the student-centered teaching approach among educators. It was observed that the characteristics of learners and pre-existing teacher identities were grounded in focused experiential encounters. Moreover, the study revealed that participating teachers exhibited increased self-assurance in their teaching competencies and greater motivation to engage in teaching activities. These findings may be construed as indicative of the multifaceted cognitive, emotional, and motivational contributions of informal experiences to the evolution of teachers’ PI [12].

Arslan (2023) also highlighted the relevance of earlier studies, wherein informal learning community experiences were found to be instrumental in supporting both novice and practicing teachers in their pursuit of professional development and the acquisition of in-depth knowledge. These factors constitute pivotal components in the ongoing development of prospective teachers’ professional identities [12].

2.3. Stages of Professional Development

Fisherman (2016) identified six stages in teachers’ professional development: (a) survival and discovery—novice teachers “discover” their PI and begin to consolidate it; (b) stabilization—the teachers “collect” many elements, which lead them to assume that their PI is solidified; (c) investigation and diversification—teachers are exposed to additional aspects and begin to examine them; (d) evaluation and doubt; (e) clarity and calm; (f) detachment and release [1].

The initial phase of a teaching career, often known as “sink or swim”, profoundly influences the trajectory of a teacher’s career. This phase is fraught with an array of professional, managerial, organizational, social, personal, and, most notably, emotional challenges. In addition to these challenges, teachers grapple with bridging the gaps between theory and practice and between their ideals and the stark realities of the classroom [13].

Within the research literature, there is a phenomenon known as “the shock of the live classroom” found among novice teachers. This phenomenon underscores the disconnect between the expectations of new teachers and the stark realities they encounter in the classroom. The underlying reasons for this disparity are rooted in various personal, cognitive, educational, emotional–social, and structural–systemic factors. The challenges experienced by novice teachers can be categorized into three distinct stages, each focusing on different aspects of their professional development and maturity:

Stage 1—Survival: During this initial stage, teachers tend to be self-focused, driven by a fear of failure. Their efforts predominantly revolve around establishing productive relationships with school staff members;

Stage 2—Mastery of Teaching Methods: In this phase, teachers shift their focus to the realm of mastering teaching techniques. They grapple with issues related to teaching strategies and the acquisition of pedagogical skills;

Stage 3—Student-Centric Focus: In the third stage, teachers direct their concerns towards understanding the needs and emotions of their students [14].

The extensive research literature reveals that novice teachers encounter a myriad of challenges in their initial years of teaching. Many of these teachers grapple with the paradox between their roles as STs and their roles as professionals, often referred to as the “reality shock.” During this stage, a significant number of teachers, including those of high quality, find themselves at a crossroads, contemplating whether to persevere or exit the teaching profession. This phenomenon of teacher attrition, particularly among novices, is prevalent in numerous countries, including Israel [15].

Teacher attrition is a phenomenon that affects both experienced and novice educators. An exploration of the factors that contribute to the departure of novice teachers from the profession reveals several key drivers:

Lack of job security: Novice teachers often find themselves in a precarious position, needing to work in more than one school to secure a full-time position. This instability prevents them from forming lasting bonds with students and feeling a sense of belonging within the school staff. The temporary nature of their positions perpetuates a continuous sense of pressure, as they must constantly prove themselves to gain tenure and secure higher job percentages;

Heavy workload: The need to prepare teaching materials for each lesson results in a substantial workload that encroaches on the personal and family lives of novice teachers. The blurring of boundaries between their professional and personal lives exacerbates the likelihood of fatigue and burnout;

Classroom management challenges and student diversity: Dealing with student discipline issues and conflicts among students leaves new teachers emotionally drained. Moreover, the need to navigate diversity, especially among students from disadvantaged backgrounds, amplifies the feeling of unpreparedness to handle the realities of the classroom;

Lack of support: Novice teachers often report inadequate support from experienced colleagues and school administrators. The absence of effective teamwork, cooperation among teachers, and constructive feedback contribute to a diminished sense of competence and the absence of trust in mentoring relationships [16].

