Identity Statuses and Gender in Pre-service EFL Teachers' Professional Identity Development

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Abstract

The professional identity construction of pre-service English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teachers (PSETs) has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention. Nonetheless, the specific roles of gender, identity statuses, and their interaction remain insufficiently investigated. This study seeks to examine the extent to which gender, identity statuses, and the interaction between these variables influence the professional identity construction of PSETs. A total of ninety PSETs (N = 90) enrolled in a teacher education program in Indonesia served as the sample of the study. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using a two-way ANOVA to determine the influence of gender, identity statuses, and their interaction on professional identity development. Findings revealed that identity statuses exerted a significant influence on professional identity formation, with pronounced differences identified between participants in the Identity Diffusion and Identity Achievement categories. By contrast, gender and the interaction between gender and identity statuses were not found to indicate significant influence. These results call into question prevailing assumptions regarding the influence of gender on professional identity construction, highlighting instead the centrality of identity exploration and commitment.

1. Introduction

A teacher's identity is essential in professional development (Sarie et al., 2020), especially among pre-service teachers working on their learning paths to become teachers. Teachers' professional identity is believed to affect how teachers carry out their duties, view themselves as teachers, approach problems, develop constructive relations with students, and succeed in teaching (Beijaard et al., 2004; Shodiq & Syamsudin, 2019). Research on professional identity among pre-service English as a Foreign language (EFL) teachers (PSETs) has incorporated various aspects, including the role of language proficiency, pedagogical and personal aspects significant in shaping professional identity through teaching practice (Taşdemir & Seferoğlu, 2022), the emotional and academic journey undergone by pre-service teachers in becoming a teacher through e-portfolio (Salinas & Pizarro, 2023), and autonomy contributing to identity formation (Dilek & Altas, 2022). These studies suggested that a complex examination of teacher professional identity among pre-service teachers has been conducted and possibly influenced by various factors. Nonetheless, little has been investigated about the interaction impact of gender and identity status on the professional identity of prospective EFL teachers.

Previous studies have demonstrated that gender plays a significant role in the construction of teacher professional identity, particularly among pre-service teachers (Barbosa, 2017; Gracia et al., 2022; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022; Wang et al., 2018). These studies illustrate how gender influenced identity formation, with noticeable differences between male and female pre-service teachers. For instance, female pre-service teachers were often found to possess a stronger professional identity compared to their male counterparts (Qin & Liu, 2023; Wang et al., 2018). Moreover, gender-

based career choices have been highlighted, with men tending to prioritize gender roles and women focusing on pre-service teacher identity development when selecting teaching as a profession (Soylu et al., 2021). In the Indonesian context, Imelwaty et al. (2022) identified distinct approaches in how male and female pre-service teachers construct their identities within the English language teaching field. Additionally, research has suggested that investigating gender differences in professional identity development could help promote personalized approaches in educational and cultural settings (Gnatyshina et al., 2018). However, while gender differences have been explored in previous research, more comprehensive studies are necessary to uncover the intersections between gender and other factors, such as identity statuses, in shaping professional identity among pre-service teachers.

In addition to gender, professional identity construction is also shaped by an individual's identity status, rooted in Marcia's Identity Development Theory (1966). This theory posits that exploration and commitment to various life aspects, including career choices, determine identity statuses, which are categorized into four stages: identity diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement (Marcia, 1966, 1980). Numerous studies have examined the relationship between identity statuses and identity development (Asayesh & Vakili, 2020; Kaya & Çok, 2021; Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Martinussen & Kroger, 2013). For example, Kroger and Marcia (2011) found that individuals who achieved identity status demonstrated a stronger sense of professional identity. Similarly, Asayesh and Vakili (2020) underscored the importance of commitment in the identity formation process. While these studies highlight the significance of identity statuses in shaping individuals' professional development, they have primarily focused on broader disciplines, leaving a gap in investigating its role in pre-service teacher education. Specifically, the intersectionality of identity status and gender in constructing professional identity among pre-service teachers remained underexplored. Thus, this study aimed to fill this gap by examining how both gender and identity status jointly influence professional identity construction among pre-service teachers, an area that has received limited empirical attention.

