CONCEPTUALIZING THE UNDERSTANDING OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN TEACHER'S CAREER

Ilze Mikelsone, Associated Prof., Dr.paed.
Liepaja University, Latvia
Indra Odina, Associated Prof., Dr.paed.
Ligita Grigule, Lecturer, Mag. paed.
University of Latvia, Latvia

Abstract

The article deals with the research designed as the Grounded Theoryto explore and conceptualize the practising teachers' perception of their professional identity. The practising teachers – master students of the professional master study programme „Teacher" study module "Education for Well-being and Cohesion" taking the course „Educator's Professional Identity and Pedagogic Mastery" were chosen to help to formulate the theory. Analogies (metaphors) and narrative essays have been used as the techniques for identifying concepts. Making associations, brainstorming, coding, making concepts, conceptual sorting in categories, memoing and outlining theories was the procedure how teachers conceptualized the various elements used to construct professional identity.Word frequency list and key-word-in-context list techniques were used to carry out computer-aided content analysis and represented by the help of Wordle.net – the tool for generating "word clouds" from text that is provided.

The outcome of this research is the content of teachers' professional identity discussed and analysed in the light of various theories and in close link with the concepts of "professional career", "personality development", "career" and "self-concept". Based on the keywords provided by teachers, the teacher's professional identity structure consisting of 4 components: professional "self-concept", harmony of professional identity, successful self-determination and creative professional activity was elaborated by adding criteria notions, as well as the content analyses of teachers' narratives was used to identify professional identity development statuses.

Keywords: Professional identity, teacher's career, self-concept,self-determination, professional competence

Introduction

Today with the growth of inter-related environmental, economic, social and political problems, there is need for more responsible citizens. Education is essential pre-condition to make wise choices and work responsibly, creating good conditions for social, economic and environmental sustainability both locally and globally. This determines the need for a holistic view of education and interdisciplinary approach and new requirements for teacher education focusing on the aspects of teacher's professional identity and life-long learning, for the growth of the teacher as a holistic personality.

Referring to the latest guidelines and approaches in education and according to the requirements of the labour market, Professional Master's Study Programme 'Teacher' has been accredited in the University of Latvia.The Programme ensures professional Master degree studies in teacher education that are directed to personal well-being and coherent

development of society encouraging the development of both interdisciplinary pedagogical competence and sustainable development oriented pedagogical and research activity and providing an opportunity to obtain one of the 33 subject teacher's qualifications.

The Master's module (60 ECTS) comprises the courses: *Sustainable Cultural Environment of Education, Holistic Development of Personality in Education Practice, Educator's Professional Identity and Pedagogic Mastery, Education Research for Local and Global Changes, Didactic Approaches in Education Practice, Practice in Research and Development of Master's Thesis.*

In relation to the conceptualization of one's professional identity, the aims of the Programme particularly stress that completing the course, the students will be able: to demonstrate skill of examining features of development of holistic personality and clearly and convincingly communicating information taking into consideration peculiarities of the target audience; to evaluate one's professional competence, planning and directing self-education towards harmonised development of the society.

The students are offered learning assignments for the development of convergent and divergent thinking skills, bilingual studies, formal, non-formal and informal learning processes, the practice in the context of the local community and global education. Innovative approaches to programme monitoring and evaluation of the personal significance are searched for. Master studies are oriented towardscross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary teaching activities and relate to personality development andprofessional career.

Professional Identity in Teacher's Career

The professional identity of a teacher is discussedand analysed in the light of varioustheories – personality and work environment type theory (person – environment fit) (Holland, 1985; 1997), professional self-concept theory or career anchor theory (Schein, 1993), career development theories (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, Herma, 1951., Super, 1957, Buller, 1965), profession psychology theories ("*психологияпрофессий, психологиятруда"*:Толочек, 2005, Зеер, 2006, Пряжников, Пряжникова, 2001, Романов, 1983, Кибанов,2007), acmeology theories (Вишнякова,1998), etc.

In general, it is recognized that analysis of professional identity is based on the understanding of person's professional and individual growth throughout life *("life career")* (Patton, McMahon, 1997), comprehensive and dynamic development in the main spheres of life (work, family, leisure) (Sharf, 2006), as well as on understanding of human social activity (Wolfe, Kolb, 1980) and efforts for achieving a condition in which it is possible to satisfy the personal needs, correlations of personal and professional development and reach a sense of life success (Lāce, Miķelsone,2012; Толочек, 2005; Пряжников, Пряжникова, 2001). Thus, analysing the concept of professional identity, there should be a close link between the concepts of "professional career" and "personality development" (Wolfe, Kolb, 1980; Толочек, 2005), as well as "career" and "self-concept" (Schein, 1996; Callanan, 2003;Зеер, 2006).