The experience of novice teachers is often described as navigating through a challenging reality. During their early tenure, they confront four primary difficulties:

Planning challenges: This includes planning lessons, schedules, tasks, study units, and a curriculum suited to diverse student populations;

Implementation hurdles: Novice teachers possess theoretical knowledge but lack practical experience, making it challenging to apply teaching theories effectively in a real-world classroom;

Assessment difficulties: Evaluating the quality of assignments and assessments for students is a struggle for new teachers, and adapting assessment methods to align with teaching objectives also proves challenging;

Theory-to-reality gap: Novice teachers experience a significant divide between the theories they learned during their training and the practical realities of teaching, often leaving them feeling ill-prepared for the actual demands of their profession [14].

3. Methodology

The current study aims to investigate the factors that impact the evolution of the PI of STs during their first, second, and third years of training after completing their practicum in schools.

A quantitative approach was chosen since 216 STs participated in the research during their training and interviewing this number of participants is almost impossible. Hence, a quantitative approach was deemed the most suitable for the addressing the research questions.

The questionnaire was based on the Fishman–Weiss 2011 questionnaire and included socio-demographic data according to the year of the student’s studies and the professional identity check, which contained 41 items ranked on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true).

3.1. Research Questions

Is the professional identity of teachers affected by a sense of belonging and mission?

How does practical experience affect one's sense of professional identity?

Are there differences in the sense of professional identity of first-year student teachers versus the second- and third-year student teachers?

The above questions are underpinned by the following research hypotheses:

H1. *Differences will be found in the sense of belonging and mission between STs in Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3, such that Year 3 STs will have higher levels of the sense of belonging and mission compared to STs from Years 1 and 2.*

H2. *The practicum in school conducted in Years 2 and 3 will have a positive effect on the STs' sense of PI, such that the more positive the practicum experience, the stronger the PI, and vice-versa.*

H3. *Differences will be found in the sense of PI between STs in Years 1, 2, and 3, such that Year 3 STs will have higher levels of PI compared to STs from Years 1 and 2.*

3.2. Research Method

With 216 STs participating in the study, the quantitative approach was considered the most suitable method. The study sought to examine the impact of the practicum on STs, with reference to the sense of belonging and mission as an aspect related to the means of support, adaptation, and development of PI versus the feelings of difficulty, especially among those undergoing their practicum experience as they see and feel it.

3.3. Research Participants

In the current study, participants were 216 STs from 1 college of education and teaching. The purpose of the study was to examine their levels of self-identity and sense of belonging and mission regarding their choice of teaching as a career, in order to elicit whether there are differences according to the various socio-demographic data in the research variables and, mainly, to examine the correlation between the in-school practicum and both the level of PI and the sense of belonging and mission. Table 1 below presents the participants' socio-demographic data.

Table 1. Socio-demographic data of the participants ($n = 216$).

Variable	<i>n</i>	Percentage
School Year		
1	70	32.4
2	64	29.6
3	82	38
Total	216	100
Gender		
Men	92	42.6
Women	114	57.4
Total	216	100
Age		
20–30	158	73.1
31–40	50	23.1
41–50	6	2.8
51+	2	0.9
Total	216	100

The data in Table 1 show that 57.4% (114) of the participants are women and 42.6% (92) are men; regarding age range, 73.1% (158) are between the ages of 20 and 30, 25% (50), are between the ages of 31 and 40, 2.8% (6) are between the ages of 41 and 50, and 0.9% (1) is over the age of 50. Regarding the year of study, 38% (82) were in Year 3, 32.4% (70) in Year 1, and 29.6% (64) in Year 2.

3.4. Research Tool and Procedure

The questionnaire, based on the research of Weiss and Freshman (2011) [17], contained items relating to socio-demographic data (gender, age, and year of study) and a general questionnaire containing 41 statements relating to the fields of “sense of belonging and mission”, “practicum”, and “professional identity”. Responses were ranked on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = completely untrue and 5 = very true.

4. Findings

To analyze differences in terms of sense of belonging, commitment to a mission, and PI across the three years of study, a one-way ANOVA test was applied. Additionally, correlations between the in-school practicum and PI, as well as belonging and commitment to a mission, were explored using a Pearson coefficient test. Table 2 below presents the descriptive statistics for the research variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables.

Variable	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's α
General questionnaire	-	-	-	0.93
A sense of belonging and mission	3.51	0.63	1.73–5	0.86
Practicum	3.70	0.61	1.80–5	0.85
Professional identity	3.47	0.62	1.73–5	0.86

H1 assumed that Year 3 STs would have higher levels of the sense of belonging and mission compared to STs from Years 1 and 2.