The identified knowledge gap underscores the urgency of conducting the present study, which explores the interaction between gender and identity statuses in shaping the professional identity construction of pre-service EFL teachers. This study, therefore, investigates an underexplored dimension of professional identity construction by analyzing the intersectionality between gender and identity statuses and its potential influence on PSETs' professional identity. While numerous studies have addressed professional identity among teachers, there remains a limited focus on the specific experiences and challenges faced by pre-service teachers (PSTs) in diverse educational contexts. This research builds upon existing literature by explicitly applying Marcia's Identity Theory to explain how gender and identity statuses influence their professional identity formation. By situating this study within the broader discourse on teacher identity, it underscores the significance of contextual factors, particularly in the Indonesian educational landscape, to enrich theoretical frameworks in teacher education. Grounded in this rationale, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Does gender significantly influence the professional identity of pre-service EFL teachers?
2. Do identity statuses influence the professional identity of pre-service EFL teachers?
3. How does the interaction between gender and identity statuses influence the professional identity of pre-service EFL teachers?

Teacher professional identity construction in teacher education

Teacher professional identity is central to shaping how individuals approach the teaching profession, influencing their perceptions of roles, responsibilities, and self-concept within a broader social context (Sachs, 2005). This identity formation begins during pre-service teacher training programs, where future educators start negotiating and redefining their professional identities (Cheng, 2021; Nickel & Zimmer, 2019). Teacher education programs serve as critical spaces for this process, as they introduce professional values and practices that shape pre-service teachers' sense of belonging and commitment to the teaching profession (Banegas, 2022; Sachs, 2005). Research has shown that pre-service teachers often begin training with preconceived notions of the teaching profession, shaped by prior experiences and societal expectations (Friesen & Besley, 2013). These preconceptions may either align with or contrast with the pedagogical frameworks introduced during training, leading to a dynamic negotiation of professional identity (Cheng, 2021; Sachs, 2005). Structured experiences within teacher education programs can, therefore, either reinforce or transform these initial beliefs (Nickel & Zimmer, 2019), emphasizing the importance of fostering strong professional identities to promote positive

attitudes toward teaching (Zhao & Zhang, 2017). However, despite extensive research on TPI development, the specific elements of teacher education programs that shape this process remained underexplored, especially in relation to the influences of gender and identity statuses.

Gender and Teacher Professional Identity

Gender is a significant factor in shaping pre-service teachers' professional identity. In language education, for example, research has revealed the complexities of this relationship. Dilek and Altas (2022) found a nuanced interaction between gender, professional identity, and teacher autonomy, suggesting that gender shaped professional agency in distinct ways. Similarly, Perez-Gracia et al. (2022) highlighted differing perceptions of professional identity between male and female pre-service teachers, pointing to gendered perspectives on teacher training aspects such as new methodologies and practice placement duration. These findings indicate a need for gender-sensitive teacher education curricula that acknowledge these differing experiences and perceptions. Ningrum et al. (2024) identified a gender disparity in English proficiency, with females often outperforming males, while Tran and Dee (2023) reported that in religious institutions, gender was not a significant factor in shaping professional identity. Taken together, these studies revealed that while gender can influence professional identity, this influence is both complex and context-dependent. This study builds on these insights by examining how gender interacts with identity statuses, potentially comprehensively influencing professional identity construction. Understanding this intersection could inform inclusive teacher training programs that foster professional identity development in all pre-service teachers.

