

# Mapping the Literature: Socioeconomic Influences and Reflective Practices in Teacher Professional Identity

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**Abstract:** *Teaching is a dynamic profession shaped by individual, social, and systemic factors. Understanding the factors influencing teachers' professional identity is critical for fostering their development and retention. Socioeconomic contexts and reflective practices are pivotal in shaping teachers' self-concept and effectiveness. Teachers face complex challenges in today's rapidly changing educational landscape, including resource disparities and evolving societal expectations. These pressures highlight the need for deeper insights into how socioeconomic and reflective dimensions affect teachers' professional growth. This study explores the socioeconomic perspectives influencing teachers' professional identity and the role of reflective practices in fostering their development. Synthesising existing literature underscores the impact of education, training, work environments, professional relationships, job security, and social status on shaping teacher identities. The reflective practitioner model, proposed by Donald A. Schön, is analysed for its relevance to continuous professional growth. The study employs a comprehensive literature review methodology, utilising academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Consensus to identify relevant peer-reviewed articles, books, and reports published between 2020 and 2024. Through thematic analysis and critical evaluation, recurring patterns were identified, emphasising the interplay between socioeconomic factors and reflective practices. From the synthesised literature, the findings reveal that supportive work environments and equitable compensation significantly enhance job satisfaction and professional commitment. Furthermore, reflective practices like reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action are crucial for fostering adaptive teaching strategies and professional growth. This paper highlights the intricate interdependence of these influences, offering practical insights for policymakers, educators, and institutions to enhance teacher preparation and retention. Further research is recommended to explore the longitudinal impacts of socioeconomic factors and reflective practices on teacher retention and effectiveness, particularly in resource-constrained settings.*

**Keywords:** teachers' professional identity, socioeconomic factors, reflective practice, Schön's model, education policy

## 1. Introduction

Teachers' professional identity is integral to their effectiveness, motivation, and retention. It encompasses the beliefs, values, and practices that define how educators perceive their roles,

responsibilities, and interactions within the educational ecosystem (Solari & Martín Ortega, 2022). This identity is not static; it evolves through the interplay of individual, social, and systemic factors. Understanding these dynamics is critical for fostering teacher satisfaction, professional growth, and educational outcomes.

Socioeconomic factors play a pivotal role in shaping teachers' professional identities. Education, work environments, stakeholder relationships, job security, and societal perceptions collectively influence teachers' experiences and self-concept (Pishghadam et al., 2022; Toropova et al., 2021). For instance, teachers working in resource-constrained settings often navigate significant challenges that demand resilience and adaptability (Naidoo & Wagner, 2020). Such contexts underscore the importance of addressing socioeconomic considerations to support teacher development and retention.

In parallel, reflective practices have emerged as a cornerstone of teacher development. Rooted in Donald Schön's reflective practitioner model, these practices encourage educators to critically evaluate their experiences, adapt to challenges, and continuously refine their teaching strategies (Tan, 2020; Hommel et al., 2023). Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action enable teachers to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, enhancing their self-efficacy and pedagogical effectiveness (Pang, 2022).

By integrating these two dimensions—socioeconomic perspectives and reflective practices—this paper comprehensively analyses the factors influencing teachers' professional identities. Drawing on recent literature, it examines how these elements interact dynamically to shape teacher experiences and offers actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders. Such an understanding is essential for designing targeted interventions that address teacher preparation challenges and promote equity and excellence in education.

## 2. Methodology

This article employs a comprehensive literature review methodology to synthesise and analyse the existing knowledge on teachers' professional identity, socioeconomic factors, and reflective practices. The following steps were undertaken to ensure a rigorous approach:

### Data Collection

Relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and reports published between 2020 and 2024 were identified using academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Consensus. Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR, NOT) were employed to refine and broaden the search scope. For instance, combinations such as “teachers' professional identity AND reflective practices” or “socioeconomic factors OR job satisfaction” ensured comprehensive retrieval of pertinent literature. Keywords included “teachers' professional identity,” “socioeconomic factors,” “reflective practice,” “Schön's model,” and “education policy.”