The concept "career" is defined asdeliberateand successfulprogression atwork orother activityspheres whereachievementis possible.Careeris a sequence of varioussocially significanthumanroles related to the individual's work, studies, self-expressionandleisure activities (Miķelsone, 2008). Career can be understood in a narrower and broader sense. In its narrower sense career is a professional growth, which can take place both vertically and horizontally ensuring the individual's professional competence development. In career development the need of self-realization and the need to be recognized by society are emphasized. On the other hand, in its broader sense career is associated with the human life as whole and with the life success in general. In this perspective, any professional activity that creates feelings of frustration, interferes with individual's harmoniouspersonallifeor

createsa senseof failure cannot be considered as a successful career. In the broader sense career can be described as progressive development of the basic human life spheres – family, work, leisure, but in the narrower sense – life dynamism and professional activity. Thus, the career is not only a progression or development, but more a successful progression or development. So far the teacher's sense of self and his/her need for personal development is not researched sufficiently as a condition of personal career. A teacher, who does not feel personal satisfaction about his/her life in general, who does not feel the impact of professional growth as part of his/her life perfection, also loses optimism and zest in professional activities. Therefore, subjective achievements of one's career are very significant as they make a person a lot more responsible for his/her career development (Hall, 1996).

From a subjective point of view, the individual's perception of a successful career is formed by inner standards, perceptions about satisfaction and social networking achievements (Ballout, 2007). Hall (1996) emphasizes that the ultimate goal of one's career is a psychological success, in other words, feelings of pride and personal achievements (inner peace, happy family, etc.), which is formed through reaching the most important goals of one's life. But vertical or objective career achievements are at the basis of out-dated understanding of career, where the goal is a vertical climbing up the career ladder within organizational hierarchy together with the increase of salary. Hall (1996) stresses the importance of psychological achievements suggesting that there are very many ways of reaching them and that they depend only on the unique needs of each individual, while vertical and objective career achievements can be reached only by moving up the ranks of organizational hierarchy.

Career is a subjective opinion of a person about his or her professional future and expected self-expression possibilities; it is individually acknowledged behaviour and attitudes (based on understanding of personal values), which is grounded in the professional and life experience.

Career guidance is a subjective activity that can be viewed from the person's perspective at one's own activities. Career development is influenced by person's subjective evaluation (self-evaluation) of personal career development and different career stages, and emotional feelings that come as the result of this evaluation.

Developing one's career, the individual perfects his/her professional self-concept, which includes the answers to the following questions:
- ✓ What are the spheres of my abilities, skills and competences?
- ✓ What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- ✓ What are my main motives of live, my needs, desires and goals?
- ✓ What do I want or do not want and why (because I have never desired it, or because I have reached a certain level of understanding and therefore I do not want it)?
- ✓ What are my values (the main criteria by which I judge things I do)?
- ✓ Do I work in organization that meets my values?
- ✓ How good do I feel about what I do?
- ✓ How proud or ashamed am I about my work and career? (Schein, 1993).

Motives, values and talents are gradually merging in a professional "self-concept" and they form understanding of 'who I am', 'who I am not', and 'who I would like to be'. Thus, progressive awareness about one's own development and formation of independent planning, implementation and adjustment, as well as readiness to analyse oneself in time and find personally significant meaning in a particular professional activity can be considered as the goal of professional development and professional self-realization (Schein, 1993, Пряжников, 1996), which also defines and forms a professional identity of a person.

Similarly, Callanan(2003) also states that, first of all, a key to a successful professional activity is explicit self-identity development, then setting the career goals, and finally – the choice of the career strategy, which must be in compliance with this identity.

Professional "self-concept" that is based on regular self-assessment and exploration of the further goals can be considered as the most important element of professional identity (see Figure 1).