Identity Statuses and Professional Identity Formation Amongst PSETs

Marcia's (1980) Identity Development Theory, an extension of Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, provides a robust framework for understanding professional identity formation among pre-service English language teachers (PSETs). Marcia proposed that identity development is a process of exploration and commitment, marked by four statuses: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement (Lile, 2013). The four identity statuses each represent distinct approaches to professional identity development. In the diffusion status, individuals display minimal exploration or commitment to specific professional values, indicating a need for clear direction. Foreclosure involves a firm commitment without prior exploration, often shaped by conformity to external expectations rather than personal choice. In the moratorium status, individuals actively explore diverse options but have yet to make definitive choices, marking a transitional phase in professional identity formation. Finally, achievement represents a high level of both exploration and commitment, leading to a clear and well-defined professional identity. These identity statuses serve as a lens through which PSETs' professional identity formation can be analyzed, as each status reflects distinct levels of self-exploration and commitment. Crowe and McGarr (2022) similarly argued that these identity statuses are central to how PSETs negotiate their professional roles. These identity statuses are instrumental in understanding how PSETs integrate their preconceived ideas about teaching with the realities encountered during teacher education. This ongoing negotiation involves re-evaluating personal values, teaching philosophies, and professional aspirations shaped by educational experiences and career demands. Marcia's framework is particularly relevant for this study, as it enables an analysis of how pre-service teachers' exploration and commitment levels, influenced by identity statuses, influenced their professional identity trajectories.

Framework of the Study

Research on gender and identity statuses in shaping teacher professional identity has established the significance of each factor individually; however, the intersectionality of these two factors remains underexplored. Studies such as Pérez-Gracia et al. (2022) and Wang et al. (2018) suggest that female pre-service teachers often exhibit stronger professional identities attributed to socio-cultural norms and expectations that shape gendered views of teaching. Likewise, pre-service teachers who achieve a stable identity status, marked by high levels of exploration and commitment, tend to demonstrate stronger professional identities, characterized by a clear understanding of their roles and a commitment to teaching. This study sought to extend this body of knowledge by examining the interaction between gender and identity statuses and how these intersecting factors shaped professional identity construction among PSETs. The conceptual framework posits that gender and identity statuses independently and interactively influence professional identity. By exploring this intersection, the study aimed to reveal unique pathways through which male and female PSETs navigate their identity development, providing a comprehensive understanding that could better inform the design of teacher education programs.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical foundation and the review of prior studies, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H_1: Gender significantly influences the professional identity of pre-service EFL teachers.

H_2: Identity statuses significantly influence the professional identity of pre-service EFL teachers.

H_3: The influence of identity statuses on professional identity significantly differs across genders.

2. Method

Design

The present study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design. This design is suitably chosen when a study requires testing hypotheses, measuring differences or effects, similar to the nature of the present study which is to examine the influence of gender, identity statuses, and the interaction of the these two aspects on pre-service EFL teachers' professional identity.

Participants

The target population consisted of 93 third-year pre-service English teachers enrolled in an English language teacher education program in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Limiting the study to third-year students provided consistency in participants' academic progression and exposure to the teacher education program, critical factors in identity development. A representative sample of 90 respondents ($N = 90$) was selected using a random sampling technique, yielding a gender distribution of 25 males (27.8%) and 65 females (72.2%), as shown in Table 1. The sample size aligns with Cohen et al. (2007), which recommends 86 participants for a population of 100 with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. This sample size enhances the study's statistical power and reliability.

Table 1 Frequency on gender

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	**Male**	25	27.8	27.8	27.8
	Female	65	72.2	72.2	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Instruments

The Teacher Professional Identity Scale, initially developed by Wong and Liu (2022), was modified for this study to assess professional identity among PSETs. The instrument contains 18 items categorized into three dimensions: teacher self-efficacy (nine items), commitment to teaching (four items), and professional orientation (five items), each rated on a five-point Likert scale. To enhance cultural relevance, the TPIS was translated into Indonesian by a professional translator, with modifications to specific wording to ensure contextual appropriateness. The translated TPIS was validated by two experts in teacher identity and one expert in teacher professional development. Revisions based on feedback were incorporated without removing any items. A pilot test with 21 PSETs confirmed the reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.906) and validity (significance level < 0.05; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = 0.502, significance level = 0.000) of the modified TPIS, indicating suitability for use in the Indonesian context.

