



## Relationship Between Mentorship Quality and Professional Identity Clarity Among Teacher Trainees

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Mentorship plays a crucial role in the professional development of teacher trainees by providing guidance, support and opportunities for reflective learning. One of the key outcomes of effective mentorship is the development of a clear professional identity, which is essential for prospective teachers to understand their roles, responsibilities, values and commitment to the teaching profession. The present study aims to examine the relationship between mentorship quality awareness and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees. The study adopted a descriptive survey method to explore the extent to which awareness of mentorship quality is associated with clarity of professional identity. A representative sample of teacher trainees was selected using appropriate sampling techniques. The tools used were Mentorship Quality Awareness Inventory and Professional Identity Inventory. The collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques such as Pearson's product-moment correlation to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between the variables. The findings of the study revealed a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.64$ ) between mentorship quality awareness and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees. This result indicates that higher levels of awareness regarding the quality of mentorship are significantly associated with greater clarity in professional identity. Teacher trainees who experienced effective mentoring relationships demonstrated improved understanding of professional roles, enhanced confidence and stronger alignment with the values and expectations of the teaching profession. The study concludes that mentorship quality is a significant factor influencing the formation of professional identity among teacher trainees. The findings highlight the need for teacher education institutions to strengthen structured mentorship program and ensure the availability of competent and supportive mentors. Enhancing mentorship quality can contribute meaningfully to the professional identity development of teacher trainees, thereby preparing them to become competent, confident and committed teachers. The study has important implications for teacher education policy, practice and future research in mentorship and professional development.

**Keywords:** *Mentorship quality, Professional identity clarity, Teacher trainees.*



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## 1. Introduction

Mentorship quality is a critical factor in nurturing academic excellence, professional competence and personal growth among learners. A well-structured mentorship system provides sustained guidance, motivation and support, enabling mentees to identify their strengths, overcome challenges and achieve their goals effectively. High-quality mentorship fosters a culture of trust and collaboration, where mentors act not only as instructors but also as facilitators of holistic development.

Effective mentorship is characterized by clarity of purpose, regular interaction and responsiveness to individual needs. Quality mentors demonstrate subject expertise, empathetic understanding and a commitment to continuous engagement with mentees. Through systematic monitoring, constructive feedback and timely interventions, mentorship helps learners improve performance, enhance decision-making skills and develop confidence. Such mentorship relationships contribute significantly to academic progression and career readiness.

In an institutional context, mentorship quality reflects the commitment to student-centered learning and inclusive growth. Robust mentorship practices ensure early identification of academic, personal or social concerns and enable appropriate support mechanisms. By promoting accountability, reflective learning and professional ethics, quality mentorship plays a vital role in shaping responsible individuals who are prepared to meet academic challenges and societal expectations.

Professional identity clarity refers to an individual's clear understanding of their role, values, responsibilities and goals within a chosen profession. It enables professionals to align their knowledge, skills and attitudes with the expectations of their field, fostering confidence and purpose in their work. Teacher identity is not merely a static label, but a continuous process shaped by individual experiences, social interactions, institutional settings, and personal beliefs (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). A strong sense of professional identity helps individuals to recognize their contribution to the profession and guides ethical and responsible practice.

Clarity in professional identity develops through education, reflective practice, mentorship and real-world experiences. When individuals

clearly understand professional standards, codes of conduct and role expectations, they are better equipped to make informed decisions and adapt to evolving professional demands. This clarity also supports continuous learning, resilience and effective collaboration within professional communities.

For instance, Day et al. (2006) found that teacher's personal and professional identities often intersect and reflective engagement helps them balance these facets effectively. In an institutional and organizational context, promoting professional identity clarity strengthens commitment, accountability and quality performance. It prepares individuals to transition smoothly from training to practice and to uphold the values of their profession with integrity. Ultimately, professional identity clarity contributes to professional competence, leadership development and sustained excellence in service to society.

### Significance of the study

The study on the relationship between mentorship quality and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees is highly relevant in the context of teacher education, where effective mentoring plays a pivotal role in shaping future educators. Teacher trainees are in a formative stage of their professional development and the quality of mentorship they receive significantly influences their understanding of teaching roles, ethical responsibilities and professional expectations. Exploring this relationship helps to identify how structured guidance and supportive mentoring contribute to the development of a clear and confident professional identity.

This study is also relevant in addressing the challenges faced by teacher trainees during their transition from theoretical learning to practical classroom engagement. High-quality mentorship provides consistent feedback, role modeling and reflective opportunities that enable trainees to internalize professional values and teaching standards. By examining how mentorship quality impacts professional identity clarity, the study offers insights into improving mentoring practices within teacher education institutions, thereby enhancing the training preparedness, confidence and commitment to the teaching profession. Josef (2024) examines the impact of peer mentoring and reflective practice as collaborative learning

models to enhance teaching quality and professional growth among rural educators. The research highlights how peer-led professional networks foster experiential learning, improve pedagogical confidence and encourage self-assessment.

