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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CAPACITY-ANALYSIS PARADIGM FOR THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ECONOMICS TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN GHANA

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A B S T R A C T

This study developed a set of core professional identity indicators to which professional Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators in Ghana responded in order to determine their validity as components of the Economics teachers' professional identity in relation to their ideal professional capacity. In specific terms, the study investigated opinions of respondents on the importance attached to the rubrics of teachers' professional capacity as well as differences in opinion on the importance placed on indicators of teachers' professional knowledge, values, skills and reflective practice. The study was a descriptive type which employed the survey method. The study sample comprised 751 professional Economics teachers and 125 Economics teacher educators who were selected through the simple random sampling technique. One self-developed instrument, Questionnaire on Senior High School Economics Teachers' Identity (QSHSETI) was used and a reliability index of 0.96 was obtained. The data were analyzed using mean and the independent sample t-test. There are three paradigmatic levels for considering teachers' identity. They are the ideal paradigm as shown in Figure 1, the implementable paradigm as obtained by the researcher-developed instrument, and finally the perceived or realistic paradigm based on the consensus of Economics teacher educators and Economics teachers. The findings of this study revealed discrepancies in opinion between the perceived competency and ideal targets of Economics teacher educators and that of Economics teachers. Curriculum development in Economics teacher education should therefore aim at bridging the gap between the ideal competency targets and the perceived or core competency targets. The study concluded that, teacher education policy makers should support continuous capacity-building programs among Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators.

Keywords: Economics teacher, economics teacher educator, professional capacity, curriculum development.

INTRODUCTION

There are competing perspectives on what constitutes an ideal teacher. Lawal (2006) identifies four broad attributes of an effective English teacher as; professional knowledge, values, skills and reflective practice. To him, these attributes are characteristics of an ideal English teacher. A widely accepted claim in the science and mathematics community is the constructivist idea of discovery learning as opposed to direct instruction, which is the best way to get deep and lasting understanding of scientific phenomena and procedures (Klahr and Nigam, 2004). Consequently, Staver (2007) proposes the following instructional practices as identity indicators of effective science teachers: Demonstrating mastery of subject matter, respecting and accepting the unique perceptions of individual learners, reflecting on, and considering learners' prior knowledge when selecting teaching strategies and techniques. Other instructional practices and attributes are; **committed** to the teaching of the subject, a belief in one's ability to influence students' learning outcomes and creating a non-threatening, learning environment. These are Staver's perspectives of an ideal science teacher. Latterell (2010) reports that a good mathematics teacher has knowledge in the subject matter, is able to engage and motivate students, has effective management skills and emphasizes understanding over rote procedures.

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Siddique (2012) identifies three important qualities of an ideal Economics teacher. They are; scholarship, professional training and personality. With respect to scholarship, the teacher of Economics must have mastery of the subject matter. In the opinion of Siddique, mastery of subject matter goes beyond basic Economic concepts to include knowledge and awareness of Economic trends at the local as well as the international level. Siddique suggests that an ideal Economics teacher should have up-to-date knowledge about the current affairs of the Economy. Knowledge in other subjects like geography, civics, history, statistics and the others, to enable him or her analyze Economic situations from those perspectives. In terms of professional training, Siddique posits that an Economics teacher should be conversant with new methods of teaching the subject as well as innovations in the teaching and learning process of Economics.

A closer look at these perspectives point to the fact that, an ideal professional teacher, irrespective of the subject he or she handles should demonstrate and practice all aspects of professional knowledge, values, skills and reflection (Lawal, 2006, 2011). These are the broad indicators of teachers' professional identity and capacity. In Ghana, Anamuah-Mensah (2011) observes that various measures have been put or are being put in place to arrest the declining status of teaching and pursue ways of attracting and retaining committed teachers. **He** however expresses concern that, in Ghana and other African countries, the development of teacher identity comes as a by-product and not the planned focus of teacher development **programs**. He further indicates that, Ghana like most other countries in Sub-Sahara Africa, incorporate the following five elements in their teacher training **programs**: subject knowledge, knowledge of students (*child psychology*), foundation courses, methods of teaching and immersion **in** field-based experience or practicum. Anamuah-Mensah is of the view that, a missing area of focus in teacher education **programs** is helping the individual to know himself or herself and his or her role as a teacher (*personal dimension*). Thus, questions such as; *who am l?, how do l see myself*?, and *how do others see me*? are not raised; rather group-identity questions such as, *what do l have to do as a teacher*?, *how **do** l act as a teacher*? *what qualities do teachers have*? and *how do l achieve these?,* take centre stage and draw out the question of self or teacher identity (Anamuah-Mensah, 2011).