A self-developed single-item measure was added based on Marcia's (1980) Identity Statuses Framework to classify participants' identity statuses. This item asked respondents to select the option that best described their current stance toward the teaching profession: (1) lack of active exploration (identity diffusion), (2) commitment without prior exploration (identity foreclosure), (3) active exploration without commitment (identity moratorium), or (4) active exploration with solid commitment (identity achievement). This item underwent expert validation by two external validators (an expert in English language education and a professional statistician) to ensure alignment with Marcia's framework and appropriateness for statistical analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection, conducted from December 2023 to January 2024, proceeded in several stages. With permission from relevant teacher educators during lecture hours, the first author visited classes to provide background information about the study, clarify participation expectations, and address any questions. Following this briefing, a link to the online survey was distributed to students willing to participate. The survey began with an informed consent form, allowing participants to confirm their

willingness to partake in the study. This approach helped maintain ethical standards while minimizing any perceived influence from teacher educators.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a two-way Analysis of Variance to examine the effects of gender and identity statuses on PSETs' professional identities and the interaction between these variables. The two-way ANOVA was selected for its effectiveness in comparing means across multiple groups and detecting interaction effects. Before conducting the analysis, assumptions for ANOVA (normality, homogeneity of variance, and independence of observations) were tested to ensure the validity of the results. This method allowed for a robust examination of both independent and interaction effects, strengthening the study's capacity to identify how gender and identity statuses uniquely and interactively influence professional identity formation in PSETs.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Descriptive results: Trends of the participants' identity statuses

The descriptive analysis of identity statuses among the PSETs revealed that the majority were classified as being in the identity diffusion status (40%), followed by those in moratorium (31.1%), foreclosure (25.6%), and a small minority in identity achievement (3.3%). These findings (see Table 2) indicate that most PSETs had not yet committed to pursuing a teaching career or engaged in active exploration of the teaching profession. The high proportions of identity diffusion and moratorium suggest a lack of definitive professional commitment, potentially due to the complex nature of the teaching profession and the early stage of career development among PSETs.

Table 2 Classifications of the PSETs' identity statuses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Identity Diffusion**	36	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Foreclosure	23	25.6	25.6	65.6
	Moratorium	28	31.1	31.1	96.7
	Identity Achievement	3	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

The hypotheses testing and ANOVA results

A homogeneity test of variances yielded an F-value of 1.809 and a significance level of 0.107 ($p > 0.05$), confirming that variances across identity status and gender groups were homogeneous. This result supports the reliability of the subsequent two-way ANOVA analysis. Subsequently, a two-way ANOVA was performed to examine the main effects of gender and identity statuses and the interaction effect of these variables on the professional identity levels of PSETs. Table 3 presents the ANOVA results, including F-values, significance levels, and effect sizes (partial eta squared) for each hypothesis.

Table 3 The result of the two-way ANOVA test

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model		2.348[a]	6	.391	2.371	.037	.146
Intercept		568.216	1	568.216	3442.473	.000	.976
Gender		.157	1	.157	.950	.333	.011
Identity_Statuses		1.541	3	.514	3.113	.031	.101
Gender * Identity_Statuses		.191	2	.095	.578	.563	.014
Error		13.700	83	.165			
Total		1267.546	90				
Corrected Total		16.048	89				

The analysis revealed that gender did not significantly affect PSETs' professional identity (F = 0.950, p = 0.333, p > 0.05). This finding indicates no substantial differences in professional identity levels between male and female PSETs. A lack of gender-based influence might be attributed to cultural or institutional factors within the Indonesian education context, where gender roles may exert a minimal influence on professional identity development among early-career teachers. This finding suggests that

other factors, such as teaching experiences and educational support systems, might play a more pivotal role than gender in shaping professional identity.

Significant differences in professional identity levels were found across identity status groups (F = 3.113, p = 0.031, p < 0.05). The effect size for this finding was moderate (partial eta squared = 0.10), suggesting that identity status significantly influences professional identity. These results imply that identity statuses such as identity diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity achievement may correspond to diverse levels of professional identity, with individuals in higher exploration and commitment statuses potentially experiencing a stronger sense of professional identity.

The interaction effect between gender and identity statuses on professional identity levels was not significant (F = 0.578, p = 0.563, p > 0.05), as shown in Table 3. It suggests that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between identity status and professional identity among PSETs. The absence of an interaction effect may indicate that identity statuses independently influence professional identity, regardless of gender.