Factors influencing the professional self-concept

| Recognized personal abilities, skills and competences | Personal motives, needs and objectives of life | Personal values that are expressed as emotional experience and feelings in professional activity |

Professional self-concept
(Searching and finding the meaning of life)

Professional identity

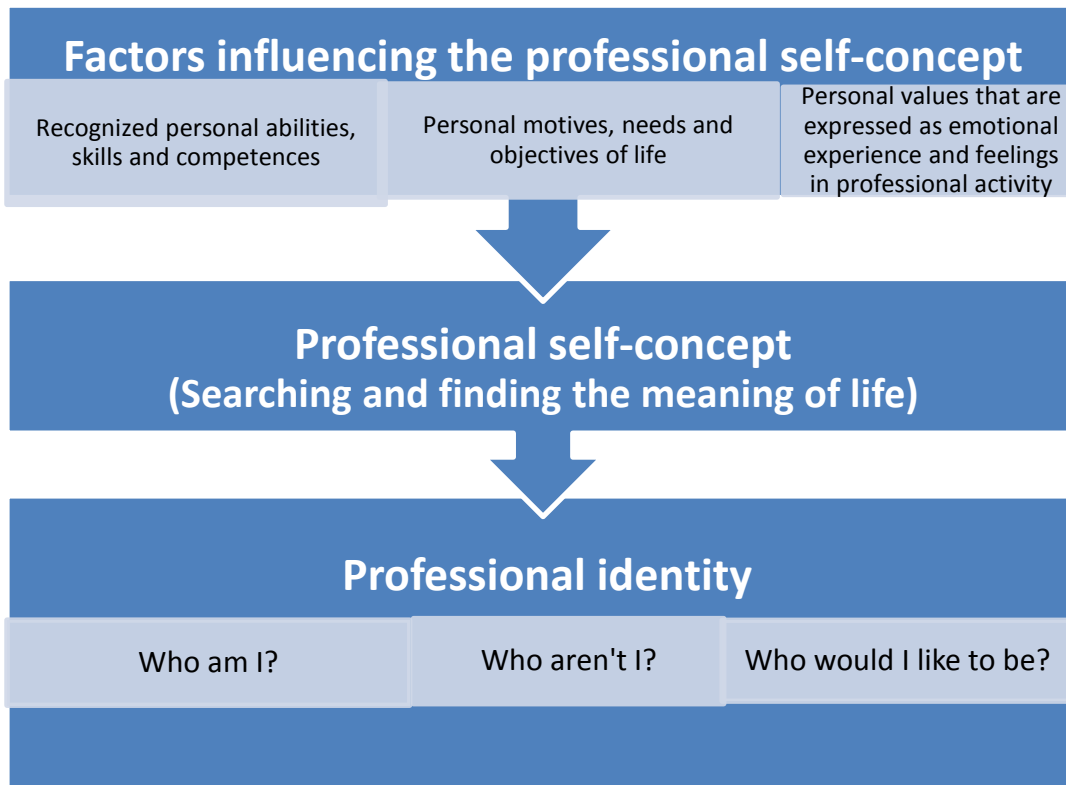| Who am I? | Who aren't I? | Who would I like to be? |

Figure 1. Professional Identity Development.

The understanding of professional identity described in career theories and procedural conditions leads to the following components of the teacher's professional identity (Lāce, Miķelsone, 2012): professional self-concept; harmony of professional identity (merging with personal identity); successful self-determination and innovative professional activity.

Research Methodology and Data

The research was designed as the **Grounded Theory** (originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s) to form inductively concluded theory on research phenomenon – practising teachers' perception of their professional identity. The aim of the research was to explore new relationships to be used as a theory in other studies and in life. The expected outcome was to develop theory about phenomenon of interest – the theory that is entirely dependent on the research sample perspective, attitudes, values, positions, privileges, geographical position, etc. Scott (2013) compares the Grounded Theory to a research tool which enables one to seek out and conceptualize patterns and structures „through the process of constant comparison. (A bit like being the x-ray machine of the social world?)"http://www.groundedtheoryonline.com/what-is-grounded-theory.

The sampling of the study was purposive – theoretical – practising teachers – master students of the professional master study programme „Teacher" study module "Education for Well-being and Cohesion" taking the course „Educator's Professional Identity and Pedagogic Mastery" were chosen to help to formulate the theory. 24 respondents involved in exploring

and shaping their own understanding of teacher's professional identity wereof different age and aimed to advance in their careers both horizontally and vertically. Therefore, the participants of this research were not differentiated by age groups, but all characteristics of adult life stages were respected and analysed.

The research began with raising generative questions which helped to guide the research, but they were not intended to be static:

What is the teacher's professional identity?
How do teachers define and perceive their identity?
How do teachers evaluate their professional identity?

The data were collected by analogies (metaphors) and narrative essays.