- 1) **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:** Studies were included if they directly addressed the interplay between socioeconomic factors and reflective practices in shaping teachers' professional identity. Articles focusing solely on unrelated domains, lacking empirical or conceptual depth, or published before 2020 were excluded to maintain relevance and quality.
- 2) **Thematic Analysis:** The collected literature was systematically reviewed to identify recurring themes and patterns. Key themes were categorised into socioeconomic factors

(education and training, work environment, professional relationships, job security and compensation, and social status) and reflective practices (reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action). This thematic analysis provided a structured framework for synthesising insights.

- 3) **Critical Evaluation:** Each source was critically evaluated based on its relevance, methodological rigour, and contribution to the topic. High-quality, recent publications were prioritised to ensure that findings reflect contemporary challenges and insights. This critical evaluation process enhanced the credibility and robustness of the study's conclusions.
- 4) **Summary of Methodological Contributions:** A summary table of references and their methodological contributions was prepared to document the breadth of sources utilised in this study. The table highlights the scoping reviews, theoretical perspectives, empirical studies, and other methodologies that informed the analysis. (Refer to **Table 1** for details.)
- 5) **Synthesis:** The insights from the reviewed literature were synthesised to provide a cohesive narrative that integrates socioeconomic factors and reflective practices, emphasising their collective impact on teachers' professional identity. This synthesis bridges theoretical frameworks with practical implications, offering actionable insights for stakeholders.

The following table summarises the references utilised in this study and their respective methodological contributions.

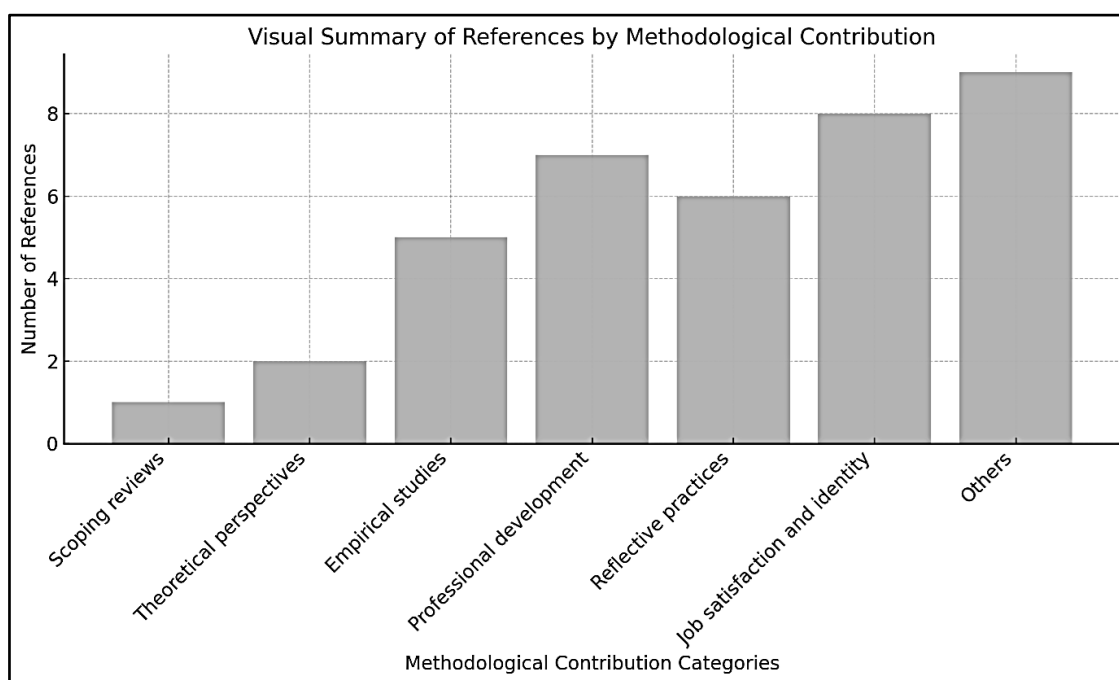
**Table 1: Summary of References and Their Methodological Contributions**