To further explore the significant main effect of identity statuses, a post-hoc Tukey HSD test was conducted, examining differences between identity status groups (see Table 4). The results showed a significant difference in professional identity levels between the Identity Diffusion and Identity Achievement groups (p = 0.022; p < 0.05), suggesting that PSETs with identity achievement exhibit significantly higher levels of professional identity than those with identity diffusion. This finding highlights the importance of active exploration and commitment to the teaching profession to achieve a strong professional identity.

Table 4 The posthoc test result across identity statuses

(I) Identity Statuses	(J) Identity Statuses	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Interval Lower Bound	Confidence Upper Bound
Identity Diffusion	Foreclosure	-.19592	.10861	.279	-.4805	.0886
	Moratorium	-.18100	.10252	.297	-.4496	.0876
	Identity Achievement	-.71605*	.24450	.022	-1.3566	-.0755
Foreclosure	Identity Diffusion	.19592	.10861	.279	-.0886	.4805
	Moratorium	.01492	.11450	.999	-.2851	.3149
	Identity Achievement	-.52013	.24976	.167	-1.1745	.1342
Moratorium	Identity Diffusion	.18100	.10252	.297	-.0876	.4496
	Foreclosure	-.01492	.11450	.999	-.3149	.2851
	Identity Achievement	-.53505	.24717	.141	-1.1826	.1125
Identity Achievement	Identity Diffusion	.71605*	.24450	.022	.0755	1.3566
	Foreclosure	.52013	.24976	.167	-.1342	1.1745
	Moratorium	.53505	.24717	.141	-.1125	1.1826

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to a growing body of literature on the complex relationship between gender, identity statuses, and professional identity among pre-service EFL language teachers. While prior studies have explored the isolated influences of gender and identity statuses on teachers' professional identity, this study investigates their interaction within a specific educational context, thus addressing a significant gap in existing scholarship. The results revealed new insights into the formation of professional identity and provided practical recommendations for teacher education programs.

The findings suggest that most PSETs were in a state of identity diffusion, reflecting a lack of commitment and exploration in their development as teachers despite their enrolment in a teacher education program. This result aligns with Asayesh and Vakili (2020), who similarly observed that

many adolescents remained in a state of identity diffusion, suggesting a broader reluctance to embrace the teaching profession. The prevalence of identity diffusion may be attributed to a combination of factors, such as the lack of personal engagement with the teaching role or a mismatch between PSETs' expectations and the realities of the profession. This gap highlights the need for teacher education programs to prioritize the development of PSETs' identity exploration and commitment. Moreover, the study found that PSETs with achieved identity status, characterized by a combination of extensive exploration and firm commitment to the profession, demonstrated significantly stronger professional identities. It aligns with Marcia's (1966, 1980) Identity Statuses framework, which posits that professional identity development occurs through exploration and commitment. These findings emphasize the need for teacher preparation programs to facilitate opportunities for PSETs to engage in reflective practices, mentoring, and experiences that challenge their existing perceptions of the profession. Specifically, fostering identity achievement could enhance PSETs' perceived value of teaching, as Zhao and Zhang (2017) suggested, and contribute to long-term commitment to the teaching profession. Teacher education programs should implement interventions such as guided reflective exercises, career counseling, and peer collaboration to promote this process and better equip PSETs for future roles.

Contrary to the initial assumptions and existing literature, this study found no significant influence of gender on PSETs' professional identity. This unexpected finding suggests that male and female PSETs construct their professional identities similarly throughout their training, irrespective of gender. This lack of gender differentiation in professional identity development raises important questions about the role of gender in shaping professional identities in education. One possible explanation for this homogeneity lies in the context of the study itself. The sample consisted primarily of third-year students with limited firsthand teaching practice experiences, and the teacher education program was inherently gender-neutral in its approach. These factors may have minimized gender-related differences in the development of professional identity. Additionally, the absence of significant gender influence could reflect the increasing shift in educational contexts towards more equitable and inclusive environments, where the role of gender may be less salient in professional identity construction. Previous research (Pérez-Gracia et al., 2022; Qin & Liu, 2023; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022; Wang et al., 2018) has suggested more pronounced gender differences in professional identity development. The discrepancy between this study and earlier findings may be due to differences in demographic characteristics, educational settings, or research methodologies. This study's cross-sectional design, which focused on pre-service teachers at a specific stage of their training, might have overlooked potential gender differences that could become more apparent at later stages of professional development. Longitudinal studies tracking professional identity over time could provide deeper insights into the role of gender in shaping teachers' professional identities as they gain more experience in the field.

