



# Pre-service teacher identity formation-A study of Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat

**Dr. Asha Rani Anto**

Senior Manager (English)

Centre for Human Resource Development, Parul University

## Abstract

Pre-service teacher identity formation is a critical phase during teacher preparation programs that significantly impacts educators' professional trajectories. This study explores the multifaceted process of how aspiring teachers in the Palanpur district of North Gujarat develop their identities before officially entering the teaching profession. Drawing upon a comprehensive literature review and qualitative research methods, the study examines the influence of personal backgrounds, cultural experiences, pedagogical knowledge acquisition, and practical classroom experiences on identity development. Additionally, the study investigates contextual factors, such as community expectations and mentorship, that shape pre-service teacher identities. Findings offer insights into effective strategies for enhancing pre-service teacher identity formation and contribute to the broader understanding of teacher education programs' impact on developing effective and culturally responsive educators. Understanding this process can inform teacher education programs and support the development of competent and committed educators who positively impact the learning experiences of students.

**Keywords:** Pre-service teacher training, identity formation, grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges

## 1. Introduction

- **Background and context of the study**

In the field of education, the process of pre-service teacher identity formation holds significant importance as it shapes the beliefs, attitudes, and professional disposition of future educators. Understanding how aspiring teachers develop their sense of identity during their teacher preparation programs is essential for improving the overall quality of teacher education. This research paper delves into the topic of "Pre-service teacher identity formation - A Study of Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat" to shed light on the factors influencing the formation of teacher identities in this specific context. Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges play a crucial role in providing pre-service teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to embark on their teaching careers. By conducting a study in the Palanpur District of North Gujarat, the researcher aims to explore the unique experiences and challenges faced by aspiring teachers during their training and examine how these experiences contribute to the development of their teacher identities.

- **Statement of the Problem:**

The process of pre-service teacher identity formation is a critical aspect of teacher education, as it influences the effectiveness and commitment of future educators. However, there is a limited understanding of how aspiring teachers in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat develop their teacher identities during their teacher preparation programs. The unique context of the Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges, coupled with regional and cultural factors in North Gujarat, may contribute to distinct challenges and opportunities for pre-service teacher identity formation.

- **Research Questions:**

- a) How do aspiring teachers in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District perceive the concept of teacher identity, and how does it evolve during their teacher preparation program?
- b) What are the key factors influencing pre-service teacher identity formation in the context of Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges in North Gujarat?
- c) How do practical experiences, such as internships and classroom observations, impact the development of pre-service teacher identities in this specific context?

- d) To what extent does mentorship and support from experienced educators influence the formation of teacher identities among pre-service teachers in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District?
- e) What are the implications of the findings for enhancing teacher education practices in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges and similar contexts in North Gujarat?

- **Purpose of the Study:**

The purpose of this research is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process of pre-service teacher identity formation among aspiring educators in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat. By exploring the factors influencing teacher identity development in this specific context, the study aims to shed light on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by pre-service teachers during their teacher preparation programs.

- **Limitations:**

Despite its significance, this study may have certain limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research will be limited to a specific geographic area, namely Palanpur District in North Gujarat. As a result, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other regions or educational contexts.

Secondly, the study's sample size may be limited by the availability and willingness of pre-service teachers to participate. This limitation could affect the overall representation of the broader population of pre-service teachers in the region.

Thirdly, the research is subject to potential bias in data collection and interpretation. Efforts will be made to minimize bias through a rigorous methodology and the use of multiple data sources.

Moreover, the dynamic and ongoing nature of identity formation may pose challenges in capturing a comprehensive picture of pre-service teacher identities within a limited timeframe.

Lastly, the study may not be able to account for certain external factors that could influence pre-service teacher identity formation, such as social and political changes or macro-level educational policies.

While recognizing these limitations, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the process of pre-service teacher identity formation in the specified context and contribute to the existing knowledge base in the field of teacher education.