Analogy is a cognitive process of transferring information or meaning from a particular subject (the analogue or source) to another particular subject (the target), or a linguistic expression corresponding to such a process. It plays a significant role in problem solving such as, decision making, perception, memory, creativity, emotion, explanation and communication. Analogy can be expressed by metaphor. People often represent their thoughts, behaviours and experiences with metaphors, as metaphors are rich, data-reducing and pattern-making devices which help to connect data with theory. For this research metaphor of the elephant was used as a tool to find out how teachers conceptualized the various elements used to construct professional identity.

Metaphors, as Lakoff and Johnsen (1980:5) explain, are a vehicle for "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. … a fundamental mechanism of mind.… a fundamental scheme by which people conceptualize the world and their own activities".Metaphor allows to use what is known about one's physical and social experience to provide understanding of countless other subjects.It does not necessarily correspond to what is happening in the observable physical world, but is every bit as "real" because people take it for granted, act upon it and often can't conceive of alternative way of viewing things.

According to Ortony (1975) and Osborn (2009), metaphors can serve a variety of functions, their pedagogic value … : the compactness, the inexpressibility and the vividness: they can reduce overload in mental storage of units of knowledge, thereby facilitating discourse; they can express our experiences in rich and vivid language, which fosters a communicative and/or explanatory role of metaphor;they can spark creativity; they can underpin the cognitive function of conceptualizing — namely, generating or understanding concepts — by giving the concept a familiar and compact terminological framework, obviating the need for a more elaborate, intricate, convoluted, or elusive language in order to express the concept more concretely.

So it was decided to explore the extent to which—and how—teachers engaged in various forms of professional work might define and perceive their professional identity. Expected outcome –to get keywords of professional identity, raise teachers' self-awareness of their professional identity. To begin data gathering, core theoretical concept(s) were identified. Tentative linkages were developed between the theoretical core concepts and the data. Initially there was used open coding, considering the data in minute detail while developing some initial categories. Later, there was a move to more selective coding – systematically coding with respect to a core concept.

The procedure involved: making associations, brainstorming, coding, making concepts, conceptual sorting in categories, memoing and outlining theories. In the beginning, the participants were asked to share their associations with the elephant. In order to minimize pre-conceptions, the brainstorming: *what they associated with the parts of the body of the elephant: the trunk, the ears, the tail, legs, tusks etc.,* took place. Afterwards, the respondents worked in groups of 3 and they compared the teacher's professional identity to elephant, by filling up the shape/ model of elephant with the content that to their mind corresponded to

teacher's professional identity. Later on the groups compared their understanding as to what they had put in separate parts of elephant's body, 20 in total: the mouth, belly, internal organs, heart, stomach, forehead, lungs, backbone, head, brains, eyes, teeth, tusks, tail, trunk, ears, legs, skin. Together the participants came up with 130 notions that teacher's professional identity contained, every group proposing on average 16 terms, from minimum 10 per group to maximum 27 terms. The terms were shared concerning the previously discussed parts of elephant's body and computer-aided content analysis was carried out.

"Content analysis involves categorizing information and then comparing the frequency of occurrence of different categories" (Robson 2013: 523). In addition to deciding on categories, a recording unit as an individual word had been selected. Word frequency list technique for coding the text wasused to carry out computer-aided content analysis. "Word frequency list provides lists of words in the document, ordered according to the number of times that they appear; together with the frequencies themselves"(Robson 1999: 281). The content of teachers' professional identity theory was depicted by the help of **Wordle.net** – the tool for generating "word clouds" from text that is provided. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. For example, the prevailing notions in teachers'cloud (Figure 2) were *knowledge, skills, professional, sense, listen, belonging, stability, responsibility, ability, new*.

Figure 2. Respondents' Understanding of Teacher's Professional Identity.

During the process of verification and summary, the effort was made to evolve toward core categories. From these 130 terms 14 items had been selected as new, not found in the theory: *sense of belonging (belly), emotional resilience (skin), sense of security (the tusks), love for people (heart), humour (legs), added value (trunk), cooperation (the tail), tolerance (the mouth), flexibility (stomach), positivism (bottom), diversity (lungs), individuality (backbone), professional sense (backbone), attitude (the mouth and belly)*.

Memoing was the next stage – a process for recording the thoughts and ideas as they evolved throughout the study. Starting with extensive marginal notes and comments and later on they tended to increasingly focus in on the core concept.

