UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

AN EXAMINATION OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN CENTRAL REGION, GHANA

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AN EXAMINATION OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN CENTRAL REGION, GHANA

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Dorothy Mends, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work and been submitted either in part or whole, for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Signature: ………………………………………….

Date:………………………………………………..

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
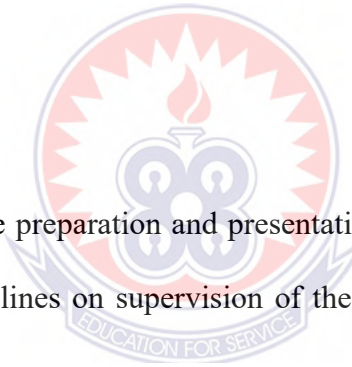
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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DEDICATION

To my lovely children, Elikem and Deladem

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of the study was to examine the opinion of JHS Social Studies teachers' professional identity in four randomly selected districts in Central Region, Ghana. To arrive at this objective, five research questions were posed and two hypotheses formulated. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting four districts in Central Region and 171 schools from which 171 Social Studies teachers in public junior high schools were purposively selected for the study. A four-point Likert type scale questionnaire was used to gather data from 171 JHS Social Studies teachers. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was ascertained using the Cronbach's alpha which generated a reliability coefficient of 0.73. The design adopted for this study was descriptive cross-sectional survey design. Data collected was analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and the t-test and ANOVA were used in analysing the two hypotheses formulated. From the analyses of the data it was evident that, JHS Social Studies teachers in Central Region, had a high opinion of professional knowledge, professional values, professional skills and professional reflective practice as indicators of Social Studies teachers' professional identity. They, however, perceived inadequate resources, difficulty in teaching integrated subjects and the low regard for Social Studies teachers as challenges that influenced the identity of Social Studies teachers. The study also revealed significant differences between males and female JHS Social Studies teachers' professional values; significant differences in professional values on the bases of their teaching experiences was also evident. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that the district education directorate and Social Studies teachers themselves identify opportunities to acquaint themselves with current knowledge, values, skills and constantly reflect on their practices to enable them demonstrate attributes that would set them apart from teachers of other subjects. Besides, social studies teachers should be creative in developing resources themselves and use more internet resources to make teaching more interactive.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Overview

This chapter presents the general introduction to the research. It is divided into six (6) sections, namely: the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses, significance of the study and definition of terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Teaching is a complex and demanding task and teachers are often expected to handle multiple roles both in the classroom and beyond (Chong & Cheah, 2009). They must develop analytical skills that allow them to make sound decisions, investigate problems and understand students' needs (Darling-Hammond & Barnett, 2001). It is, therefore, necessary to prepare new teachers to not only just demonstrate newly learned teaching skills in practicum or student teaching, but retain these skills and apply them in their own classrooms as they transition from student teacher to professional teacher without the support of cooperating teachers and university supervisors (Scheeler, 2008; Yidana, 2017). The professional identity of a teacher is partly derived from the uniqueness of his or her skills that are used to perform assigned roles.

Theoretically "teacher identity" has been explored as a concept, a connection of inter-locking variables, through which the teacher can be understood and appreciated as a professional as well as a social and cultural being. Teacher identity is not a fixed or coherent set of traits but something that is complex, often contradictory and subject to

change across time and space (Morgan, 2004). The development of a teachers' identity is therefore a continuing and dynamic process (Cooper & Olson, 1996).

Professional teacher identity draws from educational, psychological and sociological paradigms of teaching (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Samuel & Stephens, 2000). Beijaard et al. (2004) reveal that professional teacher identity is conceptualized in many different ways within teaching and teacher education. Some researchers use the concept of teacher identity relating it to teachers' concepts and images of self, while others emphasize the teachers' roles (Beijaard et al., 2004). However, Clarke (2008) proposes that "teachers' professional identity implies both a cognitive psychological and a sociological perspective" (p.98). In this regard, people develop their identity in interaction with other people (sociological perspective), but express their professional identity in their perceptions of "who they are" and "who they want to become" (Beijaard, 2006), indicating a cognitive psychological perspective. Professional teacher identity is therefore described as the perceptions that teachers have of themselves as teachers (Cattley, 2007).

There are competing perspectives on what constitutes an ideal teacher (Yidana & Lawal, 2015). Lawal (2006) identifies four broad attributes of an effective English teacher as; professional knowledge, values, skills and reflective practice. To him, these attributes are characteristics of an ideal English teacher. Relatedly, Staver (2007) proposes the following instructional practices as identity indicators of effective science teachers: demonstrating mastery of subject matter, respecting and accepting the unique perceptions of individual learners, reflecting on, and considering learners' prior knowledge when selecting teaching strategies and techniques. Other instructional practices and attributes are; committed to the

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teaching of the subject, a belief in one's ability to influence students' learning outcomes and creating a non-threatening, learning environment.

Siddique (2012) identifies three important qualities of an ideal Economics teacher. They are; scholarship, professional training and personality. With respect to scholarship, the teacher of economics must have mastery of the subject matter. In the opinion of Siddique, mastery of subject matter goes beyond basic Economic concepts to include knowledge and awareness of economic trends at the local as well as the international level. Siddique suggests that an ideal Economics teacher should have up-to-date knowledge about the current affairs of the Economy. Knowledge in other subjects like geography, civics, history, statistics and the others, to enable him or her analyse Economic situations from those perspectives. In terms of professional training, Siddique posits that an Economics teacher should be conversant with new methods of teaching the subject as well as innovations in the teaching and learning process of Economics. A closer look at these perspectives point to the fact that, an ideal professional teacher, irrespective of the subject he or she handles should demonstrate and practice all aspects of professional knowledge, values, skills and reflection (Lawal, 2006, 2011). These are the broad indicators of teachers' professional identity and capacity.

Government policies in Africa on educational reforms do not position the teacher as the locus of change and that little evidence of empirical studies is directed at teacher identity and professionalism as core determinants of how teachers perform their roles. The approach to in-school teacher preparation seems heavily focused on equipping teachers with the so- called 'knowledge base' in their subjects, and the appropriate methods and techniques for communicating this knowledge to learners. In Ghana, Anamuah-Mensah

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(2011) observes that various measures have been put or are being put in place to arrest the declining status of teaching and pursue ways of attracting and retaining committed teachers. He however expresses concern that, in Ghana and other African countries, the development of teacher identity comes as a by-product and not the planned focus of teacher development programs. He further indicates that, Ghana, like most other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, incorporate the following five elements in their teacher training programs: subject knowledge, knowledge of students (child psychology), foundation courses, methods of teaching and immersion in field based experience or practicum. Anamuah-Mensah is of the view that, a missing area of focus in teacher education programs is helping the individual to know himself or herself and his or her role as a teacher (personal dimension). Thus, questions such as; who am l? How do l see myself? And how do others see me, are not raised; rather group-identity questions such as, what do l have to do as a teacher?, how do l act as a teacher?, what qualities do teachers have?, and how do l achieve these? take centre stage and draw out the question of self or teacher identity (Anamuah-Mensah, 2011).

A review of extant literature indicate that most studies in the context of Social Studies have focused on qualities of a Social Studies teacher as opposed to Social Studies teachers' professional identity. For instance, Martorella (1994) explains that one quality of a Social Studies teacher is that "the person must be reflective, competent and concern" (p.10). He further explained that the person should be able to formulate hypothesis that can be tested, think critically, make decisions and solve problems on the basis of the best evidence available. Furthermore, the person should be a reservoir of knowledge from which learners draw their knowledge and are abreast with current issues and changing trends in the society.

To Parker and Jarolimek (1997) a good Social Studies teacher exhibits the ideals of a democratic free society by involving in civic activities such as elections, paying of tax, and obeying the constitution. Aggarwal (1982) and Brophy (1988) also opine that a good Social Studies teacher is tolerant and broad-minded, a good leader, a patriot, devoted to freedom, make independent decisions and believes in the ideals of a democratic free society.

Banks (1990) intimates that the Social Studies teacher should identify and analyse issues and to suspend judgments concerning alternative beliefs, attitudes, values, customs and cultures. Kanda (2012) summarizes the qualities as he indicated that "a good Social Studies teacher has eight qualities that make him or her effective" (p. 236). These ranged from having adequate content knowledge, confidence, being caring…and a catalyst. From the above qualities espoused by the various writers, it is evident that, the qualities of a good Social Studies teacher depends on the kind of environment in which the individual is, the values cherished in the community and the individuals temperaments. Therefore, the qualities of a Social Studies teacher range from the passive compliance member of the community and nation to the active informed citizen who is committed to improving existing conditions. This therefore makes who a Social Studies teacher is quite fluid and general. It is in this vein that this study sought to examine what defines a Social Studies teacher's professional identity in the Central Region, Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ideally, every subject teacher or specialist must have a clearly defined identity that sets him or her apart from other subject teachers, and which may be influenced by a multiplicity of factors during pre-service and in-service practice which have implications for teacher

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effectiveness. However, like most subjects, Agyemang-Fokuoh (1994) indicated that educational background of Social Studies teachers over the years regarding their preparation has been problematic. Kanda and Kankam (2015) underscored this by asserting that majority of the teachers teaching Social Studies in a particular district in Central Region were diploma and first degree holders which did not necessarily mean they were specifically trained to teach the subject while a few of them were senior high school graduates. This presupposed that the subject is being taught by non-professional, para-professionals and professional teachers (Abroampa, 2017). Non-professionals are those who have not been formally trained as teachers but who are teaching the subject; para-professionals are professional teachers by virtue of their formal training but have not been trained to teach that specific subject and the professionals are JHS Social Studies teachers who have been equipped by virtue of their formal training to teach the subject; The experiences of these categories of teachers may create varying identities.

It appears teacher education programmes manifest severe shortcomings in addressing the issue of 'identity formation' as implied by Anamuah-Mensah's (2011) submission. He indicates that the approach to pre-service and in-service teacher preparation seems heavily focused on equipping teachers with the so- called 'knowledge base' in their subjects, and the appropriate methods and techniques for communicating this knowledge to pupils. He laments that little attention is paid to the formation of those core beliefs, values, and attitudes that will eventually mediate their effectiveness as teachers. As a result, there are teachers with varying qualifications and dispositions teaching Social Studies with a fuzzy understanding and appreciation of what it takes to teach the subject.

Even though most Social Studies teachers in the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese, Mfantsiman, Agona West and Komenda-Edina-Aguafo-Abirem Districts have higher academic and professional qualifications, they seemed not to have the core beliefs, values, and attitudes that will eventually mediate their effectiveness as teachers. As a result, their dispositions to teaching the subject comes with a vague understanding and appreciation of what it takes to teach the subject. Though some studies have been conducted on professional identity of English teachers in Nigeria (Lawal, 2006, 2011); professional identity of economic teachers in Ghana (Yidana, 2015); little has been done on the professional identity of Social Studies teachers, especially in Ghana. Most studies on the discipline have looked at the nature and teaching of Social Studies in basic and high schools, and qualities of a Social Studies teacher in Ghana. Though, Ozbas (2015) worked on development of identity, the study focused on student teachers specializing in Social Studies. This study thus sought to examine who and what constitute a Social Studies teacher by examining Junior High School Social Studies teachers' professional identity in Central Region, Ghana.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the professional identity of Junior High school Social Studies teachers in the Central Region, Ghana.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. assess JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional knowledge as an identity indicator.

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2. examine JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional values as an identity indicator.

3. determine JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the relevance of professional skills as an identity indicator.

4. assess JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the relevance of professional reflective practice as an identity indicator.

5. explore challenges that affect Social Studies teacher's development of professional identity.

1.5 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional knowledge (PK) as an identity indicator?

2. What is JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional values (PV) as an identity indicator?

3. What is JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the relevance of professional skills (PS) as an identity indicator?

4. What is JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the relevance of professional reflective (PRP) practice as an identity indicator?

5. What challenges affect Social Studies teacher's development of a professional identity?

1.6 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. H_0: There are no statistically significant differences between male and female JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the four teacher identity indicators (PK, PV, PS, PRP).

   H_i: There are statistically significant differences between male and female JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the four teacher identity indicators (PK, PV, PS, PRP).

2. H_0: There are no statistically significant differences in JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the four teacher identity indicators (PK, PV, PS, PRP) on the basis of their teaching experience.

   H_i: There are statistically significant differences on JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the four teacher identity indicators (PK, PV, PS, PRP) on the basis of their teaching experience.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will provide insights into how Social Studies educators can assist in developing the professional identity of teachers they train. The findings will also expose the Social Studies teachers to what may constitute their identity to enable them develop themselves. Again, the findings of this study will add to existing knowledge on teacher professional identity and teaching of Social Studies.

Also, the findings of the study may inform policy makers and teacher education curriculum developers to make provision for techniques, strategies and principles that may be applied to enable pre-service teachers imbibe the requisite skills and values critical to the

development of their identity. Educational administrators and supervisors by being exposed to such provisions in the curriculum, as enshrined in the new National Teacher Standards and National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework will ensure that effective measures are put in place to create an enabling environment, and also prop up JHS Social Studies teachers to demonstrate competencies acquired that sets them apart from teachers of other subjects

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on examining four professional identity indicators that may constitute a Social Studies teacher's professional identity which are professional knowledge, professional skills, professional values and reflective practice. It was restricted to only JHS Social Studies teachers in three selected districts in the Central Region of Ghana because all the JHS Social Studies teachers are expected to have gone through formal training and would have met all requirements that qualify them to teach at that level. Besides, all the junior high schools are using the same approved curriculum materials. The study employed the descriptive cross-sectional survey design since data would be gathered across a wide group of JHS Social Studies in order to increase the generalizability of the findings.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study was organized into five (5) chapters. The first chapter dealt with the introduction, which gave an insight into the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study and the research questions, which served as a guide to the study. It also dealt with the significance of the study, the delimitation, limitations and definition of

terms. Chapter two focused on the review of related literature on the topic. It comprised the definition of concepts, the theoretical framework, the conceptual framework and the empirical framework/review of related literature. Chapter three comprised of the methodology for the study. It highlighted the population, sample and sampling techniques used in the study. It again described the research design as well as the instruments. The analysis of the data that were collected for the study opens chapter four. It also contained the analysis of the data in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. Discussions of the findings were also done in chapter four. Chapter five dealt with summary of the study, findings, conclusion and recommendations. The chapter ended with the suggested areas for future research.

Operational Definitions of Terms

Professional Identity: an interaction between the personal experiences of teachers and the social, cultural, and institutional environment in which they function on a daily basis.

Professional Knowledge: It is the combination of subject matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, and an understanding of students and their learning processes, all for the purposes of promoting student achievement.

Professional Skills: They are the prescribed techniques, strategies and approaches that are often used by teachers to facilitate and promote effective teaching and learning in a subject area.

Professional Values: These are the gamut or values and attitudes inherent in specific subjects that teachers of that subject are expected to possess and demonstrate.

Reflective Practice: It is a technique that allows teachers to review and analyse their experiences for the purpose of learning from that experience.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Overview

This chapter focused on the review of related literature for the study. This involved the systematic identifications, location and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem. The literature review made the researcher aware of contributions of other researches that have been done and needs to be done in the area under investigation. In this chapter, therefore, attempts have been made to examine related literature on Social Studies teachers' professional identity. All the themes guiding the review were derived from the research questions and hypotheses used in perceiving the chapter. The literature review was structured under the following headings:

1. Theoretical framework.

2. Formation of Teacher Identity

3. Personal Construct Theory

4. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory

5. The Concept of Teacher Professional Identity

6. Indicators of Teacher Professional Identity

7. Determinants of Professional Teacher Identity

8. Challenges of Social Studies teachers' identity development.

9. Summary of literature review.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This section comprised the theoretical framework underpinning the study; the formation of identity was discussed followed by the personal construct theory which explains the formation of teacher identity in the face of personal perception, beliefs, values, experiences and environmental and social forces. The Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory was also adopted to explain the critical ecology of the Social Studies profession.

2.1.1   The Formation of Teacher Identity

The formation of teacher professional identity is a complex process, entailing not only the acquisition of knowledge and skills but also the development of new ways to define the self as professional (Sutherland & Markausaite, 2012). Although most rapid changes in the development of a professional identify occur when teachers graduate and begin their work in schools and classrooms, the development of teachers' professional identity begins with their education (Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010). During this period, a preaching identity arises from images of teachers held by the students, their initial beliefs about what constitutes a good teacher, and their implicit theories of teaching (Sutherland et al., 2010) and continues to evolve. In making the transition from student to a full member of the professional community of teachers, teachers need to refine their understanding of pedagogical practices and develop their professional knowledge and create and recreate their image of themselves as members of a community (Sutherland et al., 2010).

Timostsuk and Ugaste (2010) who carried out a qualitative study of the professional identity of 45 student teachers in Estonia, emphasized the importance of supporting teacher identity formation during initial training to develop the social aspects of learning to teach.

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Using the case-study design, Fletcher (2012) also reported that teacher education program helped teachers to develop their professional identities by challenging their prior assumptions of what teaching entailed and meant to them. In another study of professional development among student teachers, Anspal, Anspal, Eisenschmidt, and Lofstrom (2012) found that the practice periods appeared to be highly relevant to identity development. The findings indicated that students focus shifted from the self to teaching methods and skills and pupil learning. In another study of the development of teachers' professional identity at entry and exit points in a 4-year undergraduate teacher preparation program, Chong, Ling, and Chuan (2011) reported significant changes in their participants' sense of identity.

According to Gee's (2000) understanding of conceptualization and interpretation of teacher identity, teachers, like other human beings, have storied life-trajectories, past experiences, and personal backgrounds that they stand on to interpret and make sense of what happens to them in the classrooms and schools. Such sense of one's being is at the core of the construction of teacher identity "I", or the self as a teacher yet what is important about Gee's conceptualization is his explanation that what matters is not one's sense of self but instead the "kind of 'person' one is recognized as 'being' at a given time and place" (p. 99) in a classroom, with children or with beginning teachers. Thus, identity is not related to internal states of teachers but to their performances in society. As a result, identity formation is not a passive but a dynamic affair that involves a giving and a withholding which simultaneously alters oneself and one's context, with the result that alternative identities may form (Bullough, 2005).

Gee (2000) also described four ways of viewing identity, explaining that they are connected with one another in very complex and important ways. They raise questions about how

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identity works for teachers and people (children and adults) in different contexts. In the first view, the nature perspective (N-Identities), people are who and what they are by nature (genes), which they do not control; identity unfolds outside control by them or society. This is similar to Plato's argument that people are born with different qualities fixed by nature. So it is possible that most teachers, their natural love and care for children will shape their identity as teachers.

In Gee's (2000) second perspective, the institutional perspective (I-Identities), identity connects to the life of individuals and what they do in it and the way in which they position themselves. It is not something that people have achieved or were given by nature; it is about who people are in relation to the position they occupy in society. It is thus worthy to note that the various settings and environment or milieu in which teachers operate and how they interact with the environment will contribute to shaping their identity. The third perspective on identity is the discursive perspective (or D-Identities), which concerns how others view and see the individual; it entails the idea of an individual trait or a matter of one's individuality and is not merely something that someone is born with or creates and upholds (Gee, 2000). Discursive identity requires an individual trait that one cannot achieve but is determined by the power related to the discourse or dialogue of others. People "are what [they] are primarily because of individual accomplishments as they are interactionally recognized by others" (Gee, 2000, p. 101). For instance, the kind of perceptions or views people have about Social Studies education and Social Studies teachers may affect teacher's perception and identity created.