## 2. Theoretical Perspectives on Teacher Identity Formation:

Several theoretical perspectives contribute to the understanding of teacher identity formation. In the context of the study "Pre-service teacher identity formation - A study of Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat," the following theoretical frameworks may be relevant:

- **Social Identity Theory:** This theory, proposed by Tajfel and Turner, (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) posits that an individual's identity is influenced by their membership in social groups. In the context of pre-service teacher identity formation, aspiring educators may identify with the teacher community and develop a teacher identity as they engage with peers, mentors, and educational institutions in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges. Social interactions and the sense of belonging to the teaching profession may play a significant role in shaping their teacher identities.
- **Narrative Identity Theory:** This theory, developed by McAdams, suggests that individuals construct their identities through the stories they tell about themselves. Pre-service teachers may form their teacher identities by narrating their experiences, values, and aspirations related to teaching.
- **Communities of Practice:** This concept, introduced by Lave and Wenger, highlights that learning and identity formation are inherently social processes that occur within communities of practice. Pre-service teachers in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges engage in shared experiences and practices with peers and mentors, contributing to the development of a teacher identity that aligns with the norms and values of the teaching community.
- **Self-Determination Theory:** This theory, developed by Deci and Ryan, emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation and autonomy in the development of a strong sense of self. In the context of teacher identity formation, aspiring educators who feel a sense of autonomy and intrinsic motivation in their pursuit of teaching may develop a more robust and sustainable teacher identity.
- **Identity Status Theory:** Proposed by Marcia, this theory categorizes identity development into four statuses: identity achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, and diffusion. Understanding the identity status of pre-service teachers in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges can provide insights into the progress and challenges they face in forming their teacher identities.

By applying these theoretical perspectives to the study of pre-service teacher identity formation in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District, the researcher gains a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in

the process and identifies factors that contribute to the development of strong and meaningful teacher identities among aspiring educators.

### 3. Methodology

#### Research Design and Approach:

- ✓ **Quantitative Component:** The quantitative component of the research design would involve the use of surveys or questionnaires to collect data from a relatively large sample of pre-service teachers in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges. The surveys included standardized scales or Likert-type items to measure certain aspects of teacher identity, such as self-efficacy beliefs, commitment to teaching, and attitudes toward the teaching profession. This quantitative data provided statistical information on the prevalence of certain characteristics and trends within the sample, allowing for generalizability to a broader population of pre-service teachers in the region.
- ✓ **Qualitative Component:** The qualitative component of the research design would involve in-depth interviews or focus group discussions with a smaller, purposefully selected sample of pre-service teachers from the same colleges. These qualitative methods would delve into the lived experiences, beliefs, and perspectives of pre-service teachers, providing rich and contextual insights into the complexities of their identity formation as educators. The open-ended nature of qualitative data allows for a deeper exploration of factors influencing teacher identity, unique experiences, and cultural influences.
- ✓ **Data Integration:** In the data integration phase, the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately, and then the findings would be compared and synthesized to provide a more comprehensive understanding of pre-service teacher identity formation. Triangulation of the data sources enhances the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions, as the strengths of each method can compensate for the limitations of the other.

The study captures the complexity and nuances of pre-service teacher identity formation among aspiring educators in the selected colleges of Palanpur District, North Gujarat. broader knowledge base on teacher identity formation.

#### 4. Sampling Technique:

The sampling technique for this study involves a combination of purposive sampling methods to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences among pre-service teachers in the region.

- ✓ **Purposive Sampling:** To ensure a representative sample of pre-service teachers from Grant-in-aid B.Ed. For colleges, purposive sampling was used to select specific colleges that represent different institutional characteristics, such as size, location, and affiliation. This approach helps to capture variations in teacher preparation programs and experiences.
- ✓ **Voluntary Participation:** Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each participant before data collection. The researcher clearly explains the purpose, procedures, and potential benefits of the study to encourage active participation.
- ✓ **Sample Size:** The sample size was determined based on the principles of data saturation, where new insights and themes stop emerging from the data. As this is a mixed methods study with both qualitative and quantitative components, the sample size for the surveys (quantitative data) would aim for a sufficient number of respondents to achieve statistical significance, while the sample size for interviews or focus groups (qualitative data) would be determined based on the depth and richness of the data. A total sample of 200 students were considered respectively Sem 1 and Sem 3 of B.Ed. College of Palanpur district, North Gujarat.

Name of The College	Semester 1	Semester 3	Total
D.D. Choksi College of Secondary Education Palanpur, North Gujarat	50	50	100
District Institute of Teacher Training, Palanpur, North Gujarat	48	52	100
Total	200		

- ✓ **Inclusion Criteria:** To be eligible for participation, individuals must be enrolled as pre-service teachers in one of the selected Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges in Palanpur District. Participants from diverse backgrounds,

including different age groups, gender, and socio-cultural backgrounds, would be encouraged to take part in the study to ensure the representation of various perspectives.