Finally the teachers were asked to evaluate their professional identity using the terms by their choice from the list of 130 terms. The format of the evaluation was narrative essay. On the whole 172 pages of narratives were received and analysed. From the new descriptors – keywords proposed by teachers in describing teacher's professional identity, the most mentioned in the narratives was cooperation in 40 cases, attitude and sense of security in 24 cases, tolerance – 10, added value and love – 8, sense of belonging – 7, diversity, flexibility – 6, emotional resilience and humour mentioned in 5 cases.

Based on teachers' keywords, the teacher's professional identity structureconsisting of 4 components: professional "self-concept", harmony of professional identity, successful self-

determination and innovative professional activity (Lāce, Miķelsone, 2012) was elaborated by addingnew notions to criteria (Table1). In the content analysis of teachers' narrative essays, the individual word had been used, as well as paragraphs or whole items had been used as the recording unit.Key-word-in-context (KWIC) list wasused to carry out computer-aided content analysis.

Table 1. Teacher's Professional Identity Structure, Its Criteria (based on Lāce, Miķelsone, 2012)and notions added by teachers.

Component and criteria	Teachers' narratives	Notions added by teachers
Professional "self-concept":understanding the personality; finding personally significant meaning in professional activity; professional ambitions	*I put self-exploration as the second most important, because one should be self-critical towards oneself (Respondent 2).* *Teachers' professional mastery consists of the knowledge, skills, attitudes developed through the accumulation of professional experience during work, observing ethics and morality, and the quality of their work (R24).* *It allows to search and find answers to the questions – what belongs to you; what you know; who you know; who you are (R 7).* *I possess the experience, contacts and skills in journalism, not the majority of teachers have, this is useful to get along at school, planning lessons, organizing after school events and cooperating in local community (R2).* *Evaluating my personal identity, I can say that I am aware of myself, I have clear idea who I am and what I should not look for in myself. I am aware of my goals in life. With regard to myself I am both critical and demanding, but I love myself (R4).* *I do forget about myself, I get lost into consultations, negotiations with colleagues and students. ...I have a light and good feeling (R20).*	Tolerance Positivism Individuality Professional sense
Harmony of professional identity (merging with personal identity): individual satisfaction; all achievements in life (work, family, leisure), life success	*I understand and am understood, so I have a sense of belonging. I am a patriot of my school (R2).* *Yes, I feel I belong to this time and this place (R3).* *It is very important to schedule time for myself, so I can read, go to theatre, concerts, attend exhibitions, engage in crafts, explore the world and even write the lyrics. It is equally important to talk about this with children, to share experience enriching each other (R10).* *I'm curious. I am definitely interested in everything that takes place in the education system. There may be times it is not at all related to my direct duties. But I am somehow lucky to find the information even without looking for it specifically. ... my colleagues often come to me with a variety of issues "If you do not know something, go to XX, she definitely knows." Of course, there is no way that I know everything. Not at all. But I never refuse to help, and then we are looking for the answer together (R3).* *Another issue could be the mastery of aligning work life with private, in order it is acceptable for my family. I am fortunate to have family members of creative professions and at the same time teachers (R15).*	Sense of belongingEmotional resilience Sense of security
Successful self-determinationsocial activities of an individual; series of career decisions(purposeful dynamics); self-confidence and desire to demonstrate the results of activities;	*Positive cooperation needs dialogue, hearing and accepting wishes (R9).* *My teaching should be improved by a methodological diversity, I lack diversity in teaching and miss alternative approaches to problem solving (R5).* *My attitude towards students is the first condition in students'successful acquisition of the study content (R20).*	Love for people Attitude Cooperation Diversity

| awareness of future perspectives; dividing strength for whole life | *Sometimes this abandonment leads to an incredible exhaustion and the loss of surrounding world, but then I am glad that I have friends and dance, where to forget about everything in a completely different way (R20).*

One is, how I myself evaluate my career, how it is influenced by my values, challenges, goals, as well as the ability to balance work and personal life. The second – what is the economic situation, the success criteria. In addition, the success criteria do not always determine job satisfaction (R3).

The meaning of teacher's life is to make the world a better place, but the world –arewe – all people (R14).

It would be useful to engage in the exchange of experience in order to improve my professional activities (R19).