Finally, the fourth perspective on identity is affinity identity (A-Identities), in which people "are what [they] are because of the experiences [they] have had within certain sorts of

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'affinity groups'" (Gee, 2000, p. 101). The term identity has taken on so many different meanings in the literature, yet a person cannot have an identity of any kind without an interpretive system to support it (Taylor, 1989). This system could comprise every individual's views of nature or sociocultural powers, norms, rules, and institutions that influence who they are being and becoming; thus, identity can be understood differently on different occasions, depending on different interpretive systems.

2.1.2 Personal Construct Theory

One of the major theoretical foundations underlying this study is Kelly's (1963) Personal Construct Theory. It presents a systematic and detailed description of the ways individuals create their reality based on their interconnected construct systems. The basic theory is summed up as one fundamental postulate that is further elaborated by means of eleven corollaries. In Kelly's view of the universe, one of the related concepts is composed of three important propositions: (i) the universe is real; (ii) everything is interlocked in it; and (iii) it is measured along the dimension of time. The above propositions can be helpful in exploring and understanding smaller units of the universe, such as "individual universes" that also reveal these traits. Concepts can be transferable and, in this sense, a "universe" can refer to an individual's world and in this case the Social Studies teacher's world that is real, interconnected, measured in time and it is created based on one's lived experiences.

By the same token, an individual's beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations of one's lived experiences are interlocked. In other words, everything is connected to everything exerting a mutual effect on one another. The analogy is also pertinent to the time factor. An individual's life can make (more) sense if it is put in a bigger perspective

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of time (that is, one's life span) so that we can gain a holistic view of it. Hence, sequencing one's life events chronologically allows us to seek relationships and connections among them and in turn, it facilitates reflection and interpretation. In this light, time is an important factor when we talk about the various ways of re-constructing one's life and one's identity.

The notion of "man-the-scientist" is another essential concept relevant to the study, by which Kelly (1955, 1963) referred to all of mankind in an abstract sense, rather than only to a particular group of men who have become scientists in a concrete sense. This notion highlights the "scientist-like" characteristics of individuals, for example, inquisitiveness, curiosity, open- mindedness, search for the truth and self-growth rather than the biological features of being human. The theory also proposes that individuals are actively engaged in making sense of and extending their experience. Kelly (1963) states that "man creates his own ways of seeing the world in which he lives; the world does not create them for him. However, man can enslave himself with his own ideas and then win his freedom again by reconstructing his life" (pp. 12, 21). Put differently, what an individual perceives may not exist, but his perception does, and for an individual his perception is real. He adds that people's fictitious perception will often turn out to be a grossly distorted construction of something which actually does exist (Kelly, 1963).

The term "personal construct" needs to be defined prior to presenting the theory and its corollaries in detail. In Kelly's (1955, 1963) theory the concept of "personal construct" refers to a set of mental models or mental representations that each individual has made about their world. The notion is described in the following way:

> Man looks at the world through transparent patterns or templates which he
> creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is

> composed. This fit is not always very good. Yet without such patterns the world appears to be such an undifferentiated homogeneity that man is unable to make any sense out of it. Even a poor fit is more helpful to him than nothing at all. (Kelly, 1963, p, 9).

The term "construct" is particularly well-chosen because it carries two meanings of equal importance. One meaning is retrospective: a construct represents how the person classifies (that is, has constructed) his or her experience. The other meaning is forward-looking: a construct represents the person's predisposition to perceive (or construe) in the future. Thus, "man as a scientist" ultimately creates his own constructs through which he views the world of events and seeks to predict and control the course of events in his world. It follows then that the constructs are intended to help him in his efforts to predict things.

The fundamental postulate is the following: "A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events" (Kelly, 1963, p. 46). To make sense of the above postulate, we can dissect the terms used in it following Kelly's own method to interpret each word in a statement. It is clear that the postulate refers to an individual and it deals with processes rather than a static substance. These processes are conceptualized in a psychological manner. The term "channelized" refers to a person's processes that occur through a network of psychological pathways, which is flexible and often alterable. The term "ways" refers to a person's processes that can both facilitate but also restrict a person's range of actions. The emphasis is on how an individual person chooses to operate. Each person may have a different way of operating in order to realize his or her objectives. This network of psychological pathways, called "constructs", can also influence the way an individual anticipates future events.

Kelly (1963) explained that different constructs may lead to incompatible predictions. This happens when an individual experience a personal conflict that is painful to face. Kelly claims that each individual finds different ways to transcend contradictions. People are not only different in how they construe events; they are also different in how they organize their constructions of events. In other words, each person deals differently with solving contradicting constructs. Sometimes, we may need to revamp our construct system and we need to make a decision what to do, for example, to replace some aspects of the old system or preserve the integrity of the old system altogether. The theory emphasizes the importance of self-consistency. Therefore, some people may decide to preserve the old system altogether when they anticipate events this happens when they resist changes. Personal growth happens when they are able to replace some conflicting and dysfunctional aspects of their construct system and can thereby rise above the contradiction.

In summary, Kelly's (1955, 1963) Personal Construct Theory maintains that our construct systems make our world more predictable since they reflect our constant efforts to make sense of the world. Construct systems can grow and change; in other words, they are not static but they are constantly confirmed or challenged in every moment we are conscious. Consequently, construct systems influence our expectations and perceptions. Kelly (1955) further explained that some constructs, or some aspects of our construct system, are more important than others. This means that some constructs are easy to change while others are more resistant to change. A person's construct system represents the truth as they understand and experience it, therefore construct systems are idiosyncratic. According to Kelly (1955), the extent to which one person can understand another or oneself is an indicator of that person's empathy. In my view, the extent of our understanding of the

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Social Studies teacher depends on our ability to infer empathically how they interpret and make sense of their experiences. The Social Studies teacher perception of him/herself or how other people view him or her will best be understood on the premise of putting oneself in their place. The Personal Construct Theory has shaped the conceptual understandings and interpretations about the workings of construct systems and their influence on the Social Studies teacher's perceptions and interpretations that are fundamental pillars to the formation of teacher identity.

2.1.3 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

The present study also draws on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1981), and a critical ecology of the teaching profession as extended by Miller, Dalli and Urban (2012). Although the ecological systems theory founded by Bronfenbrenner was initially created as a perspective on child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1981), it has been used in other fields as it is effective to explain the complexity of individual's experiences in society. The recently extended perspective by Miller et al. (2012) is used in this study considering that it provides a better understanding of environmental factors in society and their influence on the individuals (Social Studies teachers). This perspective contemplates Social Studies teachers' contexts and complex realities and propose Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to better understand the concept of professionalism in Social Studies education.

The ecological model presents five interrelated systems (micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono) that have been adapted to understand how Social Studies practitioners experience the complex realities of the profession, and how such realities are related to the wider social, political, economic and cultural contexts. Particularly for this study, these five are

understood for early Social Studies teachers as follows: microsystem to refer to the settings in which the Social Studies teachers exist (for example, workplace, neighborhood) and is active in interactions with other social agents (for example students, co-workers, parents); mesosystem to represent the interactions between microsystems or with Social Studies teacher (for example, relationship of family experiences to workplace experiences); exosystem involving relationships between a setting in which Social Studies teachers are not active participants and their immediate context (for example, educational authorities, municipalities); macrosystem which includes the general societal culture in which Social Studies teachers are (for example, values, beliefs, socioeconomic status, national laws and rules); and chronosystem that refers to changes of the ecological system over time since Social Studies teachers and the environment change over time and these changes are important to comprehend how the different system influence the individual.

It is mainly significant for this study as the influence of the macrosystem level where policies and societal ideologies are founded. Such level is associated to the research questions that aim to reflect firstly on ideologies of childhood, children and learning, beliefs that shape the goals of Social Studies and Social Studies teachers' practices. It is at the macrosystem level where the expectations that different stakeholders have for Social Studies students and for Social Studies teachers operate; and it is at the microsystem level that becomes visible how Social Studies teachers respond to such expectations. As Sheridan et al. (2011) argue, Social Studies teachers deal with changing goals and expectations that make them develop ideas about how they reason and talk about Social Studies pedagogy as well as how they translate such goals into practice. Besides, it is important to consider the chronosystem level that relates to the changing expectations over

time, changes that are significant to understand how this system affects Social Studies teachers' identity.

As argued at the beginning, Social Studies teachers can be seen as more than part of social structures, they can be seen as active agents, able to transform their profession. As Garbarino (2009) suggests, Bronfenbrenner's model argues for an active role of individuals in creating and recreating their environment. Based on interactionist perspectives, Sheridan et al. (2011) also argue that through interaction, Social Studies teachers and the environment influence and are influenced by one another. Thus, Social Studies teachers' initiative and ability can influence their specific environment and not only the organizational, societal and global.

The notion of agency appears as crucial in having a comprehensive understanding of professional identity. It has been argued that having a sense of agency comes as a consequence of teachers being aware of their identity within their context (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Being active agents empowers teachers to critic and transform their realities. Teachers can determine the changing aspects of their context and shape their individual activities (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Such agency is connected to the ways in which teachers interact with their contexts and are influenced by them (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Miller et al. (2012) researchers describe the idea of "a critical ecology" of the profession, which aims for Social Studies teachers to be alert of their environment, their context and their experiences, so that they can, not only own their reality, but can also transform it by being critical and self-reflective. Critical Social Studies teachers imply being alert to

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differences in contexts (history; policies; values; qualifications), experiences (individual/collective) and perspectives about what it means to be/act professionally, and to be part of a profession. Researchers invite Social Studies teachers to be critical because the ecology in which one acts is decisive to the type of professionalism that is possible.

Moreover, within the concept of "a critical ecology", members of the profession must be reflective, self- critical, and open to the local context. Professionals in this sense will not only own their reality but will transform it through action-reflection. Sheridan et al. (2011) have agreed that Social Studies teaching is a profession in change, part of a complex ecological system with global dimensions, but teachers are not passive recipients but rather agents of change.

2.1.4 The Concept of Teachers' Professional Identity

This section of the literature reviews related literature on some of the predominant concepts of the study. These concepts were related to professional teacher identity, the determinants of professional teacher identity, curriculum change, relation and experiences. These concepts explain the perspective of the study.

The concept of "teacher identity" has recently garnered the attention of many teacher educators and researchers in education discourses (Liu & Xu, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Zembylas, 2005; Miller, Moore, Edwards, Halpin, & George, 2002; Danielewicz, 2001). Teacher identity has been addressed and examined in light of social and cultural changes (for example, globalization, post structuralism, and deconstruction). Teacher identity has been examined primarily by poststructuralists (Thomas, 2012) who have played a major part in the deconstruction of some assumptions related to the

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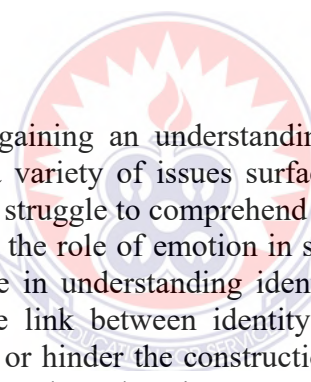
construction of teacher identity.

According to poststructuralists teacher identity is not a fixed set of attributes; it is not a certain something. Instead, it is contingent (changeable and conditional), meaning that somehow it can be reformed and open for reconstruction (Liu & Xu, 2011; Watson, 2006; Pavlenko, 2003). From the poststructuralists' point of view, this dynamic, ongoing process of reconstructing teacher identity and the self is all about emotions, formed and controlled by "social conventions, community scrutiny, legal norms, familial obligations, and religious injunctions" (Rose, 1998, p. 1). Thus, examination of teacher identity should occur in light of the role of emotions, power, agency, and resistance in teaching, all of which influence the construction of a teachers' identity.

With reference to Foucault's work, Zembylas (2005) argued that for teacher educators to have a deep understanding of teacher identity, they must understand it in terms of the social and historical contexts in which meaning intersects with experiences, where teachers are subjects of and subjected to these experiences. In a sense, an understanding of the constitution of a teacher as a self and her or his experiences should focus on the discourse of experiences, not the experiences themselves. In other words, experiences do not constitute the self. Identities are influenced by and subjected to the social and historical contexts of practices and discourses in which these discourses do not simply reflect or describe reality, knowledge, experience, self, social relations, social institutions, and practices; instead, they play an integral role in constituting (and being constituted by) them. In and through these discourses [people] ascribe to [their] bodily feelings, emotions, intentions, and all the other psychological attributes that have for so long been attributed to a unified self. In this sense, subjects of their emotions; emotions do not just happen to

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them (Zembylas, 2005, p. 938).

This means teacher self-identity, which Foucault referred to as subjectivity, is continually reconstructed, depending on the meaning conveyed and given to experiences. Thus, teacher identity is open to new forms of meanings constantly given to the self. Another way of putting it with reference to Foucault's work is that self-identity is not unified but "multiple, contradictory, contextual, and regulated by social norms. Subjectivity is produced, negotiated, and reshaped through discursive practices. As such, the self is continuously constituted, never completed, never fully coherent, never completely centered securely in experience" (Zembylas, 2005, p. 938). Defining identity is a challenging task. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) wrote:

> A major hurdle to gaining an understanding of identity is resolving a definition of it, as a variety of issues surface in any attempt to reach a definition. One must struggle to comprehend the close connection between identity and the self, the role of emotion in shaping identity, the power of stories and discourse in understanding identity, the role of reflection in shaping identity, the link between identity and agency, the contextual factors that promote or hinder the construction of identity, and ultimately the responsibility of teacher education programs to create opportunities for the exploration of new and developing teacher identities (p. 176).

Thus, research on teacher identity is complex. According to Ritchie (2009) "what makes this research even more complex is the use of diverse theoretical perspectives and sub-constructs of identity across studies" (p. 596). The concept of identity has been defined in various ways in the literature on teaching and teacher education.

The concept of identity proposed by Gee (2000) is an informed understanding of Social Studies teachers' professional identity. According to Gee, the term referred to an ongoing, dynamic process situated in an unending continuum. Gee (2000) argued that all people

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have multiple identities connected not only to the kind of person they are, but also by how society perceives them. From this perspective, professional identity can be defined by how a teacher identifies him or herself in the field of teaching. Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) suggested four features critical for teachers' professional identity: "professional identity is an ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation; professional identity implies both person and context; a teachers' professional identity consists of sub-identities that more or less harmonize, and agency is an important element of professional identity meaning that teachers have to be active in the process of professional identity." (p. 122). These four factors aid teachers at all levels of experience.

Professional teacher identity is about how teachers identify themselves as teachers. This study gave preference to the term "professional teacher identity" over "teacher identity" to align itself with such usage in contemporary research on teachers' work identity (Beijaard et al., 2004). Professional teacher identity is emerging as a fully established autonomous theoretical construct from literature (Tateo, 2012) which draws from educational, psychological and sociological paradigms of teaching (Beijaard et al., 2004; Samuel & Stephens, 2000).

A literature review by Beijaard et al. (2004) revealed that professional teacher identity is conceptualized in many different ways within teaching and teacher education. Some researchers use the concept of teacher identity relating it to teachers' concepts and images of self, while others emphasize the teachers' roles (Beijarrd et al., 2004). However, Clarke (2008, p.98) proposes that "teachers' professional identity implies both a cognitive psychological and a sociological perspective". In this regard, people develop their identity in interaction with other people (sociological perspective), but express their professional

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identity in their perceptions of "who they are" and "who they want to become" (Beijaard, 2006) indicating a cognitive psychological perspective. Professional teacher identity is therefore described as the perceptions that teachers have of themselves as teachers (Cattley, 2007).

Professional teacher identity for Social Studies teachers is considered as perceptions of themselves as teachers. This conception of professional teacher identity as informed by Tickle (2000) who suggested that perceptions of self as a teacher emerged from conceptions and expectations of society on what a teacher should know and does as well as what teachers themselves find important in their professional work. Therefore, how Social Studies teachers perceive themselves as teachers emanating from what they are expected of as teachers, and what they find important in their professional work, constitutes professional teacher identity. In this regard, professional teacher identity is assumed to emerge from the interaction between the person and profession (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). The interactions between the person and professional coincide with what the society expects and what the teachers themselves find important.

Professional identity has been related to teachers' images of self in some studies, and the emphasis was placed on teachers' role identity in other studies (Beijaard et al., 2004). Images of self "strongly determine the way teachers teach, the way they develop as teachers, and their attitudes toward educational changes" (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 108); furthermore, "teacher role identity includes teacher beliefs, values, and emotions about many aspects of teaching and being a teacher" (Farrell, 2011, p. 55).

Professional identity development was perceived as a static entity in early studies (Hong,

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2010). In recent research, however, it has been viewed as an ongoing process of change influenced by both personal and social factors and consisting of multiple identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Sanne & Meijer, 2011; Watson, 2006). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) observed that identity is "both product (a result of influences on the teacher) and process (a form of ongoing interaction within teacher development)" (p. 177). Been (2012) added that identity is multifaceted and socially and culturally constructed by lived experiences throughout teachers' lives. Volkmann and Anderson (1998) asserted that "professional identity is constituted by every aspect of teaching" (p. 307). It is also connected to teachers' histories, the expectations of the school, their content knowledge, and their own vision of what it means to be a teacher.

Teachers' sense of identity may be influenced by historical, sociological, psychological, and cultural factors (Chong & Low, 2009). In addition, professional identity entails the influence of the conceptions and expectations of other people as well as what teachers perceive as important in their professional work and lives (Beijaard et al., 2004). In their study of the identity of teachers, Beijaard et al. (2004) highlighted four common characteristics of professional identity: (a) it is not a fixed entity but an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences; (b) it implies both person and context (that is, the interaction between the person and the context is important in forming a person's identity); (c) it consists of a set of sub-identities that later form a somewhat harmonious whole; and (d) agency is an important element of professional identity (that, teachers have to be active in the process of professional development).

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Orr and Simmons (2010) concluded that "the identity of the teacher implies more than taking classes; it entails status and related salary" (p. 85). Since teachers do not live in vacuum but instead communicate with others and perform actions and realize their value within a certain social environment, their professional identities are determined by the objective world (Qu, 2008). Some researchers of teacher identity claim that teachers' professional identity cannot be separated from their social identities. In this line of research, "it is argued that conflicts arising from gender or racial inequality and from cultural stereotypes constitute the realities of teachers' lives both inside and outside the classroom and will, in turn, greatly influence how they perceive themselves as professionals" (Liu & Xu, 2011, p. 508). Other studies focus on teachers' experience with educational reform. The findings of these studies indicate that teachers need to reconstruct their identity to cope with new challenges in the workplace and that the process is very complex (Liu & Xu, 2011, p. 508).

Lasky (2005) argued that the manner in which teacher identity impacts teachers' sense of professional roles and understanding of reform mandates is not clear, especially when these policies accompany new curriculum tools and expectations for teaching. At the same time, she suggested that political, social, and economical forces affect the formation of teacher identity. "Teacher professional identity is how teachers define themselves to themselves and to others. It is a construct of professional self that evolves over career stages and can be shaped by school, reform, and political contexts" (Lasky, 2005, p. 901). Teacher professional identity is an aspect of teacher capacity that refers to "what an individual brings with him or her to the school setting and instruction" (Lasky, 2005, p. 901). It includes teachers' beliefs, identity, past experiences, emotional well- being, personal

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commitment, and view of learning, and substantive knowledge about reform ideas.

In the same manner, Chappell (2001) argued that when teachers are asked to acquire new knowledge and skills to perform their professional practices in alignment with the new demands of current social political norms, they actually construct new professional identities. In other words, because teachers have become the focus of policy discourses that have to do with quality and accountability in education, they are required to occupy themselves with new knowledge and new techniques to meet the new standards of quality education and teaching that is assumed important. As a result, these political discourses have changed, and teachers have been forced to change their understanding of their professional roles and practices. Teachers have been asked to work in new ways and to undertake new professional roles; thus, as teachers are asked to do new things, to have new understandings of their roles, and to change their professional practices, they become new and different teachers (Lasky, 2005; Zembylas, 2005; Chappell, 2001). This marks a change in teachers' identities.