In order to test the hypothesis, a one-way variance test was conducted, where the explanatory variable was “school year” and the explanatory variable was a sense of belonging and mission. The results are shown in Figure 1.

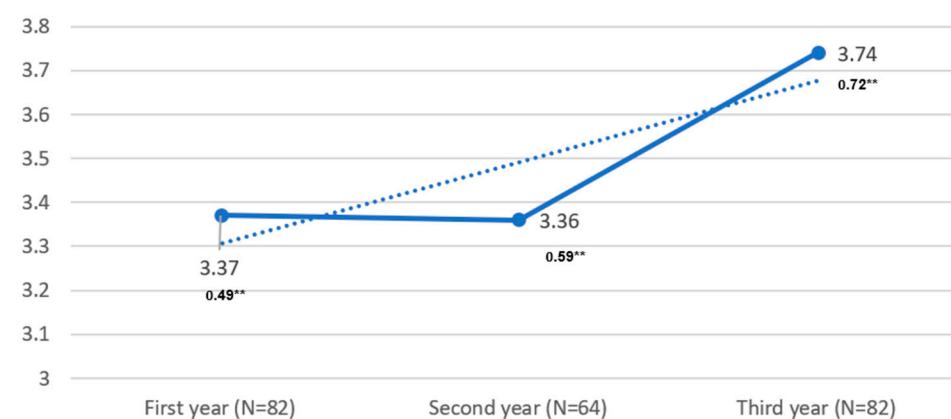


Figure 1. Differences by school year in sense of belonging and mission. ** SD F = 4.63.

The results seen in Figure 1, show differences in the sense of belonging and mission according to school year. The dotted line describes the trend from Year 1 to Year 3.

Bonferroni post-hoc analyses have shown that Year 3 students have significantly higher levels of sense of belonging and mission ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.72$) than Year 2 students ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.59$) as well as Year 1 STs ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.49$), ($p < 0.05$), $F = 4.63$ *. In other words, this hypothesis was confirmed.

H2 assumed that, the more positive the in-school practicum experience conducted in Years 2 and 3, the greater the positive effects on STs' sense of PI, and vice versa.

A Pearson test was conducted to test the hypothesis, where the explanatory variable was the practicum and the explained variable was PI. The findings show a significant positive correlation between the practicum and the level of PI ($r = 0.773$ ***, $p < 0.001$). This

confirms the second hypothesis that, the more positive the practicum, the higher the level of PI, and vice versa.

H3 assumed that Year 3 STs would have higher levels of PI compared to STs in Years 1 and 2. To test the hypothesis, a one-way variance test was conducted, where the explanatory variable was “school year” and the explained variable was a sense of PI. The results of the test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Differences by school year and sense of PI.

Variable	Year 1 (<i>n</i> = 70)	Year 2 (<i>n</i> = 64)	Year 3 (<i>n</i> = 82)	F (2105)
Sense of PI	(0.58) 3.23	(0.51) 3.38	(0.63) 3.76	8.68 ***

*** $p < 0.001$.

The results in Table 3 indicate differences in the sense of PI according to school year. Post-hoc Bonferroni analyses have shown that Year 3 STs have a significantly stronger sense of PI ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.63$) than Year 2 STs ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.51$), and significantly higher than Year 1 STs ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.58$), ($p < 0.001$), $F = 8.68$ ***. Hence, the hypothesis is confirmed.

Analysis of the research hypotheses reveals differences between the STs at the level of belonging and mission, as well as of PI, according to academic year. Thus, Year 3 STs were found to have higher levels of belonging and mission compared to STs in Years 2 and 3. Moreover, Year 3 STs have higher levels of PI compared to STs in Years 2 and 3. On the other hand, examination of the correlations between the variables reveals a clear positive correlation between the in-school practicum and the level of belonging and mission, and between the practicum STs’ PI, that is, the more positive the practicum experience, the greater the STs’ sense of belonging and mission and sense of PI, and vice versa.

5. Discussion

The answers to our research questions and the factor analysis, were aligned with the arguments in the Fisherman (2016) [1] literature review, namely, that the main elements defining STs’ PI are rooted in their thoughts and feelings regarding their professional choices, sense of mission, and feelings regarding teaching reputation. The conclusion emerging from an analysis of all the findings is that harm to any of these components creates cracks in the process of PI consolidation.