I have to improve my skills of working with students in conflict situations. There are often such cases of a conflict (even small conflicts), where I get confused, because I do not know what to do, how to solve it, of course, often I act instinctively, without knowing whether this behaviour is correct. In these situations, I feel very uncomfortable because my students can feel my uncertainty and that can lower my reputation in their eyes. This is a dangerous situation because the students can get disappointed in teacher (R11). | |
| **Innovative professional activity** implemented novelties; creative ideas for future creativity when implementing professional tasks | *… and I will be such teacher as I would like to be (R 18).*

The luggageof my experience will be packed bythe stories of laughter and tears, it will be rich with variety of cultures, open and inviting … (R5). | Humour
Added value
Flexibility |

Discussion

In accordance with the characteristics of age periods proposed by career theories in the aspect of career development (Gibson, Mitchell, 2006; Sharf, 2006; Miķelsone, 2008), three career development stages (Lāce, Miķelsone, 2012) were identified during the process of analysing teachers' narrative essays.

Stage 1 – Exploration. Discovering teacher's profession in correlation with the analysis of one's own needs, interests, abilities and values. In this stage the initial identification with teacher's profession begins to develop. Gradually the needs of professional development are analysed, clarified, setting priorities for further activities. *"My teaching should be improved by a methodological diversity, I lack diversity in teaching and miss alternative approaches to problem solving" (R5).* The exploration takes place in a pilot stage when serious and responsible duties are not yet performed, however, the main task of this stage is to recognize the professional priorities (Super, Thompson, Linderman, 1988). In accordance with identified priorities, it is important for the teachers to develop their own life programme, a plan or scenario setting high objectives, even if that means dropping out of their studies or work if considered as unsuitable. *"I would have to learn to creatively enrich my teaching in both standard and non-standard situations" (R19).* The closest professional objectives are being set on the road to professionalism (Пряжников, Пряжникова, 2001). However, without implementing the real potential, many objectives and plans are left unaccomplished (Buller, 1965).

Therefore, at this stage a substantial task for a teacher is to engage in consciously constructive activities that are based on the assessment of one's own possibilities, limits and

245

evaluation of the real circumstances, as well as recognising the value of the teacher's profession within the general value system of an individual.

Stage 2 – Career awareness. The main characteristics – balanced striving to reach the goals (Buller, 1965). If the expected evaluation is obtained, then more responsible duties are assumed, which is a condition for further development of professional activity (Super, Thompson, Linderman, 1988). The closest and further objectives of the professional career are being established, and the details of career objectives are being clarified (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad,Herma, 1951). This stage is characterized by adequate perceptions of possible difficulties and obstacles, as well as knowledge of one's own skills that would further help to implement the planned activities (Пряжников, Пряжникова, 2001). *"Humour helps to relax, encourage, change any uncertain situation not only in the classroom, but also with colleagues. However, next to the humour is the posture and rigor which among students creates a sense of stability, while makes easier the teacher's work because there are clear rules and boundaries" (R23).*Initial professionalization takes place during the pedagogical practice. It cannot be qualified as unprofessional activity; however, on this level of development it is possible only as qualitative reproductive activity based on the acquired professional exploration stage. Other characteristic features are independence in performing professional duties and assessment of personal features that are significant for the profession (Зеер, 2006). Therefore, when organizing evaluation, a gradual advancement towards independent self-evaluation is necessary facilitating teacher's ability to develop appropriate self-evaluation criteria.

Stage 3 – Development of an individual professional style. An individual professional style gradually develops by integrating educational experience with the initial professional experience (Зеер, 2006). *"The teacher's skill is to be next to, encourage, cheer up and let the child experience the joy of discovering"(R12).*Therefore, in the study process and praxis a teacher is able to propose innovative ideas and search for new challenges. Ambitions are based on already acquired evaluation and real possibilities. The objectives are fewer, and each of them is more thoughtful. "*So in the self-evaluation part of teacher's mastery, focusing on the understanding of self, I want to emphasize the important factors for myself: openness to the new, the importance of knowledge, empathy, ability to listen, to accept, motivate. To be able to do it the teacher needs to be healthy, emotionally resilient, sympathetic, loving, friendly, sincere and respected. I will mention also the intuition, more precisely – professional intuition that is often just as useful as the professional knowledge or skills" (R2).*

This stage is characterized by decision making process, where individuals try to find the optimal balance between one's own readiness for professional activity and its objectives and reality of the work life. There is a possibility for knowledge-based contemplation about other related professions. Practical personal professional development takes place together with a regular adjustment of plans in conformity with the performed self-evaluation (Пряжников, Пряжникова, 2001). Identification with the profession can be observed, as well as flexible professional working style and highly qualified activities (Зеер, 2006).

One more approach to analyseteachers' narratives was to identify professional identity development statuses.