Various scholars have also argued that an understanding of teacher professional identity must correspond with an understanding of the concepts of self and identity. For Erickson (as cited in Beijaard et al., 2004) identity is something one develops through his or her life; whereas for Mead (as cited in Beijaard et al., 2004) the concept of identity should be understood in relationship to the self, the self that develops only in a social setting where individuals learn about themselves and their practices. According to Beijaard et al. (2004), the self is a representation of individuals thinking, attitudes, and beliefs about themselves; yet although many meanings exist for the concept of the self in the literature, they all have a common shared idea that identity is not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational

phenomenon. Identity development occurs in an intersubjective field and can be best characterized as an ongoing process, a process of interpreting oneself as a certain kind of person and being recognized as such in a given context (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 108). In this sense, self-identity is about how people identify themselves in different situations and at different times.

Researchers have also suggested that the concept of professional identity is used in many ways to refer to different entities in teaching and teacher education. In some studies, researchers use professional identity in relation to teachers' images and concepts of themselves (for example, Knowles as cited in Beijaard et al., 2004; Nias as cited in Beijaard et al., 2004). Such images of the self-influence and determine the way teachers develop as teachers and their reactions to educational changes; however, in other studies, professional identity is understood in light of teachers' roles (for example, Goodson & Cole, 1994; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998). Nevertheless, concepts such as reflection and or self-understanding and self-evaluation are all very important for the development and construction of professional identity (for example, Cooper & Olson, 1996; Kerby, 1991). In addition, professional identity refers not only to concepts or images about individuals as teachers in light of how the society and others see them as teachers and our roles.

Instead, the term professional identity also refers to what teachers themselves find and believe to be important in their professional work and lives based on their practical and personal experiences and backgrounds (Tickle, 2000). According to Adams, Hean, Sturgis, and Clark (2006), professional identity is a form of social identity that develops over time at the workplace and through group interactions where a teacher differentiates and compares his or her self to that of others. These authors have suggested that professional

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identity involves gaining insight into professional practices and development of talents and mastery of skills in group interactions. They also wrote that professional identity is gained in relation to the professional role undertaken by the individual; therefore, professional identity is a matter of the subjective self-conceptualization in association with one's role. Most importantly, the authors expressed the need for a deeper understanding of professional identity and its influences on teachers.

Some have asserted that conceptions of identity are also related to notions of gender, class, race, and commitment to equality and sameness (Butler, 1993; Hooks, 1990; Pateman as cited in Chappell, 2001); others have argued that identity is subject to ongoing cultural and historical reformation. However, the meaning that one develops to understand things is what constitutes the formation of identity, which is a process of self-construction. In this process, one interprets and understands particular events, incidents, and social situations in relation to the self; therefore, in this context an exploration and study of the construction of teachers' identities necessitates a look at both the social historical and contemporary discourses that shape and create teachers' identities and the kinds of teachers they become.

Bullough (2005) argued that teacher identity and character have been always a concern in teacher education. He explained that as students come to teacher education programs expecting worthwhile knowledge and instruction, they also expect to be treated and seen as whole persons, individuals who know who and what they are, what they need, know, and what they stand for. According to Bullough, this is also true for teacher educators. When they teach, they tend to teach according to their beliefs, values, understandings, and feelings about what they teach.

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Palmer (1998) stated: Teaching like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. (p. 8). In a sense, Bullough (2005) argued that teachers teach what they stand for and think is good. Thus, teacher identity is defined "by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose" (Taylor, 1989, p. 27).

Connelly and Clandinin (1999) argued that teachers' professional identities are made from those teachers' personal lives and experiences and that teachers' identities are "an amalgam of children, curriculum, beliefs, values, and personal identities; but so too are these identities made up of parents, community, board of education, administration, and administrators" (p. 171). What is significant about this way of thinking about teacher identity is that it reshapes the professional story of the teacher, "a story that leads everywhere to imagined, often actual, splits between teacher aims, wants, and working conditions and the aims, wants, and working conditions of others on the landscape of teaching" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 172).

Connelly and Clandinin (1999) explained that teachers' stories allow understanding of how teachers make sense of the changing world around them, how they feel when what they do no longer makes sense for them, and how they try to adjust to the school system where they work while trying to define who they are, what they do, and how to retain their professional identity. They suggested that teachers' identities should be studied against the backdrop of professional knowledge or in the context of the educational landscape where they work. In

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my view the suggestion by Connelly and Clandinin (1999) holds since stories of this nature allow teachers to reflect on who they are, understand themselves and make efforts to adapt to new situations and events, including what goes on in their schools and community.

The notion of teacher identity in teacher education has been of growing interest to many teacher educators and researchers (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Bullough, 2005; Beijaard et al., 2004; Korthagen, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Even though determining what constitutes good teaching and good teachers may be difficult, teacher identity entails exploring, understanding, and finding one's own style in teaching. Reflections about what makes good teaching are very important to teacher professional development and identity formation; therefore, the current study aimed at exploring issues related to the construction of teacher identity (that is, major life events, critical incidents, and experiences) and emphasizing the importance of studying teacher identity as a way of understanding a teachers' beliefs about teaching and professional practices. Understanding and studying teachers' professional identities are difficult because the way teachers think of themselves determines the way they do things and what they do. Because professional identity and professional performance and development are related (Watson, 2006, p. 510), researchers like Connelly and Clandinin (1999) argued that teachers must continually strive to understand themselves and who they are as well as what they are doing and can do in different situations instead of thinking about what they know in specific situations.

In teacher education programs, professional identity is crucial for the preparation of student teachers. It provides teacher educators and school mentors with a framework for understanding and supporting students and their work (Volkmann & Anderson, 1998). Chiefly, a student teachers' life history and biography are a major part of the formation of

the professional identity, which "is of vital concern to teacher education; it is the basis for meaning making and decision making. Teacher education must begin, then, by exploring the teaching self" (Bullough, 1997, p. 21). Available literature also suggests that knowledge of the teacher as self provides a good understanding of professional identity, teaching practices, and feelings about teaching. In other words, the teacher as self and teachers' attitudes and beliefs are all related and part of professional identity.

Teacher identity is, then, the way one understands himself or herself in relation to others. It is a teachers' framework of actions and practices. Teacher identity poses a persistent challenge to one's sense of self. Self-knowledge is thus central to being and becoming a teacher and teacher educator and the issue is much greater than the challenges associated with induction, of assuming a teachers' or teacher educator's professional identity, but also of determining how one will be for and with others (Bullough, 2005, p. 144). Because issues like teacher identity have moral aspects, a careful attention and investigation of how teachers are made, understand, and identify themselves within their social contexts and in relation to others is warranted. For these reasons studying teacher identity and identity formation are significant; doing so is the ultimate goal of this study.

2.2.1.1 Indicators of Professional Teacher Identity

a) Professional knowledge and teacher identity

Teaching any subject is a highly complex cognitive activity in which the teacher must apply knowledge from multiple domains (Resnick, 1987; Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986; Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987). According to Clandinin and Connelly (1995), the body of literature on 'professional knowledge' is large and diverse with a range of strands that are

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not bound together or integrated in any particular way. The strand most relevant to this work is the professional knowledge base of teachers (Shulman & Sykes, 1986). According to Connell (1985) 'knowledge of how to teach is intricate and intuitive, therefore difficult to explain or defend' this is because our knowledge of our practice is silent, it is often misunderstood - despite the fact that it is fundamental to quality classroom teaching and learning. Craft and Paige-Smith (2011) pointed out that early years professionals are increasingly expected to be involved with the body of knowledge about their practice and that this 'involves a level of theoretical understanding about children's learning and participation in early years settings, and being able to reflect on how the literature, policy, and theory relate to practice'.

Bigge and Shermis (1999) posit that part of a teacher's professional knowledge is developed by teachers adopting learning theories and achieving 'an eclectic compromise formed by selecting aspects of opposing theories and taking position somewhere among them so as to form a mosaic pattern' Social Studies educators' instructional knowledge includes curriculum, content, and pedagogical knowledge. Curriculum knowledge directs an educator to utilize appropriate contents and structure of teaching learners. In addition to a subject to be taught, content knowledge contains the competence of knowing how to teach. Pedagogical knowledge contains the choices made in the teaching situation as well as practical action. According to Shulman, pedagogical thought and action go through the following stages: a) understanding / perception; b) modification / transformation; c) teaching; d) evaluation; e) feedback; f) reflection. For a teacher to cope with the above, "professional studies" are required, that is: a) pedagogical content knowledge and b) curriculum studies (Shulman 1987).Turner-Bisset (2001) suggests a course that would

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instill the necessary qualifications and focus on the following fields ("substantive knowledge", "syntactic knowledge", beliefs about the subject, knowledge of curriculum, knowledge of contexts, knowledge of self, didactic training, knowledge of learners, knowledge of objectives and learning outcomes, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical-didactic amalgam and learning subject. This body of knowledge, that can guarantee a teacher's expertise, is determined by existing conditions and contexts, as well as the personal experiences, beliefs and needs of each teacher. A teacher's knowledge in other subject areas enriches his or her professional competence. There are numerous important problems, phenomena and concepts that defy understanding or resolution when approached from single disciplines, climate change and world poverty are some few examples.

b) Professional Values and Teacher Identity

Literature about the principles and values promoted by the teaching profession has expanded the knowledge available for learning to teach. Professional organisations have drawn on research and conceptual writing on teacher identity, moral literacy and teacher ethics to establish codes, vision statements, principles, standards and curricula that has communicated values for teachers to uphold. These values have been found to have come under the broad categories of service, social justice, perspective taking, curiosity, humility, perseverance, sensitivity, empathy, adaptation, innovation, inquiry, tolerance of uncertainty, respect and integrity, and the more recent values of reciprocity and collaboration within communities of practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Husu & Tirri, 2007; Leadbeater, 2011; Loughran, 2006) concurred that emerging and experienced teachers' agency remained

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rooted in their personal principles, values and approaches to life rather than an unconscious intention to enact ethical behaviour outlined explicitly in school mission statements, codes and standards. Halstead and Xiao (2010) on the impact of the hidden curriculum on values education, underlines the students' constant learning of values that may not be those that are explicitly taught.

c) Professional Skills and Teacher Identity

Every profession requires specific skills to operate and function and it is based on these skills that a professional is known. Teaching skill is the basic skill needed for teacher as an educator. Teaching skills are whatever strategies teachers use to enable children to learn (Wragg, 2005). Kyriacou (2007) defines teaching skill as strategies that educators used which enable students to learn and get something worthwhile and which are acknowledged by those competent to judge as being skill. Teaching skills may also be perceived as a set of related teaching behaviours which specifies types of classroom interaction situations that tend to facilitate the achievement of specified types of educational objectives. Based on this description, it can be concluded that teaching skill is a strategy used by a teacher to support learners' learning in order to develop their potential.

Professional skills refer to teachers' demonstration of expert instructional practices and behaviour that are consistent with acceptable professional standards. As Lawal puts it, teachers' professional skills is a domain of their identity is made up of the skills of instructional planning, skills of instructional implementation and skills of assessment (Lawal, 2011). Teaching skill is a combination of cognitive aspect, social skills, art and talent that can be improved through experiences. The Social Studies teacher teaching skills

can be divided into several domains or content of pedagogical knowledge, such as the knowledge of teaching and learning, which are also part of professional foundations (for example, philosophical, historical, and psychological foundations); relationships with the home, school, and community; development and implementation of the curriculum; assessment methods; and professional ethics (McCarthy, 1990). The other pedagogical content of knowledge or how teachers can comprehend subject matter and transfer it into learning activity are the necessary component within the knowledge base that embraces the 'wisdom of practice'(Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) A pedagogically skillful teacher has exquisite interaction skills. He/She understands what makes learning easy or difficult and can choose developmentally appropriate practices flexibly during a teaching situation (Guskey, 1986; Saracho & Spodek, 2003). Generally, Rho, Park and Kwon (2014) divided the teacher skills as education planning and organization skill, performance of teaching and learning strategy, communication, interaction, facilitation of motivation, facilitation of learning, feedback offering, consultation, creating the learning environment, managing career, presentation, application of technology.

d) Professional Reflective Practice and Teacher Identity

The purpose of teachers' reflection is to identify problems during the process of teaching which are important for teachers to gauge students' understanding of lessons and how teaching might relate to that understanding (Yidana & Lawal, 2015). Reflective practice is a process that facilitates teaching, learning and understanding, and it plays a central role in teachers' professional development. Ghaye (2000) suggests that reflective practice can potentially help practitioners make sense in the doubt in their workplaces and offer them 'courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos'. Reflective

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practices are interactive, ethical, value-driven, open-ended processes where policy and practice are being explored and critically and actively re-interpreted from multiple perspectives. Reflection is an evolving process oscillating between theory and practice, involving emotions and collaborative interactions between a range of professionals each operating in their own unique contexts.

Reed and Canning (2009) cautioned in contradiction of a narrow definition of reflective practice. He suggested that Social Studies settings may be seen primarily as places for 'technical practice: places where society can use powerful human technologies to produce pre-determined outcomes' and that institutions should instead be seen as a place of 'democratic political practice. Developing an identity as a reflective practitioner involves aspiring to be more than a 'worker as technician'. This implies that Social Studies teachers should aspire to become what Moss describes as 'democratic and reflective' professionals, capable of thinking critically and co-constructing meaning, identity, and values. The identity of a reflective professional is related to a desire to make meanings of their experiences.

Professional teachers ideally are expected to reflect on all the dimensions of their cognitive (knowledge), affective (values) and psychomotor aspects of their professional practices (Lawal, 2011). In specific terms, professional teachers as in the case of Social Studies teachers are expected to periodically reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in terms of the content knowledge of the themes they teach (Yidana & Lawal, 2015). Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields and to everyday life. This kind of understanding provides a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge that enables teachers to make ideas accessible to others (Shulman, 1986). This includes reviewing, reconstructing,

reenacting and critically analyzing one's own teaching abilities and then grouping these reflected explanations into evidence of changes that need to be made to become a better teacher. Walkington (2005) posits that the formation of teacher identity is assisted by the process of 'reflection on action'. Reflective teaching demands that teachers are subject - conscious as well as standard - conscious because it promotes the individual as responsible for identifying subject content deficiencies and, through the act of reflection and being autonomous, take steps to address such deficiencies (Minott, 2006). Teachers who reflect on their strengths and weaknesses become aware of and control their teaching by actively assessing what they already know, what they need to know and how to bridge that gap (Yidana & Lawal, 2015).

The reflection, or the ability to step back from an experience and consider it critically, in an analytical, non-subjective manner, is an essential aspect of problem solving and decision making, and also of effective communication with clients and colleagues. The insight to teachers' reflection could suggest the need to reexamine the choice of words, actions, phrases and expressions used in class, assessment methods, and appropriate activities, including learning materials used in class, and achievement of learners. The ability of a teacher to critically reflect on these aspects will enable him/her to know how best to use them appropriately.

2.2.2 Determinants of Professional Teacher Identity

From the nature of teachers' professional identity, it is clear that teachers' professional identity is not stable but constantly in a state of flux. As such there are certain factors which determine when it should change and what direction it should take. Some of these factors

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are; curriculum change, relation and experiences.

2.2.2.1 Curriculum Change

Curriculum change is one of the major determinants of teachers' professional identity (Seetal, 2006). Once the curriculum changes in any educational environment, the way in which teachers see themselves also changes. For example, Cross and Teruvinga (2012) posited the notion of the "disappearing" teacher as learners emerged as the initiators and creators of learning. The teacher ceased from being the all-knowing teacher as in the days of apartheid and became a facilitator in the teaching and learning process. The frequent change of the curriculum and the curriculum policy document has led to a constant change in the professional identity of teachers, what they represent in the classroom. This has caused diverse problems in terms of lesson delivery and professional development for teachers (Cross & Teruvinga, 2012).

Furthermore, within the context of curriculum change, teachers more often than not are constantly in a frustrating position of being simultaneously both the subject and the agent of change (Seetal, 2006). They are often obliged to change themselves, their practice and take the necessary steps to meet specific objectives or laid down directions and principles outlined by policymakers who themselves know neither how to meet such objectives or the contexts in which the objectives are supposed to be met. At certain points in time teachers are required to make changes which they believe on the basis of their professional experience, to be unreasonable, inappropriate or impossible and this inevitably changes the way they see themselves and the very fact that they are required or expected to implement these imposed changes means that their professional identity fluctuates and their freedom

and autonomy are further curtailed (Seetal, 2006). Teachers are continually required to alter their administrative and organization systems, their pedagogy, curriculum content, the resources and technology they use and their assessment procedures to meet new standards set up by the changing curriculum.

Cross and Teruvinga (2012) postulated that a new curriculum brings with it an almost new professional identity for teachers and an educational discourse with a range of new demands in terms of teaching and learning, with which most teachers are unfamiliar. They add that the rearrangement of school subjects into learning areas and the introduction of the new forms of assessment have hampered the implementation of the curriculum and the way teachers see themselves. Sometimes the merging of knowledge into learning areas means a recreation of identity for teachers and also the collapsing of the traditional boundaries and subject disciplines. This suggests that teachers who are used to teaching single subjects have to change their thinking, approach and what they know so as to meet the demands of the new curriculum.

Seetal (2006) adds that during the apartheid era, in South Africa the educational system had school subjects which enjoyed hallowed status. But in the new educational system teachers are expected to work together in teams, cooperating with one another to promote a collaborative culture of learning amongst pupils, and encourage a problem-solving mentality and a project approach to the curriculum. As such teachers' professional identity is determined by curriculum change since it dictates what direction the teaching and learning process should take. Before the introduction of curriculum 2005 teachers were loners within the educational system. Once the curriculum change was introduced, not only did what was to be taught change, but also how it was to be taught and the person of the

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teacher was redefined. Due to this, it was noticed that the training required to support teachers perform their duty was inadequate (Seetal, 2006) and their performance drastically dropped leading to a failure of the curriculum change and consequently the introduction of a new curriculum with a new professional identity for the teacher.

Teachers' professional identity therefore has and always will be determined principally by curriculum change. The dictates of curriculum change in all academic systems, whether partial or complete change, has an impact on what teachers are to do in class and their professional identity. Much has been said on how curriculum change affects teachers' professional identity but there is a gap as to how student teachers experience teachers' professional identity and the changes that accompany it.

2.2.2.2 Relation

Relation is another major determinant of teachers' professional identity. Stenberg (2010) defines relation as the constant interactions with other teachers, the school governing body, government and the society around them. This is due to the fact that teachers make sense of themselves as a result of their relations to the world around them. Stenberg (2010) continues that the teacher relates to his or her learners or students (the pedagogical relation), his or her content, to students' studying and learning (the didactical relation) and to the teachers' personal work theory. The teachers' relation with his content includes the actual content of teaching or what actually transpires in the classroom. Relating to the content therefore embodies subject matter, instructions and classroom management amongst other things (Kemp, Blake, Shaw & Preston, 2009).

To a larger extent it also involves the bigger content of the curriculum, the manifold settings

in which teachers work and the school environment (Stenberg, 2010), as such his relation to these multiple settings aids in determining who he or she is or who he or she eventually turns out to be. The didactical relation refers to the teachers' relation to the students' relating to content or how teachers aid and support students' learning. This cannot be done by following a specific set of rules. Instead, each teacher determines his or her approach or theory to use depending on the circumstances around him, because students learn in diverse ways and at various paces. The pedagogical relation shifts the focus from teaching and learning to the communication between the teacher and learners or students and to how the teacher aids and supports the learner or students' personal growth. The teacher also relates to his or her personal working theory which more often than not is derived from the teachers' professional and personal experiences, involving his inner values, understandings and beliefs that ultimately guide and determine his professional identity (Levin & He, 2008; Kansanen, 2009). Therefore, as MacLeod and Cowieson (2001) postulate, it is most likely impossible to split the twin elements of the professional and the personal aspect of the teacher.