Reference	Methodological Contribution
Agyapong et al. (2022)	Scoping review on stress and burnout in teaching
Ahmed et al. (2021)	Study on work motivation and job stress in turnover intention
Akiri & Dori (2022)	Professional growth analysis in STEM teachers
Al Hilali et al. (2020)	Theoretical perspective on coaching and mentoring
Amador et al. (2022)	Pedagogical content knowledge for novice teachers
Amzat et al. (2021)	Phenomenological analysis of teacher burnout
Asfeldt & Stonehouse (2021)	Conceptual model for reflective practice
Bowman et al. (2022)	Professional development and instructional technology
Brinia et al. (2021)	Study on financial and moral satisfaction in education
Cents-Boonstra et al. (2021)	Observation study on motivating teaching
Darling-Hammond et al. (2020)	Implications of learning and development science
George et al. (2022)	Challenges in online English education
Hommel et al. (2023)	Conceptual model of reflection at work
Hoque et al. (2023)	Review on job satisfaction and student achievement
Larsen et al. (2023)	Re-imagining teacher mentoring
Makoa & Segalo (2021)	Novice teacher challenges in professional development
Masoom (2021)	Teachers' work environment perception
Meirkulova & Gelişli (2022)	Teachers' social status views in Turkey and Kazakhstan
Murray (2021)	Continuous learning in teaching
Naidoo & Wagner (2020)	Impact of teacher mentoring in disadvantaged contexts
O'Shea (2021)	Impact of relationships on job satisfaction
Öngel & Tabancalı (2022)	Social justice roles in teaching
Orland-Barak & Wang (2021)	Teacher mentoring for pre-service teachers

Othman & Aljuhaish (2021)	Identity construction of non-native EFL teachers
Pang (2022)	Reflective practices in assessment for learning
Pishghadam et al. (2022)	Framework for teacher identity development
Pow & Lai (2021)	Building virtual learning communities
Saidin et al. (2020)	Strategies for novice teachers overcoming challenges
Schön (1983)	Foundational work on reflective practice
Siddiqui & Ahamed (2020)	Role evolution of teachers
Silverman et al. (2023)	Educators' beliefs about socioeconomic background
Solari & Martín Ortega (2022)	Sociocultural approach to teacher identity
Stewart & Jansky (2022)	Dialogue and reflection in professional development
Tan (2020)	Revisiting reflective practice with a Daoist view
Toropova et al. (2021)	Job satisfaction and school conditions
Vanegas et al. (2021)	Professional identity crisis in language teachers
Wanders et al. (2020)	Relationships' effect on societal involvement
Zhao (2022)	Teachers' identity and well-being in development

This methodology ensures a thorough, evidence-based topic exploration by integrating diverse perspectives and employing rigorous analytical techniques.

**Figure 1** categorises the sources based on their contributions to this study's analysis of teachers' professional identity and related factors to represent the methodological diversity in the references visually utilised.



**Figure 1: Visual Summary of References by Methodological Contribution**

Figure 1 illustrates the methodological contributions of references used in this study. It categorises the sources into six major types: Scoping Reviews, Theoretical Perspectives, Empirical Studies, Professional Development, Reflective Practices, Job Satisfaction and Identity, and Others. The horizontal axis represents these categories, while the vertical axis indicates the number of references in each category. Notably, the majority of the references fall under the “Others” category, followed closely by “Reflective Practices” and “Job Satisfaction

and Identity.” These findings highlight this study’s diverse methodological approaches, with significant attention to reflective practices and professional identity factors.