Already Erikson (Eriksons, 1998) suggested that a healthy personality is the one that actively explores the surrounding environment, reveals internal personal integrity and is able to perceive genuinely the world and also oneself. In later research studies on identity development and modifying Erikson's work, it is found that there are four identity development statuses which a person moves through: *diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure, and achievement* (Kroger, Martinussen,Marcia, 2010; Sharf, 2006; Marcia, 1991). These statuses can be measured through interviews or self-report questionnaires, or survey questions and for

the purpose of this research through narrative essays. In order to identify the status of professional identity, Vondracek and Skorikov (1997) suggests simple definitions based on the professional status indicators. Each of these statements is a simple tool for measuring everybody's status (Table 2).

Table 2. Professional Identity Development Statuses and Their Indicators (based on Vondracek, Skorikov, 1997).

Identity development status	Indicator	Narrative / Evidence
Diffusion refers to having few clear ideas of what one wants and not being concerned about the future.	I don't know what I want; what happens, happens.	Not applicable
Moratorium is a time, often more than several months, in which one explores options while wanting a direction, but not having one.	I don't know what I want, but I want to find out.	*I've realized that I do not know who I am. Perhaps it's stated too loud, but I feel like that(R5).* *In private life I sometimes think I do not know myself at all. In order to overcome this I have created a plan that fits perfectly into my journey to the top (R4).*
Foreclosure refers to making a choice, often based on family tradition, without exploring other options.	I know what I want and I follow established paths.	*I'm a woman. I am 49 years old. I am good at interacting with people. I can find common language with children. I have skills in Computer Science. I am able to manage the work of a large database company (large school). I know a lot of new technology applications. But I'm constantly learning and improving myself (R 18).* *I like to learn. It is not easy, but otherwise it is impossible today. I am self-confident, responsible, tolerant, curious. Others think I'm a fun, friendly and polite. My colleagues consider me competent in informatics. And a lot of people address me with questions about computers, computer hardware and software. And I'm trying to help as much as possible(R 18).*
Achievement refers to knowing what one wants and making plans to attain an occupational goal.	I know what I want and have made plans already.	*I am certain that I am where I need to be – atschool. I learn, because I wish to do that, I work with students, because I really like it. And only time and experience together with the regular desire to improve, to learn something new will help me to talk about my growth and my own – personal career (R6).*

Conclusion

During the Grounded Theory research, the practising teachers' perception of their professional identity was explored and conceptualizedby the means of analogies (metaphors) and narrative essays. The prevailing identifying concepts in teachers' metaphors were knowledge, skills, professional, sense, listen, belonging, stability, responsibility, ability, new.

In order to construct professional identity, the theories on "professional career", "personality development", "career" and "self-concept" were subjectively enriched by teachers' conceptualized notions: sense of belonging, emotional resilience, sense of security, love for people, humour, added value, cooperation, tolerance, flexibility, positivism, diversity, individuality, professional sense, attitude.The outcome of this research was the elaborated notions of content criteria of teachers' professional identity structure components: professional "self-concept", harmony of professional identity, successful self-determination and innovative professional activity:

1. Professional self-concept that is characterised by understanding one's own personality, finding personally significant meaning in professional activity and

professional ambitions was enriched by tolerance, positivism, individuality and professional sense;

2. Harmony of professional identity (merging with personal identity), with typical satisfaction of the individual, achievements in various spheres of life (work, family, leisure), and general success of life was complemented bysense of belonging, emotional resilience and the sense of security;

3. Successful self-determination that is expressed through social activities of an individual, making career choices (purposeful dynamics), self-confidence and belief in the future gained love for people, attitude, cooperation and diversity;

4. Innovative professional activity with implemented novelties, creative ideas for future and creativity when implementing professional activities was elaborated by humour, added value, flexibility.

Identifying the respondents' professional identity development statuses, the analysis of teacher's narratives confirms that teacher as a profession is a conscious choice characterized by professional identity moratorium, foreclosure and achievement statuses. Mostly respondents' entries in narratives revealed the current status of Master studies – looking for new directions (moratorium) and making informed choices (foreclosure). There were no respondents not being concerned about the future (diffusion) and only 3 revealed the characteristics of achievement status.

References:

Ballout, H. I. (2007). Career Success: The Effects of Human Capital, Person – Environment Fit and Organizational Support. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 22(8),*pp.741-765.

Buller, Ch.(1965). *Meaningful in the Nature Years.* //Aging and leisure. New York

Callanan, G. A. (2003).What Price Career Succes*? Career Development International*, *8*(3), pp.126-133.