According to Rodgers and Scott (2008), the relations in the classroom between the teachers and the students involve more than just participants in the teaching and learning process and it is a complex process of meaning making for both the teacher and the learners or students. As such what transpires in the classroom is more than an exchange of knowledge but the reproduction of self by both parties and a rub off of this self. The issue of emotions nurtured by the complex relation between teachers, learners, co-workers, mentors, school, community and state is more and more being scrutinized as a critical aspect of teachers' professional identity (Timostsuk & Ugaste, 2010). This relation inadvertently impacts how

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the teacher treats or reacts to the students in his/her class and also the quality of his or her teaching. The relation with the professional community of teachers also influences their understanding of complex practices, and the understanding of self. Since other teachers also go through this process, it is therefore an exchange of who they are rather than an impartation, making relations a critical determinant of teachers' professional identity.

Therefore, the teachers' relation with his/her learners, content, colleagues and environment at large determines his/her professional identity. The teaching and learning process is a very complicated one in which the teacher has to relate with the curriculum, its designers and the stake holders to support the smooth functioning of the school. The exchange between the teacher and the rest of the contributors or partakers in the teaching and learning process therefore has a great impact in the meaning making process for the teacher about himself. Relation is therefore a significant determinant of teachers' professional identity.

2.2.2.3 Experiences

Since teacher professional identity is not static but rather involves the creation and recreation of meaning through experiences or stories over time (Timostsuk & Ugaste, 2010), experience is another major determinant of teacher professional identity. The teacher uses his experiences to construct and reconstruct his professional identity over time, owing to the fact that meaningful learning only builds upon previous knowledge and knowing who we are is the first step of knowing or determining who we want to be. Timostsuk and Ugaste (2010) consider teachers' professional identity to be a product of experience by seeing it as a process of practical knowledge building characterized by an on-going integration of what is individually and collectively seen or experienced as

relevant to the teaching field. Geijsel and Meijers (2005) attempt to model this integration, by treating the formation of teacher professional identity as an on-going learning process, in which each professional experience is re-thought against a backdrop of mutual interactions of emotions and knowledge and where experiences can be both individualistic and one experienced with other colleagues. Thus, teachers' professional identity is determined by experience and this experience is a continuous learning process in which behaviour amongst other things, like the creation of related meaning (Rodgers & Scott, 2008) and social context in a broader perspective, is the focus.

As Feistritzer argues, not only do the educational experiences shape the teachers' professional identity but also political, social and cultural experiences (Feistritzer, 2007). Seetal (2006) maintains that the relation between curriculum change discourses and teachers' professional identity provides insights to curriculum developers and theorists into how teachers' experiences determine or shape teachers' professional identity, teachers' practices and the meaning they make of it. Teachers therefore actively interpret and re-interpret their life experiences, creating their professional identity as teachers. It is therefore clear that teachers' professional identity cannot be complete or fully shaped without the teachers' experiences. With this understanding therefore, for student teachers to fully develop into practicing teachers, their experiences of what it means to be a teacher should be investigated and the results used in teacher education.

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2.2.3 The Role of Professional Development in Social Studies Teachers' Identity

Formation

While conceptions of teacher identity vary depending on theoretical views and perspectives, researchers agree that identity formation and teacher development are associated in important ways.

> Bullough (1997) expressed this sentiment as follows: Teacher identity, what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning and self-as-a-teacher is of vital concern to teacher education; it is the basis for meaning making and decision making… Teacher education must begin, then, by exploring the teaching self. (p.21).

Teacher identity formation is important in influencing teachers' decision-making, professional lives, motivation, satisfaction, commitment, and career decisions. When considering the increasing teacher attrition rates in the Unites States (an estimated 30-50% of new teachers leave the field within their first five years, Ingersoll, 2003), it is easy to understand the critical role teacher identity plays in recruitment, preparation, and retention of the teaching workforce, as well as the need to study teacher identity and the factors that contribute to its successful and less successful development.

An examination of the research literature about teacher identity indicates that teacher' perceptions of their own identities as professional educators have been shown to influence their development as well as their ability to deal with situations in and outside of their classroom and school environments (Beijaard et al., 2000). "Teachers' talk about and experience of professional identity are central to the beliefs, values, and practices that guide their engagement, commitment, and actions in and out of the classroom" (Cohen, 2010, pp. 473). Indeed, knowledge of teachers' professional identity perceptions may help them cope

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with educational challenges and changes (Beijaard, et. al, 2000). Recognizing and addressing these perceptions may also help teacher education professionals, classroom teachers, and school administrators accommodate and attend to career-related tensions. Moore and Hoffman (1988) found that a teachers' self-perception of their professional identity, if seen in a positive light, can override dissatisfaction with poor working conditions. Flores and Day (2006) cited research that implies tension in the first few years of teaching as professionals work to make a place for themselves in the education world.

Experiences vary, but some student teachers feel isolated, disconnect between what they were doing in college and classroom expectations, and lack of support to name a few of the traits (Flores, 2001; Huberman, 1989). In this study, Flores and Day (2006) followed 14 new teachers, mostly situated in an elementary setting for two years as their professional identities were shaped and reshaped. Their findings indicated that personally situated identities were strongly integrated at the beginning of their careers, but seemed to destabilize as they progressed through the study. The climate of each school structure caused the teachers to be less creative and more routine as time passed. Flores and Day ascertained that workplace influence (positive or negative–perceptions of school culture and leadership) played a key role in (re)shaping teachers' understanding of teaching, in facilitating or hindering their professional learning and development, and in (re)constructing their professional identities.

Societal perceptions about teacher identity have also been shown to have a negative impact on decisions to enter the teaching profession. DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) examined the attitudes and perceptions of male teachers choosing to enter elementary education even though the social attitudes relate this occupation to mostly female teachers. Their argument

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was that if more men entered the field of teaching, especially in elementary education, schools could provide a more well-rounded education for many children. They discovered that the decision to enter a predominantly female-driven field corresponded with the amount of direct contact with, and nurturing children.

Foster and Newman (2005) studied a group of male pre-school teachers for four years. They uncovered widespread stereotypes surrounding men in education. Men are often perceived as doing certain kinds of jobs such as handyman or sportsman, and are sometimes associated with certain negative social roles such as sexual predators, precocious careerists, potential child abusers, staff room sex symbols, discipline men, father figures, and the like. Foster and Newman followed four male teachers who had expressed interest in exploring these perceptions in more depth. They found these men had "bruised identities" in large part due to preconceived notions about male teachers often held by the public and often found in print and visual media. These pre- conceptions perceptions have a damaging effect on teacher identity and reinforce the prevailing view that teaching is a woman's occupation. More importantly, they are likely to shape male teachers' identity formation even before entering the teaching profession.

In one study, Hong (2010) identified six psychological factors that impact teacher career paths. These factors include self-efficacy, commitment, emotions, value, knowledge and beliefs, and micro politics. Hong maintained that most teachers have a naïve and idealistic perspective on teaching and that emotional burnout is the leading factor for dropout. Allowing teachers to leave their professional training with their idealistic perspectives does not help prepare them for their future classrooms. She suggested that teacher preparation

programs must challenge teachers pre-existing beliefs about teaching by providing activities that help teachers reflect on beliefs that cause tension in their professional lives.

In a related study, Van-Veen, Sleegers and Van-de-Ven (2005) examined teacher emotions and their connection to identity and how that, in turn impacts teacher decisions to embrace or reject educational reform. The emotions analysed ranged from happiness/enthusiasm to guilt/shame and anxiety/anger. The social-psychological approach used to analyse emotions allowed them to look in-depth at the concern's teachers have when faced with the context of reforms and how their personal and professional identities are affected. They found that emotions play a key role in understanding commitment to change, quality of teaching, as well as identity.

McDougall (2010) focused her research on not only literacy and identity, but how teachers cope with changing views of identity and their professional growth. Adapting to change in education reform has been linked to professional identity in numerous studies (Van-Veen & Sleegers, 2005). By using Gee's discursive notion of identity, McDougall analyzed primary teachers' comfort with the changing views of literacy. Her findings categorized teachers in three different categories: traditionalism, survival, and futures. Traditionalism-oriented teachers felt their responsibility was to teach basic numeracy and literacy and were reluctant to accept any new curriculum alterations.

Survival-oriented teachers' acknowledged that literacy is changing and while it is important to embrace, they vocalize insecurities with this new, advanced idea. Future-oriented teachers embraced change and were enthusiastic about learning a new way of thinking. While none of these categories specifically referred to changes in literacy, future-

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oriented teachers implied their willingness and acceptance to change. This study highlights the changing responsibilities of primary teachers and the ease or discomfort they feel approaching these changes. The teachers who appeared to be more adaptable had already begun altering their identities to accommodate new, rapidly approaching literacies.

In addition to exploring the role of teacher identity in teacher learning and development, researchers have also explored best times for, as well as approaches for, fostering identity development among beginning teachers. For instance, Bullough (2005) suggested that teacher identify can and should be analysed prior to, and during the student teaching experience. Bullough proposed using trained teacher mentors to help pre-service teachers grapple with identity formation and recognition issues. The role of teacher mentors is prescribed by organizations like the National Council for the Accreditation of Institutions of Teacher Education (NCATE). Teacher mentors are practicing teachers who allow a student-teacher to enter their classroom for a designated period. The mentor teacher has several responsibilities they must fulfil to successfully carry out this role.

Alternatively, Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, and Fry (2004) proposed a "sink- or-swim" approach by placing students in situations that provoke tension and challenge their identities. They argue this allows for self-exploration, growth and a shifting of their own identities. Others in the field have argued that we should allow pre-service teachers to discover their "teaching selves" (Freese, 2006; p. 100) through reflective practice. An example of such a study, conducted by Gaudelli and Ousley (2009), targeted the student teaching semester and identity exploration of ten student teachers. The study was conducted in a large state school where the faculty had no regular contact with their students teachers. When they did have contact, faculty members stated they were often

displeased with what they observed. Many of the teaching philosophies they presented in coursework had altered to more teacher-centered lessons taken from teaching kits as well as heavy-handed classroom management. The researchers' goal, at a minimum, was to have contact with their student teachers. To accomplish this, they began a seminar class that allowed the students to meet weekly as a group during their student teaching semester. The categories reflected in their study focused on conflicts and perceptions/realities that students encountered. Their findings indicated that the students needed the seminar to reflect and compare notes with other teachers, that beginning teachers navigate their identity differently due in large part to personality differences, and that the student teachers appreciated the opportunity to hear about others' experiences.

2.3   Challenges Affecting Social Studies Teachers' Professional Identity

A number of challenges affect the professional identity of teachers. These include but not limited to prejudice about the relevance Social Studies education, the low value placed on Social Studies teachers, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and curriculum reforms and changes by the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service.

Public prejudice about the relevance of Social Studies education in the school curriculum is a challenge affecting Social Studies teachers' professional identity. This has resulted in the low status attached to the subject as a core subject in Ghanaian Junior High Schools. Such prejudices manifest in persistent societal stereotype about the essence, relevance, status and levels of intelligence of teachers involved in Social Studies education. For instance, Social Studies is viewed as a subject that any general teacher with general education background can handle. This suggests that it does not require any specialized

teacher to teach it. This negative notion undermines the status and demoralises Social Studies teachers. This assertion underscores the views of a number of scholars (Moloney & Pope, 2012, Moloney, 2010, 2011; OECD, 2006) work that the Social Studies continues to be undervalued. It does not carry the social status that accompanies other disciplines such as mathematics and the sciences (OECD, 2006; Hoi Choi-Wa Dora, 2006).

Another area of concern is the qualification of teachers who teach Social Studies as a subject. Teaching is a profession that is dependent upon graduate level pre-school training. By implication those working as Social Studies teachers require academic and professional qualifications in the fields of Social Studies education. Generally, it is assumed that general education teachers who do not major in Social Studies rather teach the subject. In other words, it does not necessarily require teachers who have specialization in the fields of Social Studies education to teach it. This notion affects professional identity of Social Studies teachers. It should be noted that practitioner qualification is critical to identity formation as noted by Moloney and Pope (2012). To Rogan and Grayson's (2003), a critical factor that can support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in a school pertains to the teacher's own background, training, qualification and level of confidence, and their commitment to teaching.

Contextual factors such as school environment, the nature of the learner population, the impact of colleagues and of school administrators, and teachers' own experiences as learners in schools affect teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). It is important to emphasize the contextual factors that are influencing the formation of teachers' professional identity. Being aware of the context and the effects it has in the dynamic process of shaping one's identity seems crucial for teachers to develop their potential

identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Even though teachers usually have no control over these factors, they may be able to negotiate their identities when being exposed to these contexts as far as they can recognize the possible situations they can encounter as teachers and the potential identities they can develop.

The recent changes in the new curriculum framework for education in Ghana, especially with regard to Social Studies education is a challenge to teachers of the subject. This is because it has dire consequences for their professional identity. With changes in the educational system, the recent emphasis on accountability, standards and assessment, among other shifts in policies, surrounding the profession, teachers find themselves having to reconstruct their identities in stressful situations (Whitty, 2008). Researchers suggest this has great implications for professional development and teacher education as it can provide students and teachers of Social Studies opportunities to reflect on the internal and external factors shaping their identity and the tensions that may arise between them.

Research has shown that teachers' personal histories and professional experiences, including workplace contextual factors, have an effect on the formation of their professional identities. For instance, researchers have indicated that contextual factors may influence the shaping of teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Smagorinsky, Moore, Cook, Jackson & Fry, 2004).

Teachers' images about themselves and their perceptions of their identities can be a challenge to constructing their professional identity. This can influence the way they are perceived or stereotyped in professional contexts, especially when they are members of minority cultural groups (Milner & Hoy, 2003). The argument here is that questions of

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identity are located or embedded not only within one's self but also within one's culture; hence, identity is influenced by external factors because it is influenced by one's inner sense of the self (Erikson as cited in Beijaard et al., 2004). The professional identity of a teacher cannot be well comprehended without understanding or considering the cultural contexts from which she or he comes and in which professional educational environments she or he teaches. This assertion affirms Kelchtermans's (2009) views that a teachers' professional identity is perceived and shaped by interaction between person and context. This is because when a group of people are stereotyped, they may have to bear or tolerate extra emotional and cognitive burdens that could undermine their work and impact their self-images. Flores and Day (2006) noted that teachers who work in collaborative school cultures develop and express positive attitudes towards teaching. Thus, personal biographies are very significant to how teachers make sense of their practices and their beliefs about themselves as teachers and also their teacher identity.

Hallman (2007) discussed the negotiating process that social studies teachers undertake when constructing teaching portfolio. She explained how the use of portfolios in teacher education programmes supports the process of becoming a teacher, yet she questioned why these teachers tried to present coherent and competent identities as beginning professionals while also undertaking the notion of identity building as a fluid, ongoing process. She found that for student teachers, presenting an identity as a beginning teacher in the space of the portfolio means making important choices about how to write for multiple audiences. Hallman (2007) argued that teacher educators should support beginning teachers' use of e-portfolio as a tool to negotiate their teacher identity:

A starting point for teacher educators may be to engage their students in

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conversations about e-portfolios as tools rather than simply as sites in which to showcase good work, to encourage thinking about teaching practice and teacher identity. In an effort to engage in teaching for transformation and social change, teacher educators must recognize the difficulty many teachers have in striving for a balance between being a knowledgeable teacher and an inquisitive student (p. 485).

It has been said that frequently professional development seems to fail in having an impact in practice as they are regularly not responding to teachers' current concerns (Sadovnik, 2007), and thus it does not have a meaningful change. Considering the importance of professional identity of teachers in their practice, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) argued that teacher education programmes seem to be the perfect starting point for encouraging awareness of the need to develop an identity, as well as to recognize the shifts that will occur in that identity. Furthermore, Oberhuemer (2005) argued that initial and continuing professional development of teachers ought to focus on the social, historical, economic and political context of social studies teachers. Bearing in mind the notion of teachers capable of reshaping their own professional identity, teacher education programmes should integrate, not only what is known about the contexts, but also their influence on forming teachers' professional identity so that they can face the challenges of forming a strong identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

2.4 Summary of the Literature Review

The review of related literature focused on some of the predominant concepts of the study. These concepts were related to profession, professional teacher identity, the determinants of professional teacher identity, curriculum change, relation and experiences. These concepts explain the perspective of the study.

The theoretical framework of the study was introduced with the discussion of the formation of identity, followed by the personal construct theory and the socio-cultural theory which explains the formation of teacher identity in the face of personal perception, beliefs, values, experiences and environmental and social forces. The Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory was also adopted to explain the critical ecology of the Social Studies profession.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

In this section, various methodological issues are discussed. This captures the research design used, population sample and sampling procedures, instrumentation, validity and reliability of instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure. Ethical considerations are also interrogated.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed the quantitative approach using descriptive cross-sectional survey design. This enabled the researcher gather quantitative data during and within a particular period for data collection (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012; Creswell & Clark, 2007). The study was underpinned by the positivist worldview. Positivism contend that only through the objective interpretation and intervention in reality can that reality be fully understood. Positivists believe that reality is stable and can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint. This viewpoint is usually linked to the notion of science as the objective truth or fact. Here, numerical estimation and statistical inferences are made from a generalize sample in relation to a larger 'true' population of interests. The positivist paradigm emphasizes on the objective measurements and numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires or surveys (Saunders & Thornhill, 2009). The positivist philosophical approach, which is often linked to quantitative research, uses critical approaches such as the generation of models, theories and hypotheses; the development

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of instruments and measurement; experimental control and manipulation of variables; collection of empirical data; modeling and analysis of data; and evaluation of results (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003).

A cross-sectional study is one that produces a 'snapshot' of a population at a particular point in time. The epitome of the cross-sectional study is a national census in which a representative sample of the population consisting of individuals of different ages, different occupations, different educational and income levels, and residing in different parts of the country, is interviewed on the same day (Creswell, 2012; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). More typically in education, cross-sectional studies involve indirect measures of the nature and rate of changes in the physical and intellectual development of samples of children drawn from representative age levels. The single 'snapshot' of the cross-sectional study provides researchers with data for either a retrospective or a prospective enquiry (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

The descriptive cross-sectional survey was therefore employed to help produce a good amount of responses from a wide range of people since it was associated with large-scale research, covering many people or events. It enabled the researcher to collect enough data to determine the nature of the group studied (Social Studies teachers) as it existed at the time of the study. The strategy allowed the use of questionnaires to collect large volumes of data that were analyzed statistically. The wide and suitable coverage gave credibility to generalized statements made on the basis of the research. The design permitted the generalization of research findings about the population studied. Best and Khan (1995) postulates that descriptive statistical analysis limits generalization to the particular group of individuals observed and that no conclusions are extended beyond this group. Further,

the researcher employed descriptive statistical tools such as percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations in analysing the data collected. McMillan (1996) agrees that descriptive study simply describes and provides an understanding of a phenomenon usually with simple descriptive statistics and it is particularly valuable when an area is first investigated.

However, Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) indicate that the descriptive cross-sectional design does have some weaknesses which include the difficulty of ensuring that a sufficient number of questionnaires are administered for meaningful analysis to be made. In order to mitigate the effects of the weaknesses associated with the use of descriptive survey for the study, the questionnaire was pilot tested. This offered the researcher the opportunity to reframe and sharpen ambiguous items. Further, respondents were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of responses provided to enable them to respond candidly and dispassionately. Also, in some instances after administering the instrument, the researcher and assistants waited for respondents to fill in their responses and collected them. As a result, the descriptive cross-sectional survey design was considered most appropriate for the study.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population includes all elements that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a study (Burns & Grove, 2003). Polit and Hungler, (2004) refer to the population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. In this case, the target population for this study comprised all Social Studies teachers in public Junior High Schools in the Central Region of Ghana. Since all these respondents cannot be

reached, an accessible population of all Social Studies teachers was obtained from four (4) randomly selected districts in the Central Region of Ghana. The accessible population comprised 237 public Junior High Schools.

3.3 Sample and sampling Procedure

The four (4) districts in the Central Region of Ghana were randomly selected. The lottery without replacement method of the simple random sampling technique was used to selecting these districts. The simple random sampling technique was also applied in the selection of the basic schools across the selected districts. One hundred and seventy-eight (178) which represents 75% of JHS Social Studies teachers in public basic schools were then selected purposively. This percentage was used in selecting Social Studies teachers across the four districts. This means that one teacher was selected from each of the schools. The choice of 75% of the accessible population is based on Dornyei's (2007) assertion that between 1% and 10% or more of a study population gives an adequate sampling fraction. Since the teachers were not known, the schools in which they were teaching were randomly selected. The random selection ensured that each teacher of the sample schools had an equal chance of being selected, and this is required for generalisation of the results to the target population as noted by Creswell (2009). The distribution is as follows:

Table 3.1: Distribution of Sample for the Study by District

District	Number of JHS	No. selected	No. Retrieved
Agona West	68	51	49
Mfantsiman	75	56	53
Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese	72	54	52
Effutu	22	17	17
Total	**237**	**178**	**171**

3.4 Instrumentation

Questionnaire was the main instrument used for the study. This as a result of the fact that a large number of respondents can be reached relatively easily and it is also more economical. It also provides quantifiable answers for a research topic which are also easy to analyse. The questionnaire was used because all the participants are literate, and therefore can read and respond to the items. An adopted professional teacher identity questionnaire was used for the study. The questionnaire consisted of six sections covering all themes in the research questions in addition to bio-data of Social Studies teachers in JHS. All items were close-ended on a four-point Likert-type scale.

The questionnaire was made up of six sections; the first section focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This comprised of the gender, age, educational level, and years of teaching experience. The second section focused on the items relating to Professional knowledge. The third section dealt with items relating to professional values. The fourth section focused on items focusing on professional Skills. The fifth section also addressed professional reflective practice. The sixth section focused on challenges influencing social teachers' professional identity. The Likert scale questionnaire come with options in four-point scale ranging from: Strongly agree (SA) =4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) =2 and strongly Disagree (SA) =1 respectively.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The face validity of the instruments for this study was established by giving the prepared instruments to my supervisors to scrutinise and make constructive criticisms. This helped in fine tuning the items in the questionnaire. Content validity is the extent to which the

questions on the instrument and the scores from these questions are representative of all the possible questions that could be asked about the content or skills (Creswell, 2012). The content validity of the questionnaire was determined by the supervisors of the research in the Department of Basic Education, University of Education, Winneba.

Reliability means that individual scores from an instrument should be nearly the same or stable on repeated administrations of the instrument and that they should be free from sources of measurement error and inconsistency (Creswell, 2012). Reliability is concerned with consistency, dependability or stability of a test (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The questionnaire was pilot tested using 15 JHS Social Studies teachers in the Agona East Municipality in order to ascertain its internal concsistency. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha which generated a coefficient of 0.73. This is considered high according to Fraenkel et al (2000; 2012).

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

In order to successfully gather data, an introductory letter was taken from the Department of Basic Education, UEW to help the researcher introduce herself and explain the purpose of the study to the Directors of the districts selected, the heads of various schools and Social Studies teachers. The questionnaire was administered with the help of trained research assistants and circuit supervisors in the various districts. Four weeks (4th-25 June, 2019) were used for data collection. Out of the 178 questionnaires, 171 were retrieved. The rest could not be retrieved because four of the teachers reported they had misplaced them whiles three filled theirs halfway so they were exempted. Data generated from the 171 questionnaires were used for the analyses and interpretations.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis is the ordering and breaking down of data into constituent parts and performing of statistical calculations with the raw data to provide answers to the research questions which initiate the research. Questionnaire retrieved from respondents were first numbered, edited and coded. Since almost all the items are on a four point likert-type scale, they were scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 for items with responses; Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Coded responses were keyed into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23, a software for quantitative data analysis. Frequencies, percentages and means were used to analyse bio-data of respondents and research questions 1 to 5. Hypotheses one was tested and analysed using the Independent samples t-test because the researcher sought to ascertain the significant difference and compare mean scores of professional identity indicators of two different groups (male and female JHS teachers) whiles ANOVA was used for the second hypotheses to compare means of four groups of years of teaching experience.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher executed all ethical procedures and practices by researchers in conducting the research. The researcher avoided plagiarism by ensuring that works of people which were used to buttress analysis of and in the literature review, were duly acknowledged in-text and listed in the reference section. In order not to violate the principle of informed consent as recommendation in the social research, letters of introduction were sent to the school authorities to seek permission before the conduct. In these letters the purpose of the study was clearly stated to both the respondents and the authorities of the schools. Hence,

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consent of the respondents were sought to participate in the study. Again, the respondents were assured that their identities would be concealed. In achieving this purpose, respondents were given numbers which they wrote on their questionnaire sheets instead of their names which made it difficult for people to identify. Individual respondents were assured of voluntary withdrawal from the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This study examined the professional identity of Junior High school Social Studies teachers in four selected districts in Central Region, Ghana. This chapter presents the results of the data collected from the respondents. The quantitative data are presented in tables as frequency counts, frequencies, mean and standard deviation. Data have been organised, presented and discussed under the following themes:

i.   Demographic information on the respondents.

ii.   Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional knowledge (PK) as identity indicator.

iii.   Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional values (PV) as identity indicator.

iv.   Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional skills (PS) as identity indicator.

v.   Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional reflective practice (PRP) as identity indicator.

vi.   Challenges affecting Social Studies teacher's development of a professional identity.

vii.   Testing of hypotheses.

4.1   Demographic information on the respondents

The demographic data of the respondents cover the following attributes: gender, age, professional qualification, and teaching experience with regard to years of teaching Social Studies.

Table 4.1: Demographic Information of Respondents

(n = 171)

Variable	Variable category	F	%
1. Gender	Male	111	65
	Female	60	35
2. Age range (in yrs)	21-25	9	5
	26-30	41	24
	31-35	47	27
	36-40	46	27
	41-45	14	8
	46-50	8	5
	51-55	6	4
	56-60	0	0
3. Professional qualification	Cert 'A' post-sec	0	0
	Diploma in Basic Education	60	35
	Degree in Basic Education	60	35
	Degree in Social Studies Education	40	23
	Degree in Education programme	0	0
	Master's degree in Education	10	6
	Any other	1	1
4. Teaching experience (yrs)	Less than a year	10	6
	1-4	29	17
	5-9	76	44
	10-14	30	18
	15-19	16	9
	20 years and above	10	6

Source: Fieldwork data (2019)
Key: F = Frequency; % = Percentage; n – sample

As indicated in Table 4.1, more male (65%) than female respondents (35%) participated in the study. It is also likely that there were more male than female Social Studies teachers in

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the selected districts that took part in this study. The age distribution is skewed towards respondents who were 31-35 years (27%), respondents who were 36-40 years (27%), and followed by respondents who were 26-30 years (24%). Respondents who were between 41 and 45 years (8%), 21 – 25 years (5%) and 51-55 years (4%) constituted the least number.

The distribution of the respondents by their professional qualification is skewed towards respondents who had bachelor degree in basic education (35%), and diploma in basic education (35%). This was followed by teachers who had bachelor degree in Social Studies education (23%). The distribution of the respondents by their professional qualification further revealed that a few teachers (6%) had master degree while (1%) had other qualification (Higher National Diploma) which is not related to Social Studies education. The information on teacher experience disclosed that a moderate number of respondents (44%) had taught for 5-9 years, respondents who had taught for 10-14 years (18%) and 1-4 years (17%). A few respondents had taught for 15-19 years (9%), 20 years and above (6%), while some taught for less than one year (6%).

It emerged from the result of this study that more male (65%) Social Studies teachers took part in the study. The result is skewed towards young and middle-aged Social Studies teachers (78%). The result is negatively skewed towards teachers who had bachelor degree in Social Studies education (25%). It could be deduced from the result of this study that 39 (23%) respondents were less experienced, 76 (44%) were experienced, while 56 (33%) were more experienced. This implies that either majority of the respondents (77%) were experienced and/or more experienced teachers teaching Social Studies in the JHS.

The findings of this study showed that there were more male Social Studies teachers (65%). It also unfolds from this study that majority of the Social Studies teachers were young and middle-aged (78%). Even though a few of the teachers had bachelor degree in Social Studies education (25%), majority of the teachers were experienced and/or more experienced in teaching the subject (77%). This information has implications on teacher professional development vis-à-vis teacher identity formation. The findings on professional and teaching qualifications and experiences of the teachers are critical factors that can support the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Ghana. It is widely accepted that the quality of any school cannot be higher than the quality of teachers in the school and that the quality of teachers in the schools is dependent upon high quality teacher education and professional development opportunities in every country. This assertion and the findings of this study are in line with the views of Rogan and Grayson (2003) who posited that a critical factor that can support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in a school pertains to the teacher's own background, training, qualification and level of confidence, and their commitment to teaching.

4.2   Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on the Importance of Professional knowledge (PK) as teacher identity indicator

The data presented and discussed under this theme bears on Research Question 1, which states *"What is JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional knowledge (PK) as an identity indicator?"*

To find answer to this research question, responses to items (questions) 5 - 12 in the questionnaire were analysed. The responses for this research question were coded: 4 = Strongly Agree (SA); 3 = Agree (A); 2 = Disagree (D), and 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD).

The quantitative data are presented as frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Social Studies Teachers' Professional Knowledge (PK) Indicators

Indicators of PK	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD.
Knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Social Studies learners	22(13)	117(68)	32(19)	0(0)	2.94	0.560
Knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of students taught by the Social Studies teacher	21(12)	132(77)	18(11)	0(0)	3.01	0.478
Knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of Social Studies students	31(18)	119(70)	21(12)	0(0)	3.06	0.549
Strengths and weaknesses in terms of knowledge in the Social Studies	39(23)	87(51)	45(26)	0(0)	2.96	0.702
Knowledge of the roles of Social Studies education to society in general	66(39)	69(40)	36(21)	0(0)	3.18	0.754
Knowledge of suitable curriculum materials for Social Studies Education	23(13)	122(71)	26(15)	0(0)	2.98	0.536
Methods of inquiring in Social Studies Education	23(13)	114(67)	34(20)	0(0)	2.94	0.575
Overall mean					**3.00**	**0.325**

N= 171; Mean Ranges: 0.00-1.59 = Strongly Disagree; 1.60-2.59 = Disagree; 2.60-3.59 = Agree; 3.60 - 4.00 = Strongly Agree. A mean of means of 2.60 indicates teachers' opinion as high.
Key: M- Mean; **SD.** - Standard Deviation; **SA – Strongly Agree; A –** Agree; **D –** Disagree**; SD –** Strongly Disagree
Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentage

The data (responses) were collapsed into two categories: agree and disagree. In line with the mean ranges above, the following cut-off mean (M) values were used as guideline for the interpretation of the levels of respondents' opinions: M ≤ 2.59 — Low; M ≥ 2.60 — High. This was done in order to facilitate the interpretation of the results.

Table 4.2 presents responses of the sample respondents on their professional identity in terms of professional knowledge. The majority of the respondents (139, 81%, M=2.94) agreed to the statement that their knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Social Studies learners improve their professional identity. However, a few

respondents (32, 19%) disagreed with the statement. Also, majority of the respondents also agreed that knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of their students had boosted their professional identity (153, 89%, M=3.01). But 18 (11%) held opposing views.

When respondents were asked whether their knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of Social Studies students could improve their professional identity level, the majority (150, 88%, M = 3.06) agreed to the statement. But 21 (12%) respondents held opposing views. Concerning respondents' knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in terms of knowledge in Social Studies, majority of the respondents (126, 74%, M=2.96) agreed to the statement it affects their professional identity. However, 45 (26%) respondents held contrary views.

In addition, most respondents (135, 79%, M=3.18) agreed to the statement that knowledge of the roles of Social Studies education to society in general enhance their professional identity. However, 36 (21%) respondents held opposing views. Respondents knowledge of suitable curriculum materials for Social Studies education did not improve their professional identity (145, 85%, M=2.98), but 26 (15%) respondents held incongruent views. Also, respondents' knowledge in the methods of inquiry in Social Studies education did not improve their professional identity (137, 80%, M=2.94), but 34 (20%) disclaimed.

A mean value M $\geq$ 2.60 was used as a cut-off point to either accept or reject the level of agreement to responses, and to indicate the level of respondents' opinion. Generally, the respondents' level of opinion on all the professional knowledge (PK) indicators was high (M $\geq$ 2.60). However, respondents' opinion on undermentioned indicators were very high

considering the overall mean (M= 3.00) and a standard deviation (SD= 0.325). It could be concluded from the results in Table 4.2 that respondents' had a high level of opinion on teachers' knowledge of the roles in Social Studies education to society in general enhance their professional identity (M=3.18, SD = 0.754). It also came to light that there was a high opinion on knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of Social Studies students improve the professional identity level of Social Studies teachers (M = 3.06, SD = 0.549). The findings also reveal a high opinion on respondents' knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of their students had boosted the professional identity of Social Studies teachers (M=3.01, SD = 0.478).

The findings of this study show that respondents had very high level of opinion on the under listed professional knowledge (PK) skills. It could be inferred from the results that professional identity of Social Studies teachers in terms of professional knowledge is enhanced through knowledge of the roles of Social Studies education to society in general, knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of Social Studies students, and knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of their students.

Generally, respondents' opinion on professional knowledge and teacher identity was high with a mean value of M ≥ 2.60, even though the mean values varied across various indicators used. For instance, respondents' opinions on professional knowledge and teacher identity were very high (M ≥ 3.00) on the following indicators: knowledge of the roles of Social Studies education to society in general, knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of Social Studies students, and knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of their students. Nevertheless, there was no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional knowledge indicators and teacher identity,

t(169) = .000, p>0.05. Similarly, there was no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional knowledge indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience, F (2, 168) = 0.000, p>0.05.

It becomes clear from the findings that most of the respondents had a high level of opinion on all aspects of professional knowledge and teacher identity. This finding is indicative that professional knowledge could likely enhance the professional identity of Social Studies teachers. The finding that knowledge of psychology of learning, as it relates to the teaching of Social Studies students, is suggestive of teacher identity corroborates the views of Craft and Paige-Smith (2011). They explained that professionals are increasingly expected to be involved with the body of knowledge about their practice, which is underpinned by theoretical understanding about children's learning. This suggests that Social Studies teachers must have knowledge of the theories underpinning learning and the psychology of learning in order to be well grounded in their profession. This will enrich their professional identity.

This finding is also parallel to the views of Bigge and Shermis (1999) who posited that part of a teacher's professional knowledge is developed by teachers adopting learning theories and achieving 'an eclectic compromise formed by selecting aspects of opposing theories and taking position somewhere among them so as to form a variety pattern. The finding that teacher's knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of their students is indicative of professional knowledge and teacher identity vindicates Turner-Bisset (2001) who stated that knowledge of learners enriches teacher professional identity. The next section discusses professional value as an indicator of teacher professional identity.

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4.3   Social Studies teachers' Opinion on the Importance of Professional Value

(PV) as Teacher Identity Indicator

The data are presented and discussed on research question two: *"What is JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional values (PV) as an identity indicator?"* Responses to question 13-22 provided data for this theme.

Table 4.3: Social Studies Teachers' Professional Value (PV) Indicators

Indicators of PV	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD.
A positive attitude towards the teaching of Social Studies always.	54(32)	105(61)	12(7)	0(0)	3.25	0.572
Belief in the ability to influence students' achievement in the Social Studies.	45(26)	104(61)	22(13)	0(0)	3.13	0.613
Maintaining a collaborative working relationship with his/her colleagues at work.	9(5)	128(75)	34(20)	0(0)	2.85	0.481
Demonstrating passion and commitments in teaching Social Studies	36(21)	93(54)	42(25)	0(0)	2.96	0.676
Respecting students' views and learner diversities	27(16)	49(29)	66(39)	29(17)	2.43	0.951
Be able to inspire students' learning of Social Studies	27(16)	61(36)	71(42)	12(7)	2.60	0.836
Emotional stability during instructional sessions in Social Studies	51(30)	76(44)	44(26)	0(0)	3.04	0.746
Being enthusiastic towards his/her students.	28(16)	63(37)	63(37)	17(10)	2.59	0.878
Demonstrating the desire for lifelong learning and commitment to professional development in Social Studies	66(39)	69(40)	36(21)	0(0)	3.18	0.754
Overall mean					**3.02**	**0.541**

N= 171; Mean Ranges: 0.00-1.59 = Strongly Disagree; 1.60-2.59 = Disagree; 2.60-3.59 = Agree; 3.60 - 4.00 = Strongly Agree. A mean of means of 2.60 indicates teachers' opinion as high.
Key: M- Mean; **SD.** - Standard Deviation; **SA** – Strongly Agree; **A** – Agree; **D** – Disagree; **SD** – Strongly Disagree
Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentage

Table 4.3 shows the description of the responses of the sampled respondents in relation to their level of professional identity in terms of their professional values. With regard to a positive attitude towards the discipline and Social Studies teachers, most respondents agreed that their positive attitude towards the discipline always improve their professional identity (159, 93%, M=3.25). However, 12 (7%) respondents held opposing views.

Also, the majority of the Social Studies teachers agreed to the statement that their beliefs in their ability to influence students' achievement in Social Studies improve their level of professional identity (149, 87%, M=3.13). Twenty-two (13%) respondents held contrary views. In terms of maintaining a collaborative working relationship with colleagues at work, respondents agreed that it did not improve their level of professional identity (137, 80%, M=2.85). However, 34 (20%) respondents disagreed with the statement. Many respondents agreed to the notion that demonstrating passion and commitments in teaching Social Studies did not also improve their level of professional identity (129, 75%, M=2.96). On the other hand, 42 (25%) respondents held incongruent views. The respondents also agreed that respecting students' views and learner diversities did not improve their level of professional identity (76, 45%, M=2.43).

Moreover, most of the respondents agreed that ability to inspire students' learning of Social Studies did not improve their level of professional identity (88, 52%, M=2.60). On the other hand, 83 (48%) respondents held opposing views. Respondents' emotional stability during instructional sessions in Social Studies was found to boost their level of professional identity (127, 74%, M=3.04). However, 44 (26%) respondents held divergent views. Respondents did not view being enthusiastic towards their students as improving their level of professional identity (91, 53%, M=2.59), but 80 (47%) respondents disagreed to the statement. Majority of the respondents agreed that demonstrating the desire for lifelong learning and commitment to professional development in Social Studies improves their level of professional identity (135, 79%, M=3.18). However, 36 (21%) respondents disagreed to the statement.