### **3. Socioeconomic Perspectives on Teachers’ Professional Identity**

Socioeconomic contexts play a pivotal role in shaping teachers’ professional identities. Factors such as access to education and training, the work environment, relationships with stakeholders, job security, and societal perceptions of the teaching profession collectively impact teachers’ experiences and self-concept. The socioeconomic perspective explains the professional identity of teachers. This method investigates how teachers’ social and economic environment influences their professional identity (Solari & Martín Ortega, 2022). These elements define the resources teachers have and influence their motivation, satisfaction, and retention within the profession. In particular, teachers working in resource-constrained settings often face challenges that necessitate resilience and adaptability, further underscoring the importance of socioeconomic considerations.

#### **Education and Training**

Education and training are pivotal in shaping a teacher’s professional identity, serving as the foundation for their growth and effectiveness. Participation in advanced degree programs and continuous professional development enhances self-confidence, job satisfaction, and teaching competence. The research underscores the transformative impact of these factors. For instance, Zhao (2022) highlights how professional development cultivates educators’ awareness of their practices, resulting in improved teaching quality and a stronger sense of professional identity. Similarly, Wu et al. (2024) reveal a positive correlation between a well-developed professional identity and career satisfaction, demonstrating that teachers with a robust professional identity experience greater job fulfilment and effectiveness.

Moreover, education and training equip teachers with the tools to create more inclusive learning environments by fostering an understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (Siddiqui & Ahamed, 2020). Such programs enable educators to master instructional strategies, comprehend learning theories, and address the needs of diverse classrooms (George et al., 2022). Continuous training ensures teachers remain adaptable, aligning their skills with evolving classroom demands while boosting their confidence and pedagogical efficacy (Murray, 2021). These findings collectively underscore the essential role of education and professional development in empowering teachers to meet the multifaceted demands of their profession.

#### **Work Environment**

Workplace conditions play a crucial role in shaping teachers’ professional identities. Collaborative and resource-rich environments foster job satisfaction and dedication (Toropova et al., 2021; Zhao, 2022). A supportive work environment enhances teachers’ success (Masoom, 2021) and encourages them to feel valued and view their work more positively, mainly when supported by administrators. Conversely, dissatisfaction with workplace conditions can lead to inadequate performance and negative perceptions of their roles. Access to essential resources such as materials, technologies, and opportunities for professional development further contributes to teachers’ effectiveness and professional growth (Bowman et al., 2022). The socioeconomic approach highlights the complex interplay of factors influencing a teacher’s professional identity and underscores the importance of understanding their work environment (Pishghadam et al., 2022). On the other hand, toxic workplaces characterised by poor support and resources can result in burnout and reduced performance



(Agyapong et al., 2022). Resources, administrative support, and a positive school culture significantly shape teachers' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

### **Professional Relationships**

Teachers' interactions with students, parents, and colleagues shape their professional identity. Positive relationships foster engagement and confidence, while poor relationships contribute to stress and dissatisfaction (Amzat et al., 2021; O'Shea, 2021). Supportive networks provide collaboration and shared learning opportunities, essential for sustained professional growth (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

### **Job Security and Compensation**

Employment stability and equitable compensation enhance job satisfaction and professional commitment (Toropova et al., 2021). Employment security and compensation significantly influence teachers' job satisfaction and commitment. Teachers are more inclined to find satisfaction in their roles and deliver quality education when they receive adequate compensation and work in a comfortable environment (Hoque et al., 2023). Money may affect the job satisfaction of teachers (Brinia et al., 2021). Teachers value their work more when they are compensated equitably and competitively. It may increase job satisfaction and contentment. However, teachers who are underpaid or undervalued may lose interest in the profession (Brinia et al., 2021). Teachers with financial and job security are more motivated to invest in their professional growth (Toropova et al., 2021). Conversely, insecurity and inadequate compensation can lead to career disillusionment (Ahmed et al., 2021).