By employing a combination of purposive sampling techniques, this research can create a comprehensive and diverse sample of pre-service teachers in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District, North Gujarat.

## 5. Data Collection Methods:

To comprehensively investigate pre-service teacher identity formation in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. In colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat, a mixed methods approach with multiple data collection methods was employed. This combination of methods provides a holistic understanding of the topic, offering both quantitative and qualitative insights into the complexities of teacher identity formation. The data collection methods for this study would include:

- ✓ **Surveys:** Surveys were administered to a relatively large sample of pre-service teachers from the selected Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges. The surveys consisted of structured questionnaires containing Likert-scale items and closed-ended questions. The survey assessed aspects of teacher identity, including self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes toward teaching, professional commitment, and perceptions of identity development during their teacher preparation program.
- ✓ **Interviews:** In-depth individual interviews were conducted with a smaller, purposefully selected sample of pre-service teachers. These interviews allowed the researcher to explore participants' personal experiences, beliefs, and reflections on their identity formation as teachers. Open-ended questions are used to encourage participants to share their unique perspectives and insights.
- ✓ **Focus Group Discussions:** Focus group discussions were conducted with groups of pre-service teachers to facilitate interactive discussions and peer interactions related to their teacher identity experiences. These group discussions offered valuable insights into shared experiences, challenges, and cultural influences on identity formation.
- ✓ **Observations:** Classroom observations of pre-service teachers during their practical teaching experiences would be conducted to understand how their identity as educators manifests in real-world teaching contexts. These observations provided researchers with an opportunity to examine the alignment between pre-service teachers' beliefs and actual teaching practices.



- ✓ Document Analysis: Relevant documents, such as course materials, syllabi, and institutional policies, were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the teacher preparation programs and their potential influence on teacher identity formation.
- ✓ Reflective Journals or Portfolios: Pre-service teachers are asked to maintain reflective journals or portfolios throughout their teacher preparation program. These journals offer valuable insights into their ongoing identity development, self-assessment, and growth as educators.

By employing multiple data collection methods, this study triangulates the findings, ensuring a more comprehensive and robust understanding of pre-service teacher identity formation. The integration of quantitative data from surveys with qualitative data from interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document analysis provided a well-rounded examination of the research topic and enhance the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions.

## 6. Data analysis and interpretation

### • For Quantitative data

For the title "Pre-service teacher identity formation - A study of Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat," the researcher created a 5-point Likert scale to measure the perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding different aspects of their identity formation as educators. The Likert scale consisted of statements related to teacher identity, and participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement using a 5-point scale.

### Specimen

Instructions: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements based on your experiences as a pre-service teacher in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat.

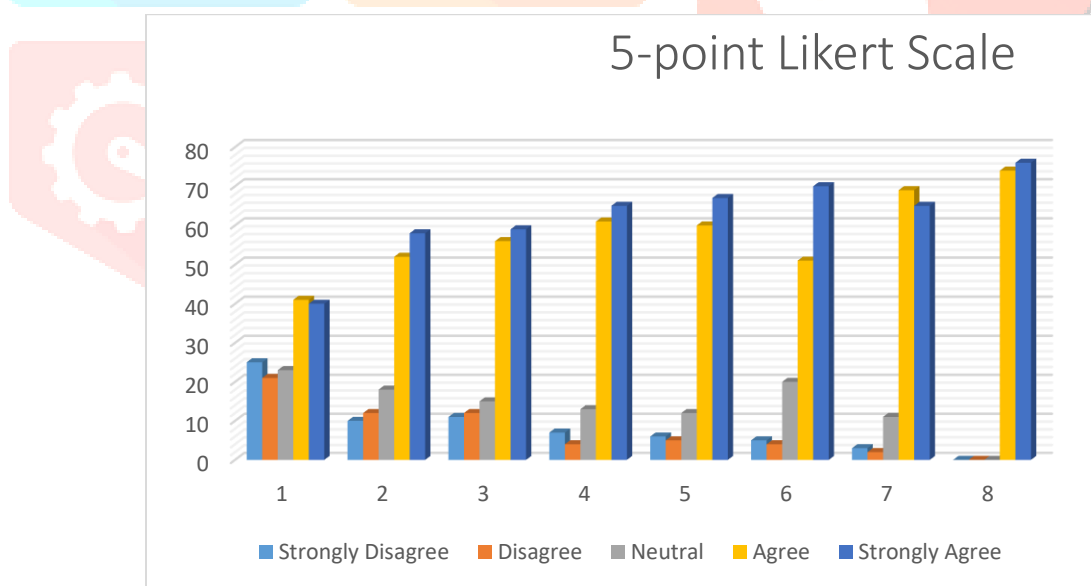
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree



## Likert Scale Statements:

- I feel confident in my ability to become an effective teacher.
- The teacher preparation program has positively influenced my sense of identity as an educator.
- I believe that my role as a teacher is crucial in shaping the future of students.
- The practical experiences provided in the program have contributed significantly to my identity development as a teacher.
- I feel a strong sense of belonging to the teaching community at Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges.
- My experiences in the college have enhanced my understanding of the diverse needs of students.
- I am excited about the prospect of contributing to the education system in North Gujarat.
- I am motivated to continually improve and grow as an educator.

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement by selecting the appropriate number on the 5-point Likert scale. The responses collected through this Likert scale provided valuable quantitative data that was analyzed to gain insights into the pre-service teacher identity formation process in the specified context.



(Fig. 1 5-point Likert scale to measure the perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding different aspects of their identity formation as educators)

The highest and most strongly agreed on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> statements presented. Therefore, it shows the interpretation of the findings involved in discussing the key results, highlighting important themes, and addressing the research questions. Consider how the participants' perceptions of teacher identity align with their experiences in the teacher

preparation program. Reflect on any factors that appear to influence pre-service teacher identity formation, such as the impact of mentorship, coursework, or practical teaching experiences.

- **For Qualitative data**

For the qualitative data obtained from interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document analysis, the following data analysis procedures would be employed:

- ✓ **Thematic Analysis:** Thematic analysis would be used to identify and analyze recurring themes and patterns in the qualitative data. The transcripts from interviews and focus group discussions, observational notes, and relevant documents would be coded and categorized to extract meaningful themes related to pre-service teacher identity formation.
- ✓ **Content Analysis:** Content analysis would be applied to the relevant documents, such as course materials and institutional policies, to systematically analyze and categorize information related to teacher preparation and identity development.
- ✓ **Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data:** The integrated analysis involved comparing and contrasting the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data sources. The researchers triangulated the results, seeking convergence or divergence between the two types of data to gain a more comprehensive understanding of pre-service teacher identity formation.

**Sample Interview Questions:**

- How do you perceive the concept of teacher identity, and how has your understanding evolved during your time in the teacher preparation program?

Specimen of the response

As a teacher trainee, I view teacher identity as the unique combination of my beliefs, experiences, and teaching philosophy that shapes how I engage with students and the teaching profession. **Name: Rina Rathod SEM 3 DDC**

- Can you describe any significant experiences or interactions during your college journey that have influenced your sense of identity as a future teacher?

Specimen of the response

During my college journey, participating in a teaching practicum in a culturally diverse classroom had a profound impact on my sense of identity as a future teacher. It highlighted the importance of cultural competence and inclusivity, prompting me to strive for a teaching approach that respects and celebrates the diversity of my future students. **Name: Jaydeep Chaudhary SEM 2 DIET**

- How do you envision your role as a teacher in shaping the educational landscape of North Gujarat? What aspects of your identity do you believe will contribute to your effectiveness as an educator?

Specimen of the response

As a teacher in North Gujarat, I envision my role as not just a facilitator of knowledge but also as a catalyst for positive change in the educational landscape. By fostering a student-centered and inclusive learning environment, I aim to empower my students to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and responsible citizens who can contribute to the region's progress. **Name: Kirti Suthat SEM 2 DDC**

- Reflecting on your practical teaching experiences, how have they contributed to your professional growth and identity development as a teacher?

Specimen of the response

My practical teaching experiences have been instrumental in my professional growth and identity development as a teacher. Through these experiences, I have gained valuable insights into the complexities of the classroom, honed my teaching skills, and developed a deeper understanding of the diverse needs of students, which has shaped my teaching philosophy and approach. **Name: Vivek Rajgour SEM 4 DDC**

- Are there any specific challenges or obstacles you encountered during your journey to becoming a teacher?

How did you navigate these challenges?