Eriksons, E. (1998).*Identitāte: jaunība un krīze.* Rīga: Jumava.

Gibson, L.R., Mitchell, H.M. (2006). *Introduction to Career Counselling for the 21st Century.* Pearson, Merrill Prentice Hall, upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Colombus, Ohio.

Ginzberg,E.,Ginsburg,S.W., Axelrad,S. andHerma,J.L. (1951). *Occupational Choice: An Approach to General Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hall, D. T.(1996). Protean Careers of the 21st Century. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 10(4), pp. 8-16.

Holland, J. L. (1985). *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Personality and Work Environments.* 2nd ed. Englewood, Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Holland, J. L. (1997). *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Personality and Work Environments.* 3rd ed. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Kroger, J., Martinussen, M., & Marcia, J. E. (2010). Identity Status Change During Adolescence and Young Adulthood: A Meta-analysis. *Journal of Adolescence*, 33, pp. 683-698.

Lakoff, G., Johnsen, M. (2003, 1980) *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. http://shu.bg/tadmin/upload/storage/161.pdf

Lāce, I.,Miķelsone, I. (2012). A Model for the Organization of Self-Evaluation Promoting the Future Teachers' Career.// In: *Teachers' Life – cycle from Initial Teacher Education to Experienced Professional*. Proceedings of the ATEE 36th Annual Conference. Belgium: ATEE, pp. 265-281.

Marcia, J. (1991). Identity and Self-Development.// In: Lerner, R., Peterson, A., and Brooks-Gunn, J., eds., *Encyclopedia of Adolescence* (Vol. 1). New York: Garland.

Miķelsone, I. (2008).Karjerasattīstībacilvēkadzīvesciklos. // In: *Karjerasattīstībasatbalsts. Izglītība, konsultēšana, pakalpojumi.* VIAA, SIA: Jelgavastipogrāfija.

Osborn, M.M. (2009). Metaphor. *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*. SAGE Publications.

Ortony, A. (1975). Why Metaphors Are Necessary and not Just Nice.*Educational Theory*, 25, pp. 45–53.

Patton, W., & McMahon, M. (1997). *Career Development in Practice: A Systems Theory Perspective*. Sydney, Australia: New Hobson Press.

Robson, C. (2013). *Real World Research*. United Kingdom: Wiley.

Robson, C. (1999). *Real World Research*. USA: Blackwell.

Schein, E. H. (1993). *Career Anchors: Discovering Your Real Values*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Schein, E.(1996). Career Anchors Revisited: Implications for Career Development in the 21st Century. *The Academy of Management Executive,10* (4), pp.80-88.

Scott, H. (2013). *Grounded Theory Seminar*. Grounded Theory Online in association with the Grounded Theory Institute and Manchester Metropolitan University. http://www.groundedtheoryonline.com/what-is-grounded-theory

Sharf, S. R. (2006). *Applying Career Development Theory to Counselling*. Belmont, CA: Thomson, Brooks/ Cole.

Super, D. (1957). *The Psychology of Careers*. New York: Harper and Row.

Super D., Thompson, A., Lindeman,R.(1988). *Adult Career Concerns Inventory: Manual for Research and Exploratory Use in Counselling,* Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, CA.

Vondracek, W. F., Skorikov, V. (1997). Leisure, School, and Work Activity Preferences, and Their Role in Vocational Identity Development. *The Career Development Quarterly*,45, pp.322-340.

Wolfe, D.M.,&Kolb,A.D. (1980). Career Development, Personal Growth, and Experimental Learning. // In: Springer,J.W. (Edd.). *Issues in Career and Human Resource Development.* Madison, WI: American Society for Training and Development, pp.1-11.

Вишнякова, Н. (1998). *Креативнаяакмеология.*Минск.

Зеер, Э.Ф.(2006). *Психологияпрофессий.* Москва: ФондМир.

Кибанов, А**.**Я. (2007). *Основы управления персоналом:* Учебник.– 2-е изд., перераб. и доп.,Москва: ИНФРА.

Пряжников, Н. (1996). *Професиональное и личностноесамоопределение.* Москва: Воронеж.

Пряжников, Н. С., Пряжникова, Е. Ю. (2001). *Психологиятруда и человеческогодостоинства.* Москва:Академия.

Романов, А. Н. (1983). *Оценкакоммерческойдеятельностипредпринимательства.*Опытзарубежныхкорпораций. Москва: Финансы и статистика.

Толочек, В.А. (2005).*Современнаяпсихологиятруда*. Москва: Питер.