### **Social Status**

The societal perception of teaching as a profession significantly shapes teachers' professional identities. Teachers often experience greater job satisfaction and a stronger sense of purpose in communities where the teaching profession is highly valued. Social status influences teachers' perceptions of responsibilities and interactions with students and the broader educational community (Wanders et al., 2020). Meirkulova and Gelişli (2022) note that teachers' attitudes toward their profession can directly affect their social status. For wealthier educators, this dynamic may translate into a heightened obligation to uphold their social standing (Silverman et al., 2023).

Öngel and Tabancalı (2022) highlight teachers' critical social role in nurturing students' potential and addressing societal barriers to promote equitable education. Teachers in communities prioritising education are more likely to strongly identify with their roles and responsibilities (Vanegas et al., 2021). Moreover, social equity considerations profoundly shape how teachers perceive and fulfil their duties, particularly in disadvantaged contexts where their impact can be transformative (Naidoo & Wagner, 2020). These factors underscore the intricate relationship between social status and teachers' professional identity, influencing their self-concept and role within the community.

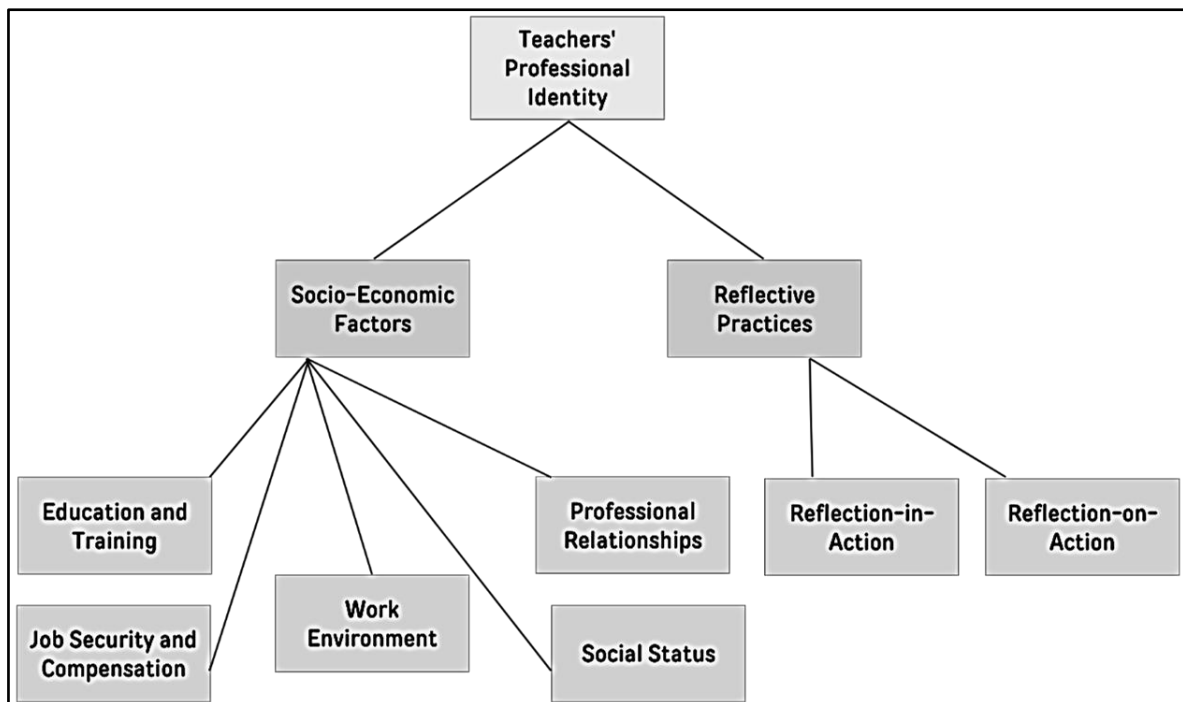


Figure 2: Factors Influencing Teachers' Professional Identity

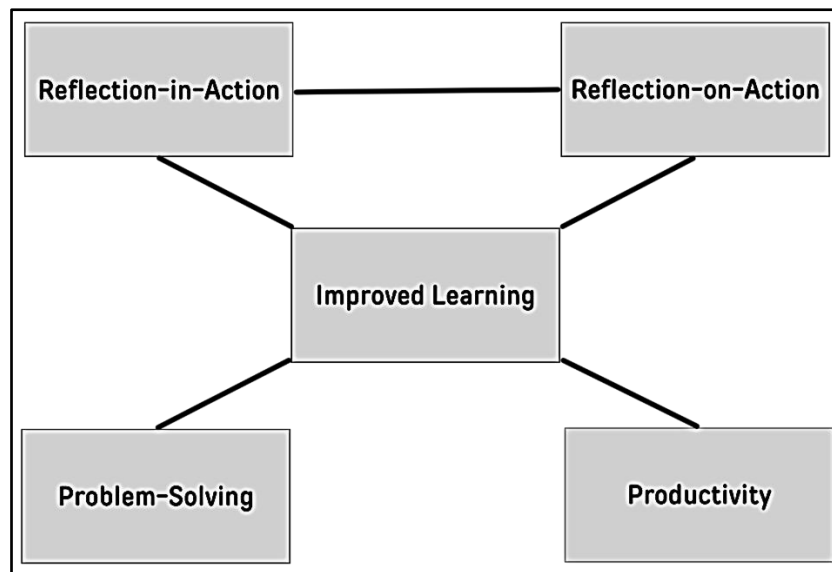
**Figure 2** illustrates the interplay between socioeconomic factors and reflective practices in shaping teachers' professional identity. The socioeconomic factors include **Education and Training**, **Work Environment**, **Professional Relationships**, **Job Security and Compensation**, and **Social Status**. Reflective practices encompass **Schön's Reflection-in-Action** and **Reflection-on-Action**. Arrows indicate the dynamic interaction between these elements, emphasising their collective impact on professional identity development.

#### 4. Reflective Practices in Teacher Development

##### Schön's Reflective Practitioner Model

Donald A. Schön's model emphasises reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action as tools for continuous professional development (Schön, 1983). Reflection-in-action allows teachers to adapt to real-time challenges, while reflection-on-action facilitates learning from past experiences (Tan, 2020).