Furthermore, the findings of this study have significant implications for policy formulation, curriculum design and institutional mentoring frameworks. Understanding the linkage between mentorship quality and professional identity clarity can guide teacher education institutions in strengthening mentorship programs, training mentors effectively and fostering a supportive learning environment. Ultimately, the study contributes to improving teacher quality, professional competence and long-term retention in the teaching profession, benefiting the education system and society at large.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teacher education plays a pivotal role in shaping competent, reflective and ethically grounded future teachers. Among the various factors influencing the professional development of teacher trainees, mentorship quality and professional identity clarity are considered crucial. Effective mentorship provides guidance, emotional support, role modeling and constructive feedback, which can significantly influence how teacher trainees perceive themselves as professionals. At the same time, professional identity clarity helps trainees develop a coherent understanding of their roles, responsibilities, values and long-term commitment to the teaching profession. In many teacher education institutions, mentorship is implemented in varied and often informal ways, leading to differences in the quality of mentoring experiences among trainees. Inadequate or inconsistent mentorship may result in confusion, low self-efficacy and lack of confidence in professional roles, thereby affecting the formation of a clear professional identity. Conversely, high-quality mentorship has the potential to strengthen trainee's self-concept as teachers, enhance reflective practices and support their transition from students to professionals. Understanding how mentorship quality influences professional identity clarity is therefore essential for improving teacher preparation programs. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine the

relationship between mentorship quality and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study asserts to meet the following objectives:

- To study the difference between first year and second year teacher trainees with respect to mentorship quality.
- To study the difference between first year and second year teacher trainees with respect to professional identity clarity.
- To find the relationship between mentorship quality and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees.

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

- There exists a significant positive relationship between mentorship quality and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees.

### **Method Adopted for the Study**

The descriptive survey method was employed for the present study. The sample comprises 360 teacher trainees selected by using stratified random sampling from teacher education colleges of Kollam and Alappuzha districts. A further sample was bifurcated based on year of study ie; first year (182), second year (178). The tools used were Mentorship Quality Awareness Inventory and Professional Identity Inventory. The data were collected by administering the above-mentioned inventories. The statistical techniques used for the analysis of data include computation of mean, standard deviation, t-test and Karl Pearson's product-moment coefficient of correlation.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of the Study**

The data obtained through the administration of Mentorship Quality Awareness Inventory and Professional Identity Inventory of 360 students were subjected to statistical analysis. At this stage, mean, standard deviation and t-test of scores on the Mentorship Quality Awareness Inventory and Professional Identity Inventory were found. Also, the correlation between mentorship quality and professional identity was calculated. The details of analysis carried out are given below:

**Objective 1:** To study the difference between first year and second year teacher trainees with respect to mentorship quality.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics related to the Mentorship Quality Awareness of first year and second year teacher trainees**

Year of study	N (Number of students)	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Level of Significance
First year	182	17.6	5.1	0.76	Not significant
Second year	178	18.5	10.1		

The above-mentioned Table 1 reveals that the mean score of first year students is 17.6 with a standard deviation of 5.1 and second year students is 18.5 with a standard deviation of 10.1. The obtained t-value is 0.76 and is not significant at any level of significance, which indicates that there is no significant difference in the mentorship quality awareness of first year and second year teacher trainees.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics related to the Professional Identity Clarity of first year and second year teacher trainees**

Year of study	N (Number of students)	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Level of Significance
First year	182	37.2	5.1	1.17	Not significant
Second year	178	37.8	6.6		

**Objective 2:** To study the difference between first year and second year teacher trainees with respect to professional identity clarity.

Table 2 reveals that the mean score of first year teacher trainees is 37.2 with a standard deviation of 5.1 and second year teacher trainees is 37.8 with a standard deviation of 6.6. The obtained t-value of 1.17 is not significant at any level of significance which indicates that there is no significant difference in the professional identity clarity of first year and second year teacher trainees.

**Objective 3:** To find the relationship between mentorship quality and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees

Table 3 reveals a correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.64$ ) between mentorship quality awareness and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees. This value indicates a moderate and positive relationship between the two variables, suggesting that higher levels of awareness regarding mentorship quality are associated with greater clarity in professional identity among teacher trainees. The positive direction of the correlation implies that improvements in

mentorship quality awareness tend to correspond with enhanced understanding, confidence and clarity about one's role and identity as a future teacher.

The strength of the correlation signifies that mentorship plays a meaningful role in shaping the professional self-concept of teacher trainees. Effective mentorship provides guidance, role modelling, constructive feedback and professional support, which together contribute to clearer perceptions of professional values, responsibilities and career goals. As trainees become more aware of the quality and impact of mentorship, they are better able to internalize professional norms and expectations, thereby strengthening their professional identity.

Therefore, the findings support the hypothesis that there exists a significant positive relationship between mentorship quality and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees. This underscores the importance of strengthening mentorship practices in teacher education programmes to foster well-defined professional identities and enhance the overall professional development of future teachers.

## Conclusion

The present study examined the relationship between mentorship quality and professional identity clarity among teacher trainees, with a particular focus on how awareness of mentorship quality influences the development of a clear professional self-concept. The findings of the study revealed a moderate positive and significant relationship between mentorship quality awareness and professional identity clarity. This indicates that teacher trainees who perceive and experience higher quality mentorship tend to demonstrate greater clarity regarding their roles, responsibilities, values and long-term professional goals as future educators. Pandey (2025) in a study suggests that reflective practice plays a critical role in shaping teachers' self-awareness, pedagogical strategies, and professional identity, ultimately contributing to enhanced teaching effectiveness and professional growth. The results highlight the pivotal role of mentorship in teacher education programmes. Through meaningful mentor-mentee interactions, trainees gain confidence, direction and a stronger sense of belonging to the teaching profession, which collectively contribute to the formation of a well-defined professional identity.

To conclude, the study underscores the need for teacher education institutions to prioritize and strengthen structured, high-quality mentorship practices. By enhancing mentorship quality and ensuring that trainees are aware of and engaged in effective mentoring processes, institutions can significantly support the professional identity development of teacher trainees. This, in turn, can lead to the preparation of competent, confident and professionally committed teachers, thereby improving the overall quality of the teaching workforce.

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