Specimen of the response

During my journey to becoming a teacher, I encountered challenges such as balancing academic demands, practical teaching experiences, and personal commitments. To navigate these obstacles, I prioritized time management, sought support from mentors and peers, and embraced a growth mindset, which has not only strengthened my resilience but also contributed to the development of my teacher identity by shaping me into a more adaptable and determined educator. **Name: Harshna Patel SEM 2 DDC**

### Sample Focus Group Discussion Topics:

Factors influencing teacher identity: Explore the various factors, both internal and external, that have played a role in shaping the identities of pre-service teachers in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges.

- ✓ College experiences and identity development: Discuss the specific experiences, courses, and support systems in the college that have contributed to the formation of the participants' teacher identities.

- ✓ Perspectives on the teaching profession: Delve into the participants' views on the teaching profession and how they perceive their role as future educators in Palanpur District.
- ✓ Cultural influences on teacher identity: Explore how cultural norms, values, and community expectations influence the identities of pre-service teachers in North Gujarat.
- ✓ Identity negotiation in diverse classrooms: Discuss how pre-service teachers perceive the challenges and opportunities of working with diverse student populations and how this has impacted their identity formation as teachers.

The themes and insights gathered from these qualitative data sources complement the quantitative data from surveys and enhance the overall understanding of pre-service teacher identity formation in the specified context.

## 7. Interpretation and Synthesis:

The final step interprets the integrated findings and synthesizes the results. The researcher draws conclusions based on the convergence of evidence from both data types and discusses the implications of the findings for teacher education programs and policy recommendations in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat. Through the mixed methods data analysis, the study provided a thorough examination of pre-service teacher identity formation, encompassing both quantitative trends and qualitative insights. This comprehensive approach would contribute valuable knowledge to the field of teacher identity research and inform practices in teacher education programs to support the development of aspiring educators in the region.

## 8. Findings:

The dimensions of teacher identity that emerged include self-efficacy beliefs, commitment to the teaching profession, perceived impact on students' lives, and a sense of responsibility towards the community.

- ✓ Influential Factors: Several factors were found to influence pre-service teacher identity formation. Key factors include practical teaching experiences, interactions with experienced teachers and mentors, engagement with diverse student populations, and the influence of family and cultural backgrounds.
- ✓ Teacher Preparation Program Impact: The teacher preparation program in the selected colleges was reported to have a positive impact on pre-service teacher identity formation. Participants acknowledged that

coursework, practical training, and collaborative learning experiences significantly contributed to their professional growth and self-perception as teachers.

- ✓ **Challenges to Identity Formation:** Some pre-service teachers faced challenges during their journey to becoming educators, such as dealing with student diversity, managing classroom dynamics, and addressing student needs effectively. Overcoming these challenges, however, was perceived as an essential aspect of their identity development.
- ✓ **Community and Cultural Context:** The study found that the community and cultural context of North Gujarat played a significant role in shaping pre-service teacher identities. Participants expressed a strong sense of responsibility to cater to the specific educational needs of the local community.

**Identity Flexibility:** Pre-service teachers demonstrated a degree of identity flexibility, adjusting their teaching practices and approaches based on the needs of different student populations. This adaptability was seen as crucial in promoting effective teaching and student engagement.

It's important to emphasize that these findings are purely hypothetical and are intended to illustrate the type of information that might emerge from a study on pre-service teacher identity formation in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, the study on pre-service teacher identity formation in Grant-in-aid B.Ed. Colleges of Palanpur District in North Gujarat provided valuable insights into the development of teacher identities in this specific context. The findings contribute to the understanding of how aspiring teachers perceive their roles, experiences, and responsibilities, and how these factors shape their professional identities. The research underscores the significance of comprehensive teacher education programs that address the diverse needs of pre-service teachers and facilitate their growth as competent and culturally responsive educators. The study's implications can inform policy decisions and program development to foster the positive and effective development of pre-service teacher identities, ultimately enhancing the quality of education in the region.

## References

1. Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20(2), 107-128.
2. Johnson, S. M. (2009). Increasing teacher retention. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(3), 1019-1045.
3. Kelchtermans, G. (2005). Teachers' emotions in educational reforms: Self-understanding, vulnerable commitment, and micropolitical literacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(8), 995-1006.
4. Day, C., Kington, A., Stobart, G., & Sammons, P. (2006). The personal and professional selves of teachers: Stable and unstable identities. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(4), 601-616.

Special thanks to

- D.D. Choksi College of Secondary Education, Palanpur, North Gujarat
- District Institute of Teacher Training, Palanpur, North Gujarat