This study also examined the interaction effect of gender and identity statuses on PSETs' professional identity. However, no significant interaction was found between these two variables. This result reinforces the theoretical perspective that identity development is primarily driven by personal exploration and commitment rather than demographic factors such as gender. As Marcia (1966, 1980) suggests, forming a professional identity is grounded in self-reflection and commitment to a chosen career path, with less emphasis on external characteristics like gender. The lack of a significant interaction effect between gender and identity statuses underscores the complexity of professional identity construction. Theoretical models of identity development, such as those proposed by Marcia, emphasize the importance of internal processes over demographic influences. This finding has important implications for teacher education programs, which should promote identity exploration and commitment in a way that transcends demographic characteristics. Educators could benefit from interventions that emphasize self-reflection, the development of pedagogical beliefs, and engagement with diverse teaching practices. Practical applications of this finding include incorporating reflective practices, mentoring, and field-based teaching experiences into teacher education curricula. These activities allow PSETs to engage with real-world teaching scenarios, apply theoretical knowledge in practice, and ultimately define themselves as educators. Previous studies (Kaymakamoğlu, 2019; Shand, 2023) emphasized the importance of mentor feedback, which supports the development of both professional identity and teaching competencies. Equally important, pre-service teachers should be able

to apply theoretical and pedagogical knowledge within practical experiences (Borg, 2019), eventually allowing them to define themselves as future educators (Macías Villegas et al., 2020). By fostering a reflective approach to teaching and providing opportunities for meaningful mentor-mentee interactions and practical teaching experiences, teacher preparation programs can support PSETs in developing a strong professional identity grounded in personal commitment and pedagogical growth.

4. Conclusion, Limitations, Future Directions

This study highlights the significant role of identity statuses, particularly identity exploration and commitment, in shaping the professional identity of pre-service EFL teachers. Contrary to prior assumptions, gender did not significantly influence the formation of PSETs' professional identity, suggesting that developmental factors, such as personal engagement in identity exploration, played a more pivotal role than demographic variables. This finding challenged existing theories that emphasize the importance of gender in professional identity construction, inviting a reconsideration of the factors that drive identity development in pre-service teachers. The results of this study offer important practical implications for teacher education programs. Specifically, teacher educators should prioritize creating environments that encourage identity exploration and foster commitment to the teaching profession. It could be achieved through project-based learning method (Tambak et al., 2023), or experiential learning opportunities such as reflective practices, collaborative learning activities, and mentorship programs, which help PSETs critically examine their evolving professional identities. By emphasizing these aspects in curriculum design, teacher education programs can strengthen PSETs' professional identity and equip them with the resilience and adaptability needed to navigate the complexities of the teaching profession, particularly in English language teaching contexts.

While this study offers valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The sample was drawn from a single institution, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The professional identity development of PSETs may differ across regions, educational contexts, and cultural settings, which necessitates the replication of this study in more diverse settings to confirm the broader applicability of the findings. Moreover, the study's cross-sectional nature restricts the ability to observe changes in professional identity over time. A longitudinal study would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how identity statuses and professional identity evolve throughout teacher preparation and early career teaching. Additionally, future research could benefit from using mixed methods approaches, combining self-reported data with qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. It would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how identity statuses interact with other factors, such as cultural background, socioeconomic status, and prior life experiences—in shaping professional identity. Examining these variables and teacher education programs' role in facilitating identity development could provide valuable insights into best supporting pre-service teachers in becoming resilient, reflective, and effective educators.

This study concludes by emphasizing that teacher education programs should emphasize facilitating identity exploration and commitment among PSETs, especially in the early stages of their training. By addressing these aspects, teacher educators can help cultivate stronger professional identities, leading to more effective and committed educators prepared to face the challenges of teaching in a dynamic and evolving educational landscape.

5. Acknowledgment

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