First, it is worth noting the uniqueness of the PI attributed to STs, since it serves as the starting point for the topic we chose to explore.

Fisherman (2016) claims that teachers’ PI embodies a reference to the individual’s professional choice, attitudes towards the chosen profession, the activation of professional decision-making, and a sense of belonging to the profession. Positive associations were also found between occupational maturity and both self-awareness and “identity of the self”, where both terms deal with feelings of belonging and identification [1]. Hence, lack of job security and lack of support are factors that impair the sense of belonging and even the sense of mission, and, hence, also the sense of self-efficacy [16]. In other words, these are key elements that define teachers’ PI.

In the current quantitative study, H1 assumed there would be differences in the sense of belonging and mission between STs in Years 1 and 2 and those in Year 3, such that the latter would have higher levels of sense of belonging and mission than the former. The results presented in Table 3 above indeed confirmed this to be the case.

H2 assumed that the practicum experience in Years 2 and 3 would positively affect STs’ sense of PI, so that, the more positive the experience, the stronger the PI and vice versa. The findings indeed show a significant positive correlation between practicum experience and level of PI, thereby confirming the hypothesis.

H3 assumed that Year 3 STs would have a stronger sense of PI than STs in Years 1 and 2. The results presented in Table 3 indeed indicate a significantly higher sense of PI among STs in Year 3 than for STs in Years 1 and 2, thereby confirming the hypothesis.

From an analysis of the research hypotheses, it can thus be concluded that there are differences between the STs, in terms of both belonging and mission, and the level of PI, according to their year of study, where STs in Year 3 display the highest levels of the sense of belonging and mission and of PI. On the other hand, the connections between the variables reveal a clear positive correlation between the practicum experience and the level of belonging and mission, and the same is true between the practicum experience and the STs' sense of PI, i.e., the more positive the practicum experience, the stronger the students' sense of belonging and mission and sense of PI, and vice versa.

6. Conclusions

The general conclusion that emerges from this study is that, evidently, the arguments presented in the literature review are consistent with the findings from the study questionnaire. This conclusion does not completely contradict the summary of the analysis findings, since there are indeed differences among STs in the levels of belonging and mission, and of PI, according to the year of study. These differences can be explained by the 'sink or swim' aspect, which describes the stage of entry into the teaching profession that affects the length of the teacher's professional track and involves professional, managerial, organizational, social, personal, and—above all—emotional difficulties. In addition to these difficulties, there is also the issue of how teachers cope with the gaps encountered between theory and practice, i.e., between ideals and reality. The development of novice teachers is characterized by three stages (survival; mastery of teaching methods; focus on students), in each of which they focus on a different plane according to their evolving professional maturity. Professional development and maturity are influenced by several personal, cognitive, educational, emotional-social, and structural-systemic aspects [13,14].

The findings of the quantitative analysis showed that Year 3 STs have higher levels of PI compared to STs in Years 1 and 2. Moreover, the data reveal a significant positive correlation between the practicum experience and the level of belonging and mission, and between the practicum experience and the STs' PI, in that, the more positive the practicum experience, the stronger the STs' sense of belonging and mission and of PI.

7. Summary

Teachers' PI is strongly influenced by their sense of belonging and mission. The practicum and the nature of the training represent the structural-systemic aspects and constitute key influential factors in the sense of PI and its development. Regarding the differences in the sense of PI, the data indicate that, among Year 1 STs, the sense of PI is unclear.

STs in Year 3 of their studies and practicum display fewer expressions of frustration and undermining of their PI. In fact, among the three research groups, it was found that, in Year 3, there is an increase in the sense of belonging and PI that corresponds to the nature and of STs' professional development.

In the study of Kwok (2018), it was also found that the continuing professional development of a beginning teacher is important and is helped by the support of the school staff and fellow teachers while learning from mistakes and analyzing teaching situations [18]. Increasing the proper cultivation of teachers' communities is also an important factor for the development of teachers' professional identity [19].

This exploratory study presents a point not previously examined, since it studies the STs during their training. The importance of practical experience and the process of learning while trying to obtain the academic degree requires those of us who are engaged in training the future generation of educators to increase their experiences as much as possible and to allow plenty of room for different experiences. All of these will increase the PI of future educators.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data are not publicly available.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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