To further explore the significance of reflective practices in professional growth, Schön's Reflective Practitioner Model is depicted below, emphasising its dual focus on reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action.



**Figure 3: Schön's Reflective Practitioner Model Framework**

**Figure 3** illustrates Schön's Reflective Practitioner Model framework, highlighting the interplay between **reflection-in-action** and **reflection-on-action**, and their contributions to improved learning, problem-solving, and productivity.

According to Schön's model of reflective practice, teachers should engage in ongoing reflection and learning through action and reflection on action (Asfeldt & Stonehouse, 2021). The model framework proposed by Schön helps professionals improve their learning, problem-solving, and productivity (Hommel et al., 2023). These reflective processes enable educators to integrate theory and practice, fostering adaptive expertise and professional growth.

### Application in Novice Teacher Training

Reflective teaching sessions benefit novice teachers, providing opportunities to examine, analyse, and replicate effective methodologies. Mentoring and feedback sessions improve their capacity to refine pedagogical practices and cultivate self-confidence (Larsen et al., 2023; Makoa & Segalo, 2021). The mentor or coach will aid the new teacher in reflecting on their experiences, pinpointing areas for enhancement, setting objectives, and formulating strategies to attain those objectives (Al Hilali et al., 2020). Novice teachers can enhance their pedagogical skills and facilitate student success by designing and executing classes that use successful teaching practices (Amador et al., 2022). Through participation in structured reflection activities, novice teachers can cultivate confidence and improve their teaching skills.