It emerged from the findings of this study that respondents' opinions on the following professional value (PV) indicators were high: Social Studies teachers having a positive attitude towards the discipline always, and belief in their ability to influence students' achievement high (M ≥ 2.60). There were high levels of opinions on maintaining a collaborative working relationship with colleagues at work, demonstrating passion and commitments in teaching Social Studies, ability to inspire students' learning of Social Studies, emotional stability during instructional sessions in Social Studies, and demonstrating the desire for lifelong learning and commitment to professional development in social.

Respondents' opinion on undermentioned indicators were found to be very high: having a positive attitude towards the discipline always improve the professional identity of Social Studies teachers vis-à-vis their professional values (M=3.25, SD = 0.572). It also unfolds from the result of this study that demonstrating the desire for lifelong learning and commitment to professional development improves the professional value and identity of Social Studies teachers (M=3.18, SD = 0.754). The result indicates that the beliefs of Social Studies teachers in their ability to influence students' achievement in the subject area improve their level of professional value and identity (M=3.13, SD = 0.613). It is also evident from the results of this study that the emotional stability of Social Studies during instructional sessions was found to boost their level of professional value and identity (M=3.04, SD = 0.746).

It could be deduced from the findings of this study that Social Studies teachers who have a positive attitude towards the discipline have professional value identity. Again, Social Studies teachers who have the desire for and show commitment to lifelong learning and

professional development improves their professional value identity. The findings further established that Social Studies teachers improve their professional value identity when they believe and are able to influence students' achievement in the subject area. The emotional stability during instructional sessions was also found to boost the professional value identity Social Studies teachers.

Overall, the result signifies a high level of teachers' opinion on professional value and teacher identity (M ≥ 2.60), except for two indicators. The findings reveal a high level of respondents' opinion on the following indicators: having a positive attitude towards the discipline, belief in the ability to influence students' achievement, and maintaining a collaborative working relationship with colleagues at work. Respondents' opinion were high for demonstrating passion and commitments in teaching Social Studies, ability to inspire students' learning of Social Studies, emotional stability during instructional sessions in Social Studies, and demonstrating the desire for lifelong learning and commitment to professional development. The finding further reveals a very high opinion (M ≥ 3.00) of Social Studies teachers on positive attitude towards the discipline have professional value identity, desire for and commitment to lifelong learning and professional development, the belief and ability to influence students' achievement in the subject area, and emotional stability during instructional sessions.

The professional value attributes are rooted in a number of constructs such as service, sensitivity, empathy, adaptation, innovation, inquiry, tolerance of uncertainty, respect and integrity, reciprocity and collaboration within communities of practice (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Leadbeater, 2011; Husu & Tirri, 2007; Loughran & Russell, 2006; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). These constructs are

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viewed as benchmarks or ingredients that can shape and improve teacher professional identity. The findings of this study imply that Social Studies teachers establish and improve their identity in the context or milieu of these professional value benchmarks. There was a statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional value indicators and teacher identity, t (169) = 3.481, p = 0.001. More so, differences in opinion on professional value indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience was found to be statistically significant, F (2, 168) = 11.317, p < 0.05.

4.4   Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on the Importance of Professional Skills (PS) as Teacher Identity Indicator

This theme is derived from research question 3, which states "*What is JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the relevance of professional skills (PS) as an identity indicator?*" The data for this research question were obtained from responses to items 23 to 35 in the questionnaire. The data are depicted in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 gives information on the indicators of Social Studies teachers' professional skills (PS). The result indicates an overall mean (M) = 2.89, and a standard deviation (SD) = 0.350. The detailed results of individual items or indicators are compared with the overall mean. Majority of the respondents affirmed that assessing student's needs to help identify learning goals boost their professional identity with regard to their professional skills (116, 68%, M=2.95). However, 55 (32%) respondents disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, many respondents confirmed that selecting and using developmentally proper activities that will make learning of Social Studies more interactive and engaging for

students boost their professional skills which is a core indicator of teacher professional identity (150, 88%, M=3.25). But 21 (12%) held divergent views.

Table 4.4: Social Studies Teachers' Professional Skills (PS) Indicators

Indicators of PS	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD.
Assessing student's needs to help identify learning goals	50(29)	66(39)	51(30)	4(2)	2.95	0.827
Selecting and using developmentally proper activities that will make learning of Social Studies more interactive and engaging for students	63(37)	87(51)	21(12)	0(0)	3.25	0.658
Developing and using learning resources that are suitable for the attainment of student's learning outcomes in Social Studies	24(14)	66(39)	81(47)	0(0)	2.67	0.711
Preparing comprehensive learning plans for Social Studies lessons	47(27)	43(25)	81(47)	0(0)	2.80	0.844
Harmonizing instructional objectives with Social Studies curriculum goals.	24(14)	80(47)	67(39)	0(0)	2.75	0.686
Conducting a review of Student's entry behaviour in Social Studies	0(0)	130(76)	41(24)	0(0)	2.76	0.428
Logical delivery of themes in Social Studies	0(0)	150(88)	21(12)	0(0)	2.89	0.329
Using instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of learners during Social Studies lessons	23(13)	127(74)	21(12)	0(0)	3.01	0.508
Illustrating Social Studies themes concepts with proper examples	62(36)	42(25)	67(39)	0(0)	2.97	0.870
Effective class management during Social Studies lessons	62(36)	63(37)	46(27)	0(0)	3.09	0.791
Harmonizing evaluation questions with instructional objectives in Social Studies	19(11)	106(62)	46(27)	0(0)	2.84	0.597
Varying assessment procedures that caters for unique needs of students	40(23)	105(61)	26(15)	0(0)	3.08	0.617
Overall mean					**2.89**	**0.350**

N= 171; Mean Ranges: 0.00-1.59 = Strongly Disagree; 1.60-2.59 = Disagree; 2.60-3.59 = Agree; 3.60 - 4.00 = Strongly Agree. A mean of means of 2.60 indicates teachers' opinion as high.
Key: M- Mean; **SD.** - Standard Deviation; **SA** – Strongly Agree; **A** – Agree; **D** – Disagree; **SD** – Strongly Disagree
Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentage

Majority of the respondents did not believe that developing and using learning resources that are suitable for the attainment of student's learning outcomes in Social Studies improve their professional skills (90, 53%, M=2.67). However, 81(47%) respondents held incongruent views. Similarly, many respondents did not believe that preparing

comprehensive learning plans for Social Studies lessons improve their professional identity (90, 53%, M=2.80). Conversely, 81 (47%) respondents disagreed with the assertion. A large number of the respondents did not think that harmonizing instructional objectives with Social Studies curriculum goals enhance their professional identity in terms of their professional skills (104, 61%, M=2.75). However, 67 (39%) respondents held opposing views.

Moreover, many respondents did not think that conducting a review of student's entry behaviour in Social Studies improve their professional identity vis-a-vis professional skills (130, 76%, M=2.76), but 41 (24%) disagreed with the statement. Majority of the respondents opined that logical delivery of themes in Social Studies improve their professional identity (150, 88%, M=2.89), even though a few respondents (21) which represents (12%) disagreed with the statement.

Similarly, many respondents averred that using instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of learners during Social Studies lessons improve their professional identity (150, 88%, M=3.01). However, 21 (12%) held opposing views. With regard to illustrating Social Studies themes concepts with proper examples as boosting Social Studies teacher's professional skills and/or identity, many respondents agreed (104, 61%, M=2.97) whereas 67 (39%) disagreed.

Concerning effective class management during Social Studies lessons as improving Social Studies teacher's professional skills and/or identity, majority of the respondents agreed (125, 73%, M=3.09), but 46 (27%) gave contrary views. Many respondents did not think that harmonizing evaluation questions with instructional objectives in Social Studies

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improves teacher's professional identity (125, 73%, M=2.84), but 46 (27%) held opposing views. Majority of the respondents admitted that varying assessment procedures that caters for unique needs of students improves Social Studies teacher's professional skills or identity (145, 85%, M=3.08). However, 26 (15%) respondent disclaimed this statement.

The findings of this study indicate that respondents' level of opinion on all the professional skills (PS) indicators was high (M ≥ 2.60). But respondents' opinion on some indicators were rather very high (M=2.89, SD = 0.350). For instance, it emerged from the results that selecting and using developmentally proper activities that make learning of Social Studies more interactive and engaging for students boost the professional skills identity of teachers (M=3.25, SD = 0.658). The findings also reveal that effective class management during Social Studies lessons improves the professional skills identity of teachers (M=3.09, SD = 0.791). Evidence gathered from this study signify that using varying assessment procedures that caters for unique needs of students improves Social Studies teacher's professional skills identity (M=3.08, SD = 0.617).

It is further gathered from the results that using instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of learners during Social Studies lessons improve professional skills identity of teachers (M=3.01, SD = 0.508). The results of this study established that illustrating Social Studies themes and concepts with proper examples boosts Social Studies teacher's professional skills identity (M=2.97, SD = 0.870). Evidently, assessing student's needs to help identify learning goals boost the professional skills identity of Social Studies teachers (M=2.95, SD = 0.827). The mean value of the result also justifies that logical delivery of themes in Social Studies improve the professional skills identity of teachers (M=2.89, SD = 0.329).

This study found a number of benchmarks that indicate and improve the professional skills identity of Social Studies teachers. These benchmarks are: selecting and using developmentally proper activities that make learning of Social Studies more interactive and engaging for students, effective class management during Social Studies lessons, and the use of varying assessment procedures that caters for unique needs of students improves Social Studies teacher. Others indicators include the use of instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of learners during Social Studies lessons, illustrating Social Studies themes and concepts with proper examples, assessing student's needs to help identify learning goals, and logical delivery of themes in Social Studies. It could be deduced from the results, therefore, that Social Studies teachers who meet these standards have improved professional skills identity.

The findings of this study indicate that respondents' opinions on all aspects of professional skills indicators and teacher identity were high (M ≥ 2.60), but respondents' opinion on some indicators were very high (M ≥ 2.89). These benchmarks are: selecting and using developmentally proper activities that make learning of Social Studies more interactive and engaging for students, effective class management during Social Studies lessons, and the use of varying assessment procedures that caters for unique needs of students by Social Studies teacher. Others indicator include the use of instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of learners during Social Studies lessons, illustrating Social Studies themes and concepts with proper examples, assessing student's needs to help identify learning goals, and logical delivery of themes in Social Studies by teachers. The evidence gathered from this study signify that these indicators improve the professional skills identity of Social Studies teachers. This means that Social Studies teachers who meet these

standards have improved professional identity. The findings of this study, however, showed no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional skills indicators and teacher identity, t (169) = 1.530, p>0.05. Again, there was no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional skills indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience, F (2, 168) = 0.060, p>0.05.

It is evident from the findings of this that teachers improve their professional identity by selecting and using developmentally proper activities that make learning of Social Studies more interactive and engaging for students. This observation corroborates the findings of Saracho and Spodekin (2003) and Guskey (1986) who claimed that teachers enrich their identity by understanding what makes learning easy or difficult, and choosing developmentally appropriate practices flexibly during a teaching situation. They also explained that teachers improve their professional identity when they are pedagogically skillful and have good interaction skills.

This study found the use of instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of learners during Social Studies lessons is an indicative of professional skills identity. This is because the effective use of instructional techniques and learner involvement during lessons are fundamental teaching skills needed by teachers to enable children learn. This result is consistent with the claims by Wragg (2005) who also indicated that the use of teaching skills or strategies enable students to learn and get something worthwhile. They emphasized that the use of teaching skills in classroom interaction situations tend to facilitate the achievement of specified types of educational objectives.

It becomes clear from the findings of this study that assessing student's needs to help identify learning goals improve teacher identity. Again, effective class management during Social Studies lessons, the use of varying assessment procedures that caters for unique needs of students improves Social Studies teacher, and logical delivery of themes in Social Studies have been found to improve professional skills and teacher identity.

These findings suggest that teachers improve their identity whenever they use assessment methods to evaluate teaching and learning outputs, offer feedback, and engage in consultation with home, school, and community. This observation is consistent with that of McCarthy (1990) who viewed facilitation of learning and assessment, feedback offering, relationships and consultation with the home, school, and community to creating the learning environment as components of professional identity.

4.5 Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on the Importance of Professional Reflective Practice (PRP) as Teacher Identity Indicator

The data presented and analysed under this theme sought to answer Research Question 4, which states "*What is JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the relevance of professional reflective (PRP) practice as an identity indicator?*"

The data for this research question were obtained from responses to items 36 to 46 in the questionnaire. The data are depicted in Table 4.5. Majority of the respondents agreed that achievements of Social Studies learners was a pointer to their professional reflective practice (170, 99%, M=3.13). But only 1 (1%) of them held divergent views. In terms of knowledge in the Social Studies themes vis-à-vis professional reflective practice, most of

the respondents asserted that it did not boost their professional identity (149, 87%, M=3.00). However, 22 (13%) respondents held opposing views.

Table 4.5: Social Studies Teachers' Professional Reflective Practice Indicators

Indicators of PRP	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD.
Achievements of Social Studies learners	22(13)	148(87)	1(1)	0(0)	3.13	0.346
Strengths and weaknesses in terms of knowledge in the Social Studies themes	22(13)	127(74)	22(13)	0(0)	3.00	0.508
Activities he/she engages students in	23(13)	87(51)	61(47)	0(0)	2.78	0.666
Learning materials used during Social Studies lessons	69(40)	41(24)	61(47)	0(0)	3.05	0.873
Knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of students under him/her	25(15)	102(60)	44(39)	0(0)	2.89	0.627
Teaching and learning techniques use in Social Studies lessons	25(15)	106(62)	40(23)	0(0)	2.91	0.612
Relationship with children and the involvement of their parents	45(26)	107(63)	19(11)	0(0)	3.15	0.594
Knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Social Studies	45(26)	103(60)	23(13)	0(0)	3.13	0.619
Assessment methods/ procedures used in Social Studies	0(0)	127(74)	44(26)	0(0)	2.74	0.438
Knowledge of the roles of Social Studies education to society in general	0(0)	127(74)	44(26)	0(0)	2.74	0.438
Overall mean					**3.13**	**0.354**

N= 171; Mean Ranges: 0.00-1.59 = Strongly Disagree; 1.60-2.59 = Disagree; 2.60-3.59 = Agree; 3.60 - 4.00 = Strongly Agree. A mean of means of 2.60 indicates teachers' opinion as high.
Key: M- Mean; **SD.** - Standard Deviation; **SA –** Strongly Agree**; A –** Agree; **D –** Disagree**; SD –** Strongly Disagree
Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentage

Concerning the activities which Social Studies teachers engage students in; this act did not reflect their professional practice and identity (110, 64%, M=2.78), but 61 (36%) respondents disagreed to the statement. Similarly, learning materials used during Social Studies lessons was not found to reflect professional practice and identity of Social Studies teachers as affirmed by the majority of respondents (110, 64%, M=3.05). A few respondents (61) representing 36% of them disagreed with the statement. With regard to knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of students under him/her, majority of the respondents did not think that it reflects their professional practice and identity as

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Social Studies teachers (127, 74%, M=2.89). On the other hand, a few (44, 26%) held contrary views.

Most of the respondents did not think that the teaching and learning techniques used in Social Studies lessons improve their professional practice and identity (131, 77%, M=2.91), but 40 (23%) disagreed with the statement. Relationship with children and the involvement of their parents was found to boost the professional practice and identity of Social Studies teachers as confirmed by majority of the respondents (152, 89%, M=3.15), but 19 (11%) respondents held opposing views. Also, teachers' knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Social Studies was found to improve their professional practice and identity as admitted by majority of the respondents (148, 87%, M=3.13). However, a few (23, 13%) respondents disagreed.

The assessment methods/ procedures used in Social Studies by teachers did not reflect their professional practice and identity (127, 74%, M=2.74), but 44 (26%) respondents held opposing views. Also, knowledge of the roles of Social Studies education to society in general was not a significant indicator which improve the professional practice and identity of Social Studies teachers (127, 74%, M=2.74). But 44 (26%) respondents held opposing views.

The evidence gathered from this study indicate that respondents' level of opinion on all the professional reflective practice (PRP) indicators was high (M ≥ 2.60). Generally, over 60% of the respondents had a high level of opinion on all the professional reflective practice (PRP) indicators (M ≥ 2.60). This is an indication that the professional reflective practices of the Social Studies teachers reflect their teacher identity. The result of this study further

shows that opinions on three indicators were extremely high (M ≥ 3.13). These indicators were (in rank order): building relationship with learners and the involvement of their parents (M= 3.15), having knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Social Studies (M= 3.13), and achievements of Social Studies learners (M= 3.13). However, there was no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional reflective practice indicators and teacher identity, t (169) = .865, p>0.05. It was also evident from the result that there was no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional reflective practice indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience, F(2, 168) = 0.016, p>0.05.

There is ample evidence from this study that building relationship with learners and the involvement of their parents improve teacher identity is in line with the views of Timostsuk and Ugaste (2010) who found that the relations in the classroom between teachers and students, teachers' relation with his/her learners, content, colleagues and environment at large determines teacher professional identity. This suggests that teachers' relation with students, colleague teachers and parents of students is a significant determinant of teachers' professional identity.

The result of this study indicated that having knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching improves the professional identity of Social Studies teachers (M= 3.13). In this regard, teachers are expected to acquire new knowledge and skills through professional development and reflective practices to perform their professional practices in alignment with the new demands of current trends in professional roles. Other studies by Lasky (2005), Zembylas (2005) and Chappell (2001) indicated that teachers have new understandings of their roles, change their professional practices, and become

new and different teachers when they develop knowledge of current trends in their professional practices.

The finding of this study indicates that teachers construct their professional identity when they reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. This revelation buttresses the views of Yidana and Lawal (2015) who stated that teachers who reflect on their strengths and weaknesses become aware of and control their teaching by actively assessing what they already know, what they need to know and how to bridge that gap. To them, the purpose of teachers' reflection is to identify problems during the process of teaching, which are important for teachers to gauge students' understanding of lessons and how teaching might relate to that understanding.

4.6   Challenges Influencing Social Studies Teachers' Professional Identity

This theme explores the views of respondents on challenges, which affect Social Studies teachers' development of professional identity. The data for this theme were obtained from responses to items 47 to 53 in the questionnaire. The data are depicted in Table 4.6. Results in Table 4.6 indicate the challenges affect Social Studies teachers' development of professional identity. A few respondents think that the continuous undervaluing of Social Studies teachers did not affect their professional identity (35, 20%, M=1.91).

However, majority (120, 40%) of the respondents disagreed. Also, a few respondents did not think that the underestimation of Social Studies teachers poses a challenge to their professional identity (78, 46%, M=2.33). In contrast, 93 (54%) respondents held divergent views. A large number of the respondents asserted (133, 78%, M=3.02), but 38 (22%) of

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them denied that teaching Social Studies does not carry the social status that goes with other subjects, and this poses a challenge to their feelings as Social Studies teachers.

Table 4.6: Challenges Influencing JHS Social Studies Teachers' Professional Identity

Items	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD.
The continuous undervaluing of Social Studies teachers affects me.	0(0)	35(20)	85(50)	51(30)	1.91	0.705
The underestimation of the Social Studies teachers' poses a challenge to me	0(0)	78(46)	72(42)	21(12)	2.33	0.685
Teaching Social Studies does not carry the social status that goes with other subjects, and this poses a challenge to my feelings as a teacher	42(25)	91(53)	38(22)	0(0)	3.02	0.685
The view that teaching Social Studies can be done by anybody poses a challenge to me	15(9)	43(25)	78(46)	35(20)	2.22	0.872
The inadequate supply of teaching learning materials to supports teaching and learning of Social Studies poses a challenge to me.	64(37)	75(44)	32(19)	0(0)	3.19	0.727
The highly integrated nature of Social Studies poses a challenge to me	31(18)	65(38)	68(40)	7(4)	2.70	0.810
Overall mean					**2.56**	**0.351**

N= 171; Mean Ranges: 0.00-1.59 = Strongly Disagree; 1.60-2.59 = Disagree; 2.60-3.59 = Agree; 3.60 - 4.00 = Strongly Agree. A mean of means of 2.60 indicates teachers' opinion as high.
Key: M- Mean; **SD.** - Standard Deviation; **SA –** Strongly Agree**; A –** Agree; **D –** Disagree**; SD –** Strongly Disagree
Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentage

With regard to whether teaching Social Studies by anybody poses a challenge to Social Studies teachers, a few respondents did not think that it is a significant challenge (58, 34%, M=2.22), but 113 (66%) held opposing views. Majority of the respondents cited the inadequate supply of teaching learning materials to support teaching and learning of Social Studies as a significant challenge to them (139, 81%, M=3.19), but 32 (19%) disclaimed this assertion. From the results in Table 4.6, most of the respondents lamented that the highly integrated nature of Social Studies poses a challenge to them (96, 56%, M=2.70). Conversely, 75 (44%) respondents held incongruent views.

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It emerged from the findings of this study that there are challenges, which affect Social Studies teachers' development of professional identity. The main challenge was inadequate supply of teaching learning materials to support teaching and learning of Social Studies as a significant challenge to them (M=3.19, SD = 0.727). This was followed by a feeling that teaching Social Studies does not carry the social status that goes with other subjects (M=3.02, SD = 0.685), and the highly integrated nature of Social Studies as a challenge (M=2.70, SD = 0.810). The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) values for these challenges were equal to and/or more than the cut-off point mean and a standard deviation [M ≥ 2.56, SD ≥ 0.351].

This study identified inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials to support teaching and learning of Social Studies as affecting teachers' identity. This result suggests that there are inadequate Social Studies textbooks, syllabus, teachers' guide and other teaching and learning materials in junior high schools in the districts in Central Region. The inadequacy of these materials in schools could be linked to the inability of Ghana Education Service to supply them. It could also be attributed to the large population of JHS pupils vis-à-vis limited supply of the materials. Indeed, a shortfall in the supply of Social Studies teaching and learning materials is a recipe for weak teacher professional identity. This finding substantiates the views of Moloney (2011) who observed that successive governments have failed to consolidate teacher identity through lack of resources and supports. The claim is also made that the shortfall of school or classroom infrastructure, teaching and learning materials have influence in shaping teachers' identity.

The evidence gathered from this study reveals an ill feeling among respondents that teaching Social Studies does not carry the social status that goes with other subjects. This

suggests that JHS Social Studies teachers in the district have negative perception, image or identity about themselves. This means they have weak professional identity. It is probable that their professional identity is constructed by the way they are perceived in professional contexts. It is also likely that they have weak professional identity because of their work performance, highly integrated nature of the subject and low qualification, which are precursors to undervaluing and underestimating them by colleagues, society and stakeholders of education. These findings are consistent with the assertions by Moloney and Pope (2012), Moloney (2010, 2011), OECD (2006), Lobman and Ryan (2007) who indicated that the work of teachers continues to be undervalued and underestimated because of weak professional identity due to poor training, poor working conditions and low salaries. The findings vindicate Morgan (2007) who also identified public prejudice, infrastructure shortfalls, shortage of learning materials and resources as affecting teacher identity and education.

The findings of this study identified highly integrated nature of Social Studies as affecting the professional identity of JHS Social Studies teachers in the Central Region. This is probable because of the misalignment in structure of the basic school Social Studies syllabus. This mismatch or incongruence in Social Studies curriculum content is seen as a threat to Social Studies teachers' identity. For instance, the confusion over the nature of social is likely to undermine teacher efficacy and professional identity. This observation buttresses the views of Bekoe and Eshun (2013) who stated that the Social Studies curriculum has feuding and implementation challenges in Ghana. Indeed, this could undermine teacher trainee efficacy in Social Studies instruction at the basic school level.

4.7.   Testing of Hypotheses

Independent samples test (t-test) and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test for the hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at a significance level of $p < 0.05$ at a Confidence Interval (C.I.) of 95%. The t-test was used to determine significant gender differences in JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the four (PK, PV, PS, PRP) teacher identity indicators. On the other hand, the ANOVA was used to compare significant mean differences in JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the four (PK, PV, PS, PRP) teacher identity indicators on the basis of their teaching experience. The t-test result is presented in Table 4.7, whereas the ANOVA results are shown in Tables 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10.

4.7.1 Testing of Hypothesis 1

H_1 = *There are no statistically significant differences between male and female JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the four teacher identity indicators (PK, PV, PS, PRP).*

Table 4.7: Independent Samples T-Test of Gender Differences in Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on Teacher Identity Indicators

Indicator	Gender	Sample (N)	Mean	SD.	t	df	p-value
PK	Male	111	3.00	.357	.000	169	1.000
	Female	60	3.00	.260			
PV	Male	111	3.13	.469	3.481	169	.001
	Female	60	2.83	.615			
PS	Male	111	2.92	.334	1.530	169	.128
	Female	60	2.83	.376			
PRP	Male	111	3.14	.378	.865	169	.388
	Female	60	3.09	.307			

*Test variables - Dependent variables (*PK, PV, PS, and PRP*) and independent variable (*Gender*).
** df (169) - degrees of freedom; *** T-test is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed); n = 171).
 Key: n – sample size; **SD**- Standard Deviation; **t**- test statistics; **p** – probability (p) value.

The result in Table 4.7 shows that there are significant gender differences in JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on professional value (PV) as teacher identity indicator. A comparison of the mean differences indicate that male Social Studies teachers (M= 3.13, n= 111, SD= 0.469) were more likely to have professional in terms of professional value

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than their female counterparts (M = 2.83, n= 60, SD= 0.615). This implies that professional value as a teacher identity indicator is high among male Social Studies teachers compared with their female counterparts in the sampled districts and schools. The t-test output indicates that the observed difference in the means is statistically significant; $t(169) = 3.481$, $p = 0.001$, at a confidence interval (C.I.) of 95%. This result statistically shows a positive and strong significant gender differences in opinion on professional value. Hence, the decision that H_1 is rejected for the variable (PV) since $p<0.05$. The professional value of teachers has implications for teacher identity formation. This survey puts forward that gender of a teacher can affect his/her professional value identity.

The t-test result also reveals no significant differences between male and female JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on three teacher identity indicators (PK, PS, PRP). There is statistically no significant gender differences in opinion on professional knowledge (PK) as teacher identity indicator, $t (169) = 0.000$, $p = 1.000$. Hence, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted since $p>0.05$. A comparison of the mean differences indicate equal mean score for both male and female teachers but with differences in standard deviation (M= 3.00, N= 111, SD= 0.357) as compared with their female counterparts (M= 3.00, N= 60, SD= 0.260).

The study found no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional skills (PS) as an indicator of teacher identity. Even though the mean differences was higher among male respondents (M = 2.92; N = 111; SD = 0.334) compared with their female counterparts (M = 2.83; N = 60; SD = 0.376), the t-test output indicates that the observed difference in the means is statistically not significant; $[t (169) = 1.530$, $p = 0.128$, 2-tailed] at a confidence interval (C.I) of 95%.

Gender differences in opinion on professional reflective practice (PRP) was skewed in favour of male Social Studies teachers (M = 3.14; N = 111; SD = 0.378) as compared with their female counterparts (M = 3.09; N = 60; SD = 0.307), but the observed mean differences is not statistically not significant; [t (169) = 0.865, p = 0.388, 2-tailed] at a confidence interval (C.I) of 95%.

4.7.2 Testing of Hypothesis 2

H_1: *There are statistically significant differences in JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the four teacher identity indicators (PK, PV, PS, PRP) on the basis of their teaching experience.*

To test this hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare means. The F-test is meant to identify whether the mean for JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on teacher identity indicators within and between teachers on the basis of differences in teaching experience significantly differ or not. Levene test was further used to examine homogeneity of the variances. Again, a post-hoc comparison was used to determine which group(s) differ. The ANOVA, Levene's test and post hoc analysis are presented in Table 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.

Table 4.8: **One-Way ANOVA: JHS Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on Identity Indicators Between and Within Teachers by Teaching Experience Categories**

Indicators		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PK	Between Groups	.000	2	0.000	0.000	1.000
	Within Groups	18.000	168	.107		
	Total	18.000	170			
PV	Between Groups	5.925	2	2.963	11.317	0.000
	Within Groups	43.981	168	0.262		
	Total	49.906	170			
PS	Between Groups	.015	2	0.007	0.060	0.942
	Within Groups	20.874	168	0.124		
	Total	20.889	170			
PRP	Between Groups	.031	2	0.016	0.122	0.885
	Within Groups	21.305	168	0.127		
	Total	21.336	170			

Source: Field survey, Mends (2019)
*F- test** is significant at the .05 level (2- tailed); **Independent variable:** Teaching experience;
***Dependent variables** (*PK, PV, PS, PRP*)

With regard to differences in opinion on professional knowledge as teacher identity indicator based on teaching experience, analysis using one-way ANOVA resulted in test statistics (F) of .000, with degrees of freedom (df) of 2 and a p-value of 1.000 at a confidence interval (C.I) of 95%. Hence, there was no significant differences in opinion on PK as an identity indicator between and within teachers by variations in teaching experience. The null hypothesis (H_1) cannot therefore be rejected; the Ha is accepted since p> 0.05.

As regards the differences in opinion on professional value as teacher identity indicator, the ANOVA resulted in test statistics, $F_{(2, 168)} = 11.317$, p < 0.05. Therefore, there was a statistically significant marginal difference in opinion on PV between and within teachers on the basis of differences in teaching experience. The null hypothesis (H_1) is therefore rejected since p< 0.05.

The ANOVA result revealed no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional skills (PS) as an identity indicator between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience, F (2, 168) = 0.060, p>0.05. Therefore, there was no statistically significant differences in opinion on PS between and within teachers by variations in teaching experience. The null hypothesis (H$_1$) is therefore accepted since p>0.05. Similarly, the ANOVA result indicated no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional reflective practice (PRP) as an identity indicator between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience, F(2, 168) .122, p> 0.05.

The one-way ANOVA assumes that the variances of the groups are all equal. Levene's test was further used to examine the homogeneity of variances. Table 4.9 presents the data.

Table 4.9: Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Indicator	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PK	6.851	2	168	0.001
PV	2.434	2	168	0.091
PS	0.036	2	168	0.964
PRP	0.081	2	168	0.922

The Levene's test for homogeneity of variances revealed a test statistics of 6.851 with significance value of 0.001 (p < 0.05). This result means that differences in opinion on professional knowledge (PK) are equal between and within teachers based on differences in teaching experience (less experienced, experienced or more experienced) of study subjects. Therefore, the assumption is justified. However, there are no differences in opinion on professional value (PV), professional skills (PS) and professional reflective practice (PRP) as teacher identity indicators between and within teachers based on

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variations in teaching experience (p > 0.05). A post-hoc comparison was also conducted using Bonferroni test to determine which group(s) of teachers by teaching experience differ. The result of the post-hoc analysis presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 is the pairwise comparison of the group means for all selected post hoc procedures. Bonferroni test procedure was used. The post-hoc analysis resulted in differences for six pairs of group: 1-2, 1-3, 2-1, 2-3, 3-1, and 3-2 with regard to differences in opinion on professional knowledge (PK), professional value (PV), professional skills (PS) and professional reflective practice (PRP) based on variations in teaching experience (less experienced, experienced or more experienced). The mean difference is the differences between the sample means. The probability that the population mean differ is zero (p < 0.05) at 95% confidence interval.

The survey established significant but marginal differences between and within group because differences in opinion on professional value (PV) are equal between and within teachers who were less experienced, experienced and more experienced. A possible reason for the significant differences in opinion on professional value could be due to variations in professional qualification and teaching experience (p = 0.000). The interpretation for this finding is that professional value of teachers between and within groups increases or decreases with variations or differences in teaching experience and professional qualification. A direct or linear relationship therefore exists between professional value teacher identity indicator and teaching experience. However, there are no differences in opinion on professional knowledge (PK), professional skills (PS) and professional reflective practice (PRP) as teacher identity indicators between and within teachers based on variations in teaching experience (p > 0.05).

Table 4.10: Post-Hoc Comparison of Mean Differences in JHS Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on Identity Indicators between and Within Teachers by Teaching Experience Categories

Dependent Variable	Group comparison by teaching experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
PK	1-2	.000	.064	1.000	-.16	.16
	1-3	.000	.068	1.000	-.17	.17
	2-1	.000	.064	1.000	-.16	.16
	2-3	.000	.058	1.000	-.14	.14
	3-1	.000	.068	1.000	-.17	.17
	3-2	.000	.058	1.000	-.14	.14
PV	1-2	.398*	.101	.000	.15	.64
	1-3	.484*	.107	.000	.23	.74
	2-1	-.398*	.101	.000	-.64	-.15
	2-3	.086	.090	1.000	-.13	.30
	3-1	-.484*	.107	.000	-.74	-.23
	3-2	-.086	.090	1.000	-.30	.13
PS	1-2	-.023	.069	1.000	-.19	.14
	1-3	-.021	.074	1.000	-.20	.16
	2-1	.023	.069	1.000	-.14	.19
	2-3	.002	.062	1.000	-.15	.15
	3-1	.021	.074	1.000	-.16	.20
	3-2	-.002	.062	1.000	-.15	.15
PRP	1-2	-.029	.070	1.000	-.20	.14
	1-3	-.035	.074	1.000	-.21	.14
	2-1	.029	.070	1.000	-.14	.20
	2-3	-.006	.063	1.000	-.16	.15
	3-1	.035	.074	1.000	-.14	.21
	3-2	.006	.063	1.000	-.15	.16

Note: 1= Less experienced; 2 = Experienced; 3 = More experienced
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
Note: 1= Less experienced; 2 = Experienced; 3 = More experienced

4.8 Summary of Results and Discussion

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The study examined the professional identity of Junior High school social studies teachers in four districts in the Central Region, Ghana. This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the findings of the study. It covers the following thematic areas: demographic data of the respondents, social studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional knowledge, social studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional values, and social studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional skills. Others include social studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional reflective practice, and challenges affecting social studies teacher's development of a professional identity.

4.8.1 Demographic Data of the Respondents

The demographic attributes of the respondents included the following: gender, age, professional qualification, and teaching experience. It emerged from the findings of this study that there were more male social studies teachers (65%). It also unfolds from this study that the majority of the social studies teachers were young and middle-aged (78%). Even though a few of the teachers had a bachelor degree in social studies education (25%), the majority of the teachers were experienced and/or more experienced in teaching the subject (77%). This information has implications on teacher professional development vis-à-vis teacher identity formation. The findings on professional and teaching qualifications and experiences of the teachers are critical factors that can support the implementation of the social studies curriculum in Ghana. It is widely accepted that the quality of any school cannot be higher than the quality of teachers in the school and that the quality of teachers in the schools is dependent upon high-quality teacher education and professional development opportunities in every country. This assertion and the findings of this study are in line with the views of Rogan and Grayson (2003) who posited that a critical factor

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that can support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in a school pertains to the teacher's own background, training, qualification, and level of confidence, and their commitment to teaching.

4.8.2 Junior High School Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on the Importance of Professional Knowledge and Teacher Identity

The first research question sought to gather data on JHS social studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional knowledge (PK) as an identity indicator. The purpose was to determine whether their opinions on professional knowledge are indicative of teacher identity. In this regard, a number of professional knowledge indicators were used to assess teacher identity. Generally, respondents' opinion on professional knowledge and teacher identity was high with a mean value of $M \geq 2.60$, even though the mean values varied across various indicators used. For instance, respondents' opinions on professional knowledge and teacher identity were very high ($M \geq 3.00$) on the following indicators: knowledge of the roles of social studies education to society in general, knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of social studies students, and knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of their students. Nevertheless, there was no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional knowledge indicators and teacher identity, $t(169) = .000$, $p>0\ .05$. Similarly, there were no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional knowledge indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience, $F(2, 168) = .000$, $p>.05$.

It becomes clear from the findings that most of the respondents had a high level of opinion on all aspects of professional knowledge and teacher identity. This finding is indicative that professional knowledge could likely enhance the professional identity of social studies

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teachers. The finding that knowledge of the psychology of learning, as it relates to the teaching of social studies students, is suggestive of teacher identity corroborates the views of Craft and Paige-Smith (2011). They explained that professionals are increasingly expected to be involved with the body of knowledge about their practice, which is underpinned by a theoretical understanding of children's learning. This suggests that social studies teachers must have knowledge of the theories underpinning learning and the psychology of learning in order to be well-grounded in their profession. This will enrich their professional identity. This finding is also parallel to the views of Bigge and Shermis (1999) who posited that part of a teacher's professional knowledge is developed by teachers adopting learning theories and achieving 'an eclectic compromise formed by selecting aspects of opposing theories and taking a position somewhere among them so as to form a variety pattern. The finding that teacher's knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of their students is indicative of professional knowledge and teacher identity vindicates Turner-Bisset (2001) who stated that knowledge of learners enriches teacher professional identity.

4.8.3 Junior High School Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on the Importance of Professional Value and Teacher Identity

This theme was intended to find out respondents' opinions on professional value indicators and teacher identity. Overall, the result signifies a high level of teachers' opinion on professional value and teacher identity (M ≥ 2.60), except for two indicators. The findings reveal a high level of respondents' opinion on the following indicators: having a positive attitude towards the discipline, belief in the ability to influence students' achievement, and maintaining a collaborative working relationship with colleagues at work. Respondents'

opinion was high for demonstrating passion and commitments in teaching social studies, ability to inspire students' learning of social studies, emotional stability during instructional sessions in social studies, and demonstrating the desire for lifelong learning and commitment to professional development. The finding further reveals a very high opinion ($M \geq 3.00$) of social studies teachers on positive attitude towards the discipline have professional value identity, desire for and commitment to lifelong learning and professional development, the belief and ability to influence students' achievement in the subject area, and emotional stability during instructional sessions.

The professional value attributes are rooted in a number of constructs such as service, sensitivity, empathy, adaptation, innovation, inquiry, tolerance of uncertainty, respect and Sintegrity, reciprocity and collaboration within communities of practice (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Leadbeater, 2011; Husu & Tirri, 2007; Loughran & Russell, 2007; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). These constructs are viewed as benchmarks or ingredients that can shape and improve teacher professional identity. The findings of this study imply that social studies teachers establish and improve their identity in the context or milieu of these professional value benchmarks. There was a statistically significant gender difference in opinion on professional value indicators and teacher identity, $t\,(169) = 3.481$, $p = 0.001$. More so, differences in opinion on professional value indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience were found to be statistically significant, $F\,(2, 168) = 11.317$, $p < 0.05$.

Junior High School Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on the Importance of Professional Skills and Teacher Identity

The findings of this study indicate that respondents' opinions on all aspects of professional skills indicators and teacher identity were high (M ≥ 2.60), but respondents' opinion on some indicators were very high (M ≥ 2.89). These benchmarks are: selecting and using developmentally proper activities that make learning of social studies more interactive and engaging for students, effective class management during social studies lessons, and the use of varying assessment procedures that caters for unique needs of students by social studies teacher. Others indicator include the use of instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of learners during social studies lessons, illustrating social studies themes and concepts with proper examples, assessing student's needs to help identify learning goals, and logical delivery of themes in social studies by teachers. The evidence gathered from this study signify that these indicators improve the professional skills identity of social studies teachers. This means that social studies teachers who meet these standards have improved professional identity. The findings of this study, however, showed no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional skills indicators and teacher identity, t (169) = 1.530, p>0.05. Again, there were no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional skills indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience, F (2, 168) = 0.060, p>0.05.