### Implementation of Reflective Practices

Observation and reflection cycles enable teachers to adopt and refine effective pedagogical strategies. Observing experienced educators offers novice teachers invaluable learning opportunities, including engaging in discussions and experimenting with diverse instructional techniques (Makoa & Segalo, 2021; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). Such observations can also provide insight into strategies for fostering active student participation (Stewart & Jansky, 2022). By reflecting on these observations and sharing insights with experienced colleagues, novice teachers can receive constructive feedback and tailored guidance to improve their teaching methods (Saidin et al., 2020). Observing how seasoned educators manage classroom dynamics, structure lessons, address student behaviour, and handle challenging situations is particularly impactful (Makoa & Segalo, 2021).



Additionally, novice teachers can learn essential skills such as engaging and motivating students, delivering clear and concise instructions, differentiating instruction to meet diverse learning needs, and evaluating student comprehension effectively (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2021). Reflection on these observations is vital for improving instructional methods and fostering professional growth (Pang, 2022). Classroom observation, as highlighted by Orland-Barak and Wang (2021), serves as a powerful tool for gaining deeper insights into effective teaching practices, emphasising the importance of closely studying the methods of experienced educators. Moreover, feedback mechanisms and collaborative learning communities provide additional support in fostering reflective practices, ensuring continuous development (Pow & Lai, 2021).

## **5. Discussion**

The interplay between socioeconomic factors and reflective practices highlights the multifaceted nature of teachers' professional identity development. Socioeconomic factors, including education, training, work environment, job security, compensation, and social status, create a foundation that shapes teachers' experiences and perceptions (Pishghadam et al., 2022; Solari & Martín Ortega, 2022). For instance, resource-rich and collaborative work environments enhance job satisfaction and foster more significant professional commitment (Bowman et al., 2022; Toropova et al., 2021). Conversely, resource-constrained settings pose significant challenges, often necessitating resilience and adaptability among teachers (Naidoo & Wagner, 2020).

Reflective practices, rooted in Donald Schön's reflective practitioner model, further enrich this foundation by enabling teachers to critically evaluate their practices and adapt to evolving educational demands (Tan, 2020; Hommel et al., 2023). Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action are instrumental in bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application, fostering continuous professional growth (Pang, 2022). These practices enhance teachers' pedagogical effectiveness and increase their self-efficacy and confidence (Asfeldt & Stonehouse, 2021).

Integrating mentoring and feedback sessions into reflective practices provides novice teachers structured opportunities to refine their instructional methods and cultivate confidence (Larsen et al., 2023). By observing experienced educators, novice teachers can gain invaluable insights into classroom management, student engagement, and differentiated instruction (Makoa & Segalo, 2021; Stewart & Jansky, 2022). These strategies aim to develop well-equipped teachers to meet diverse classroom needs and foster inclusive learning environments (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2021).

Ultimately, the dynamic interaction between socioeconomic factors and reflective practices underscores the complexity of teacher identity formation. Holistically addressing these dimensions is essential for creating supportive environments that enable teachers to thrive and contribute meaningfully to their educational communities.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study underscores the critical role of socioeconomic factors and reflective practices in shaping teachers' professional identities. Education, work environments, professional relationships, job security, and societal perceptions collectively influence teachers' motivation, satisfaction, and retention. As articulated by Schön, reflective practices provide a robust

framework for continuous professional development, bridging the gap between theoretical insights and practical application.

Policymakers and educational leaders should prioritise creating supportive work environments and professional development opportunities that address systemic challenges and individual teacher needs. Mentoring programs, feedback mechanisms, and collaborative learning communities are essential for fostering reflective practices and enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills.

Future research should explore the longitudinal impacts of integrating socioeconomic and reflective factors into teacher training programs. Additionally, studies could investigate teachers' specific challenges in resource-constrained settings and identify targeted interventions to support their professional growth. By addressing these areas, educational stakeholders can build a more resilient and effective teaching workforce, contributing to broader goals of equity and excellence in education.

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