It is evident from the findings of this that teachers improve their professional identity by selecting and using developmentally proper activities that make the learning of social studies more interactive and engaging for students. This observation corroborates the findings of Saracho and Spodekin (2003) and Guskey (1986) who claimed that teachers enrich their identity by understanding what makes learning easy or difficult, and choosing

developmentally appropriate practices flexibly during a teaching situation. They also explained that teachers improve their professional identity when they are pedagogically skilful and have good interaction skills.

This study found the use of instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of learners during social studies lessons are indicative of professional skills identity. This is because the effective use of instructional techniques and learner involvement during lessons are fundamental teaching skills needed by teachers to enable children to learn. This result is consistent with the claims by Wragg (2005) who also indicated that the use of teaching skills or strategies enable students to learn and get something worthwhile. They emphasized that the use of teaching skills in classroom interaction situations tend to facilitate the achievement of specified types of educational objectives.

It becomes clear from the findings of this study that assessing student's needs to help identify learning goals improve teacher identity. Again, effective class management during social studies lessons, the use of varying assessment procedures that caters for unique needs of students improves social studies teacher, and logical delivery of themes in social studies have been found to improve professional skills and teacher identity.

These findings suggest that teachers improve their identity whenever they use assessment methods to evaluate teaching and learning outputs, offer feedback, and engage in consultation with home, school, and community. This observation is consistent with that of McCarthy (1990) who viewed facilitation of learning and assessment, feedback offering, relationships and consultation with the home, school, and community to create the learning environment as components of professional identity.

4.8.4 Junior High School Social Studies Teachers' Opinion on the Importance of Professional Reflective Practice and Teacher Identity

Generally, over 60% of the respondents had a high level of opinion on all the professional reflective practice (PRP) indicators ($M \geq 2.60$). This is an indication that the professional reflective practices of the social studies teachers reflect their teacher identity. The result of this study further shows that opinions on three indicators were extremely high ($M \geq 3.13$). These indicators were (in rank order): building relationship with learners and the involvement of their parents (M= 3.15), having knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of social studies (M= 3.13), and achievements of social studies learners (M= 3.13). However, there was no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional reflective practice indicators and teacher identity, t(169) = .865, p>0 .05. It was also evident from the result that there were no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional reflective practice indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience, F(2, 168) = 0.016, p>0.05.

There is ample evidence from this study that building relationship with learners and the involvement of their parents improve teacher identity is in line with the views of Timostsuk and Ugaste (2010) who found that the relations in the classroom between teachers and students, teachers' relation with his/her learners, content, colleagues and environment at large determines teacher professional identity. This suggests that teachers' relationships with students, colleague teachers and parents of students are a significant determinant of teachers' professional identity.

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The result of this study indicated that having knowledge of current trends and developments in teaching improves the professional identity of social studies teachers (M= 3.13). In this regard, teachers are expected to acquire new knowledge and skills through professional development and reflective practices to perform their professional practices in alignment with the new demands of current trends in professional roles. Other studies by Lasky (2005), Zembylas (2005) and Chappell (2001) indicated that teachers have new understandings of their roles, change their professional practices, and become new and different teachers when they develop knowledge of current trends in their professional practices.

The finding of this study indicates that teachers construct their professional identity when they reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. This revelation buttresses the views of Yidana and Lawal (2015) who stated that teachers who reflect on their strengths and weaknesses become aware of and control their teaching by actively assessing what they already know, what they need to know and how to bridge that gap. To them, the purpose of teachers' reflection is to identify problems during the process of teaching, which is important for teachers to gauge students' understanding of lessons and how teaching might relate to that understanding.

4.8.5 Challenges Affecting Junior High School Social Studies Teachers' Development of Professional Identity

This study identified three major challenges which affect social studies teachers' development of professional identity (M ≥ 2.60). These are an inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials to support teaching and learning of social studies (M=3.19), ill-feeling that teaching social studies does not carry the social status that goes with other

subjects (M=3.02), and the highly integrated nature of social studies as a challenge (M=2.70).

This study identified inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials to support teaching and learning of social studies as affecting teachers' identity. This result suggests that there are inadequate social studies textbooks, syllabus, teachers' guide, and other teaching and learning materials in junior high schools in the districts in Central Region. The inadequacy of these materials in schools could be linked to the inability of the Ghana Education Service to supply them. It could also be attributed to the large population of JHS pupils vis-à-vis a limited supply of the materials. Indeed, a shortfall in the supply of social studies teaching and learning materials is a recipe for weak teacher professional identity. This finding substantiates the views of Moloney (2011) who observed that successive governments have failed to consolidate teacher identity through lack of resources and supports. This finding also validates a claim by Education International (2010) which points out that the shortfall of school or classroom infrastructure, teaching and learning materials have influence in shaping teachers' identity.

The evidence gathered from this study reveals an ill-feeling among respondents that teaching social studies does not carry the social status that goes with other subjects. This suggests that JHS social studies teachers in the district have a negative perception, image or identity about themselves. This means they have a weak professional identity. It is probable that their professional identity is constructed by the way they are perceived in professional contexts. It is also likely that they have a weak professional identity because of their work performance, highly integrated nature of the subject and low qualification, which are precursors to undervaluing and underestimating them by colleagues, society, and

stakeholders of education. These findings are consistent with the assertions by Moloney and Pope (2012), Moloney (2010, 2011), OECD (2006), Lobman and Ryan (2007) who indicated that the work of teachers continues to be undervalued and underestimated because of weak professional identity due to poor training, poor working conditions and low salaries. The findings vindicate Abdulai (2014) who also identified public prejudice, infrastructure shortfalls, shortage of learning materials and resources as affecting teacher identity and education in Ghana.

The findings of this study identified the highly integrated nature of social studies as affecting the professional identity of JHS social studies teachers in the Central Region. This is probably because of the misalignment in the structure of the basic school social studies syllabus. This mismatch or incongruence in social studies curriculum content is seen as a threat to social studies teachers' identity. For instance, the confusion over the nature of society is likely to undermine teacher efficacy and professional identity. This observation buttresses the views of Bekoe and Eshun (2013) who stated that the social studies curriculum has feuding and implementation challenges in Ghana. Indeed, this could undermine teacher trainee efficacy in social studies instruction at the basic school level.

4.9   Summary of Results

This study, which examined the professional identity of Junior High school Social Studies teachers in four selected district in the Central Region, unfolds the opinions on identities of Social Studies teachers from the perspectives of their professional knowledge, professional value, professional skills and professional reflective practice. It emerged from the results that JHS Social Studies teachers had a high opinion on the importance of professional knowledge as an identity indicator. Even though there were variations in

opinion, they viewed professional knowledge as a reflection of their identity. It is also evident that JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional values was generally high. They expressed varied opinions that give credence to the importance of professional identity in defining and shaping teacher identity. For this reason, they have positive attitude towards Social Studies as a discipline. JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the relevance of professional skills (PS) as an identity indicator were found to be high. The evidence gathered from this study signify professional skills of the teachers have improved their professional image.

Generally, JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion was high on the relevance of professional reflective (PRP) practice as an identity indicator. The results indicate that professional reflective practices of the Social Studies teachers reflect their teacher identity. The major challenges which affect Social Studies teachers' development of professional identity were: inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials to support teaching and learning of Social Studies, ill feeling that teaching Social Studies does not carry the social status that goes with other subjects, and the highly integrated nature of Social Studies as a challenge.

The findings showed no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional knowledge (PK), professional skills (PS), and professional reflective practice ($p > 0.05$), except professional value (PV) [$p < 0.05$] as teacher identity indicators. There was no statistically significant differences in opinion on PK, PS and PRP as teacher identity indicators between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience ($p > 0.05$), except professional value (PV) [$p < 0.05$] as teacher identity indicators.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0.   Overview

This chapter highlights the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study. Suggestions for further studies are also put forward.

5.1   Summary of Key Findings

This study examined the professional identity of Junior High school Social Studies teachers in selected district in Central Region. To arrive at this objective, one hundred and seventy-one (171) JHS Social Studies teachers were sampled through simple random sampling technique for the study. The design adopted for this study was descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The main instrument used was questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = 0.73). Data collected was analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics which were presented in tables. Among the findings of this study were the following:

The first research question sought to find out JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional knowledge (PK) as identity indicator. The data showed that JHS Social Studies teachers had a high opinion on the importance of professional knowledge as an identity indicator. Even though there were variations in opinion, they viewed professional knowledge as a reflection of their identity. The data again indicated no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional knowledge indicators and teacher identity (p>0.05). Also, there was no statistically significant

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differences in opinion on professional knowledge indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience (p>0.05).

The second research question looked at JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional values (PV) as identity indicator. The findings revealed that JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional value was generally high. Also, there was a positive and significant gender differences in opinion on the importance of professional values (PV) as identity indicator (p = 0.001). Teachers' opinion on professional value as an identity indicator was high among male Social Studies teachers compared with their female counterparts. There is a marginal but significant differences in teachers' opinion on professional value as teacher identity indicator between and within less experienced, experienced and more experienced teachers (p = 0.000).

The third research question sought to find out JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional skills (PS) as identity indicator. The findings of this study reveal a high opinion of JHS Social Studies teachers on the importance of professional skills as an identity indicator. Notwithstanding, there was no statistically significant gender differences in opinion on professional skills indicators and teacher identity (p>0.05). Similarly, there was no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional skills indicators and teacher identity between and within teachers by differences in teaching experience (p>0.05).

The fourth research question assessed JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion on the importance of professional reflective practice (PRP) as identity indicator. The study found that teachers' opinion was generally high with regard to the relevance of professional

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reflective (PRP) practice as an identity indicator. But there was no statistically significant differences in opinion on professional skills indicators and teacher identity by gender and teaching experience (p>0.05).

The last objective of this study sought to find out the challenges affecting Social Studies teachers' development of a professional identity. The study identified inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials to support teaching and learning of Social Studies, ill feeling that teaching Social Studies does not carry the social status that goes with other subjects, and the highly integrated nature of Social Studies as challenges.

5.2   Conclusions

Overall, JHS Social Studies teachers' opinion was generally high with regard to the relevance of professional knowledge (PK), professional value (PV), professional skills (PS) and professional reflective practice (PRP) as teacher identity indicators. It unfolds that these indicators shape, reflect and boost teacher identity. Accordingly, the study concludes that these indicators have improved professional image of JHS Social Studies teachers in the selected districts in the Central Region. It also unfolds that they have positive attitude towards Social Studies as a discipline because these indicators give credence to teacher identity. Notwithstanding the gains in establishing teacher professional identity, JHS Social Studies teachers experienced challenges which hindered their development of a professional identity.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The researcher encountered a number of difficulties during the conduct of this study. The researcher conducted this study on public JHS Social Studies teachers in four districts in

the Central Region only. The sample size was also relatively small considering the population of Social Studies teachers in all junior high schools in Ghana, and in the Central Region in particular. This limits the generalization of the study results to be true for all Social Studies teachers in other educational institutions in the Central Region, Ghana and elsewhere. Hence, the results of this study were limited to the views of Social Studies teachers in public junior high schools within the selected districts. There was also a challenge of unwillingness on the part of some of the respondents to provide the information for fear of the outcome of the research. However, the respondents were assured of their confidentiality. They were also briefed on the purpose of the research and that the results were to be used for research only. In this regard, they willingly provided the information. Also, with a purely quantitative nature of the approach, any vital qualitative information concealed by participants were not included in the findings.

5.4 Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

i. Teacher Education Colleges and Universities should ensure that teacher education programmes make provision for adequate content in Social Studies courses that will make Social Studies teachers sufficiently competent. Social Studies teachers must take personal responsibility in upgrading their knowledge reading in order to update themselves with trendy issues in Social Studies education.

ii. In the Central Region of Ghana, Junior High School Social Studies teachers should identify values and attitudes they need to imbibe and exhibit to make them distinct from other subject teachers. They should also identify mentors in the community

of practice who demonstrate such values and strive to model after them. This will help create a unique identity for themselves as Social Studies teachers.

iii. Junior High School Social Studies teachers in the Central Region should constantly update their knowledge on current practices in the discipline to enable them demonstrate skills that would make them distinct from other subject teachers. Periodically, the district education directorates should organise cluster based or district wide in-service training for JHS Social Studies teachers to enable them acquaint themselves with current practice.

iv. Junior High School Social Studies teachers in the Central Region should, on a daily basis, reflect on various activities they undertake in the instructional setting to enable them review their practices periodically so as to become effective teachers.

v. As a result of the limited resources available, JHS Social Studies teachers in the Central Region should be creative and ingenious in the development of some teaching and learning materials from community resources to enable them effectively teach some topics. In line with this, the District Education Directorate should train teachers in their jurisdiction in the use of online resources such as simulated activities, animations, videos, and pictures to make Social Studies lessons more graphic and interesting. District Education Directorate should organise workshops for JHS Social Studies teachers on more interactive techniques and strategies that can be used in teaching integrated subjects like Social Studies.

5.5. Suggestion for Further Studies

This study provided a snapshot of the junior high school Social Studies teachers' opinion on professional identity, a prospective study will be needed to investigate teachers' opinion on the subject matter. This study should be replicated to cover a larger sample of Social Studies teachers drawn from all junior high schools in the Central Region, including both public and private institutions and authorities in Social Studies education such as lecturers in universities. This is recommended to increase the number of respondents for the study to improve the reliability of the results of the study. A mixed-method research approach could be used to replicate this study to draw a conclusive evidence on the subject matter or otherwise.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Social Studies Teacher Professional Identity Questionnaire

This questionnaire is meant to gather data for a study being conducted by Dorothy Mends a student from the university named above in connection with an MPhil thesis titled: *An examination of junior high school Social Studies teacher's professional identity in Central Region, Ghana.* The information you give will help researchers and policy makers understand the extent to which the level to which your belief influences your professional identity development in all other respect, however, the data will be held in confidence to the extent allowed by law. Should the data be published, your identity will not be showed. Taking part in this study is voluntary. However, if you decide to be part, you are kindly requested to read the items and respond to them as frankly and objectively as possible. Thanks for being part of this study.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

Please place a tick (√) in the proper box

Gender

a) Male   [   ]
b) Female   [   ]

Age Ranges

a) 21- 25 years   [   ]
b) 26 – 30 years   [   ]
c) 31 – 35 years   [   ]
d) 36 – 40 years   [   ]
e) 41 – 45 years   [   ]
f) 46 – 50 years   [   ]
g) 51 – 55   years   [   ]
h) 56 – 60   years   [   ]

Professional qualification

a) Cert 'A' 3-years post sec   [   ]
b) Diploma in Basic Education   [   ]

c) Degree in Basic Education   [   ]
d) Degree in Social Studies Education   [   ]
e) Degree in Education programme   [   ]   Please, specify…………………
f) Master's Degree in Education   [   ]
g) Any other   [   ]   Please, specify………………..

Years of Teaching Social Studies

Less than a year   [   ]

1-4 years   [   ]

5-9 years   [   ]

10-14 years   [   ]
15-19 years
                                          [   ]

20 years and above   [   ]

SECTION B: Indicators of Social Studies Teacher's Professional Knowledge

*Please these items are related to indicators of Social Studies teacher's beliefs about themselves as Social Studies teachers (**Professional knowledge**). By use of a tick, please show whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) or (SD) strongly disagree with the following statements.*

No	Indicates	SD	D	A	SA
	The ideal Social Studies teacher should demonstrate the following professional knowledge				
1	Knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Social Studies learners				
2	Knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of students taught by the Social Studies teacher				
3	Knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of Social Studies students				
4	Strengths and weaknesses in terms of knowledge in the Social Studies				
5	Knowledge of the roles of Social Studies education to society in general				
6	Knowledge of suitable curriculum materials for Social Studies Education				
7	Methods of inquiring in Social Studies Education				

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SECTION C: Indicators of Social Studies Teacher's Professional values

*Please these items are related to indicators of Social Studies teacher's beliefs about themselves as Social Studies practitioner (**professional values**). By use of a tick, please show whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) or (SD) strongly disagree with the following statements.*

	Indicators	SD	D	A	SA
	The ideal Social Studies teacher should demonstrate the following professional values				
1	A positive attitude towards the Social Studies always.				
2	Belief in his/her ability to influence students' achievement in the Social Studies.				
3	Maintaining a collaborative working relationship with his/her colleagues at work.				
4	Demonstrating passion and commitments in teaching Social Studies				
5	Respecting students' views and learner diversities				
6	Be able to inspire students' learning of Social Studies				
7	Emotional stability during instructional sessions in Social Studies				
8	Being enthusiastic towards his/her students.				
9	Demonstrating the desire for lifelong learning and commitment to professional development in Social Studies				

SECTION D: Indicators of Social Studies Teacher's Professional Skills

*Please these items are related to indicators of Social Studies teacher's beliefs about themselves as. Social Studies practitioner (**professional skills**). By use of a tick, please indicate whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) or (SD) strongly disagree with the following statements.*

No	Indicators	SD	D	A	SA
	The ideal Social Studies teacher should demonstrate the following professional skills				
1	Assessing student's needs to help identify learning goals				
2	Selecting and using developmentally proper activities that will make learning of Social Studies more interactive and engaging for students				
3	Developing and using learning resources that are suitable for the attainment of student's learning outcomes in Social Studies				

4	Preparing comprehensive learning plans for Social Studies lessons				
5	Harmonizing instructional objectives with Social Studies curriculum goals.				
6	Conducting a review of Student's entry behaviour in Social Studies				
7	Logical delivery of themes in Social Studies				
8	Using instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of learners during Social Studies lessons				
9	Illustrating Social Studies themes concepts with proper examples				
10	Effective class management during Social Studies lessons				
11	Harmonizing evaluation questions with instructional objectives in Social Studies				
12	Varying assessment procedures that caters for unique needs of students				

SECTION E: Indicators of Social Studies Teacher's Reflective Practice

*Please these items are related to indicators of Social Studies teacher's beliefs about themselves as. Social Studies practitioner (**reflective practice**). By use of a tick, please show whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) or (SD) strongly disagree with the following statements.*

No	Indicators	SD	D	A	SA
	The ideal Social Studies teacher should demonstrate the following professional reflective practices				
1	Achievements of Social Studies learners				
2	Strengths and weaknesses in terms of knowledge in the Social Studies themes				
3	Activities he/she engages students in				
4	Learning materials used during Social Studies lessons				

5	Knowledge of the weaknesses, strengths, and interests of students under him/her				
6	Teaching and learning techniques use in Social Studies lessons				
7	Relationship with children and the involvement of their parents				
8	Knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Social Studies				
9	Assessment methods/ procedures used in Social Studies				
10	Knowledge of the roles of Social Studies education to society in general				

Section F: Challenges Influencing Social Studies Teachers' Professional Identity

*Please these items are related to the challenges influencing Social Studies teachers' beliefs about themselves as Social Studies practitioner (**professional identity**). By use of a tick, please show whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) or (SD) strongly disagree with the following statements.*

No	Challenges	SD	D	A	SA
1	The continues undervaluing of Social Studies Teachers affects me.				
2	The underestimation of the Social Studies teachers' poses a challenge to me				
3	Teaching Social Studies does not carry the social status that goes with other subjects, and this poses a challenge to my feelings as a teacher				
4	The view that teaching Social Studies can be done by anybody poses a challenge to me				
5	The inadequate supply of teaching learning materials to supports teaching and learning of Social Studies poses a challenge to me.				
6	The highly integrated nature of Social Studies poses a challenge to me				