Similarly in Sierra Leone, Mansaray (2011) reports that teacher education programmes manifest severe shortcomings in addressing the issue of 'identity formation'. He indicates that the approach to pre-service and in-service teacher preparation seems heavily focused on equipping teachers with the so- called 'knowledge base' in their subjects, and the appropriate methods and techniques for communicating this knowledge to pupils. He laments that little attention is paid to the formation of those core beliefs, values, and attitudes that will eventually mediate their effectiveness as teachers. Mansaray (2011) argues that the notion of identity is an **organizing** principle in teachers' jobs and lives, and that understanding the identities teachers construct for themselves is central to effecting innovation within a changing policy environment (Robinson and MacMillan, 2006; Mansaray, 2011).

Statement of the problem: Professional identity has emerged as a separate research area, an area in which researchers conceptualize professional identity differently, **investigate** varying topics within the framework of teachers' professional identity and pursue a diversity of goals (Beijaard *et al*, 2004). For example, Raymond (2006) conducted a study on professionalism and identity in teacher education. The main thrust of her study was to ascertain its implication for teacher reform. Similarly, Black (2008), studied the professional identity of teachers and its implication for the management of the 'every child matters' agenda. In New Zealand, Couling (2005) researched into the secondary school teachers' professional identity and educational reform. All these studies had varying degrees of specific purposes and context.

Research in the area of Economics education in Ghana either focuses on the teaching or learning of the subject. For example, Henderson (1975) studied some examples of teaching Economics in Ghanaian schools, reports that by proper lesson preparation and the use of living examples, Economics could become the most dynamic, interesting and useful subject in the school curriculum. Dare (1995) conducted a study to gain a better understanding of the nature of school Economics in Ghana. He concludes that teachers employ inappropriate motivational techniques resulting in the lack of intrinsic motivation on the part of students. Dare further discovers that the learning of Economics consist of committing factual information to memory and reproducing them during examination at the expense of

the development of higher levels of cognition.

It seems most of the studies on teachers' professional identity have used small samples and qualitative methods (Volkmann and Anderson, 1988). Again, it looks as if studies on teachers' professional identity deal with only a few of the identity indicators. It appears little has been done in the area of the Economics teachers' professional **identity** at the secondary school level. Another distinctive characteristic is that, it looks as if these studies are not subject-specific in respect of the teachers concerned. A research gap has therefore been created part of which this study seeks to fill by developing a set of core professional identity indicators to which Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators in Ghana could respond to determine the extent of their validity as components of the Economics teachers' professional identity in relation to their ideal professional capacity.

Purpose of the Study: The main purpose of the study is to develop and validate a capacity analysis paradigm among Senior High School (SHS) Economics teachers in Ghana. In specific terms, the study intends to investigate;

i. Economics teachers' opinions on the importance of each of the teacher identity indicators in the researcher-developed paradigm as they relate to the teacher's professional capacity.
ii. Economics teacher educators' opinions on the importance of the professional teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.
iii. Economics teachers' opinions on the importance of the professional knowledge, values, skills and reflective practice aspects of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.
iv. Economics teacher educators' opinions on the importance of the professional knowledge, values, skills and reflective practice aspects of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.

Research Questions: i. What opinions do Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators have on the importance of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity?

ii. What opinions do Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators have on the importance of the professional knowledge aspect of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity?

iii. What are the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the professional values aspect of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity?

iv. What opinions do Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators have on the importance of the professional skills aspect of the identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity?

v. What are the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the reflective practice aspect of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity?

5. Hypotheses: Ho_1: There will be no significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.

Ho_2: There will be no significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the professional knowledge aspects of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.

Ho_3: There will be no significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the professional values aspect of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.

Ho_4: There will be no significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the professional skills aspect of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.

Ho_5: There will be no significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the professional reflective practice aspects of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.

Research Design: The research design that was used in this study was the descriptive survey type which aimed at developing and validating a capacity analysis paradigm for senior high school Economics teachers in Ghana. The choice of this method was informed by the opinion of Best and Khan (1998) that descriptive survey is concerned with the conditions or relationships that

exist, such as determining the nature of prevailing conditions, practices and attitude, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, or trends that are developed.

Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques: The population for this study comprised all Senior High School (SHS) professional Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators in Ghana. The target population was made up of all SHS professional teachers of Economics and Economics teacher educators in all the ten regions of Ghana. The estimated Economics teacher population in the country was 1,913. From this number, 751 or (39.3%) were professional Economics teachers, while the non-professional Economics teachers were 1,162 or (60.7%). The approximated number of Economics teacher educators in the country is 125, which was drawn from the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, the University of Education, Winneba, and the 33 Colleges of Education in the country. The simple random sampling method was used to select all professional Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators in all the ten regions of Ghana as participants for the study. These categories of respondents were of importance because they work within the subject area of interest and were therefore assumed to have enough information and answers about the issues raised in this study.

Instrumentation: The researcher adapted the conception and framework of Lawal (2011) to develop a set of ideal indicators as a capacity-analysis paradigm for describing the perceived professional capacity/identity of the Senior High School (SHS) Economics teacher, based on the opinions of teachers and teacher educators. Consequently, one self-developed questionnaire (QSHSETI) was used to gather data for this study. This instrument consisted of five sections. Section A looked at the demographic data of respondents. Section 'B' has a list of items which sought respondents' views about the indicators of an ideal Economics teacher based on his/her professional knowledge. Section C has a set of statements which were meant to investigate respondents' opinions on what an ideal Economics teacher should demonstrate as part of his /her professional values. Section D dealt with respondents' views on the skills that an ideal Economics teacher should possess. Indicators of teachers' professional skills were categorized under three main themes; skills of instructional planning, skills of instructional delivery and skills of instructional assessment as suggested by (Lawal, 2006). Finally, items in Section E were meant to find out the importance SHS Economics teachers and teacher educators attached to the various indicators on professional reflective practice. Lawal (2006; 2011) recommend that teachers should periodically reflect on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of

their competencies. Consequently, the proposed indicators of Economics teachers' reflective practice covered some aspects of professional knowledge, values and skills.

As indicated in Figure 1 a paradigm of the core achievable professional capacity indicators could be arrived at through a comparison and streamlining of perceived indicators of the Economics teachers and the Economics teacher educators. In other words there are three paradigmatic levels for considering the teachers' professional identity, namely the ideal level as distilled from the extant canonical literature, the perceived level as obtained from the respondents through the researcher-designed questionnaire based on the idealized indicators and, finally the paradigm of core achievable indicators. The goal of curriculum development in Economics teacher education should be how to bridge the usual gab between the actual and achievable on the one hand and that between the achievable and the ideal on the other hand.

Procedure for Data Collection: The researcher recruited forty (40) research assistants for the entire exercise. They were given a thorough orientation on all aspects of the instruments as well as ethics of research. Four (4) of these research assistants were assigned to each of the ten (10) regions of Ghana. Each research assistant was given a **photocopy** of a letter of introduction. The research assistants personally visited all the sampled schools and administered the close-ended questionnaire. A 2-day interval was given to respondents to fill and complete the questionnaire.

Data Analysis Techniques: In scoring the scale, the alternative responses were credited as: 4 (Strongly Agree), 3 (Agree), 2 (Disagree) and 1 (Strongly Disagree) from the most **favorable** to the **unfavorable** end of the continuum. Item-by-by item analysis with mean and standard deviation were used to answer the five research questions while the independent t-test was used to test the five hypotheses. In transforming the data

to facilitate item by item interpretation of the various **indicators** a bench mark of 3 on the 4-point Likert scale was considered as significant. Where there was congruence in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on specific indicators, it was interpreted as a canon of truth in respect of the Economics teachers' professional identity.

Presentation of Results: H_o1: No significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.

Table 1 shows that the Economics teacher educators attached a significantly higher level of importance to all the identity indicators of teachers' professional capacity; *professional knowledge* (mean difference= 0.087), *professional values* (mean difference= 0.102), *professional skills* (mean difference= 0.166), and *professional reflective practice* (mean difference= 0.085), than Economics teachers.

H_o2: There will be no significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the *professional knowledge* aspect of teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.\

Table 1. t-test analysis for significant difference in opinions on the importance of teacher identity indicators between Economics teacher educators and Economics teachers.

Variables	Me	Mt	MD	Std. Error	df	t	p-value
Professional Knowledge	3.108	3.021	.087	.024	874	3.607	.000
Professional Values	3.009	2.907	.102	.030	874	3.369	.001
Professional Skills	3.277	3.111	.166	.025	874	6.714	.000
Professional Reflective practice	3.102	3.017	.085	.027	874	3.157	.002

Me: Mean score for Educators **Mt**: Mean score for Teachers MD: Mean Difference

The results in Table 2 show that there is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents with respect to the importance attached to B1 (*knowledge of his/her strengths and weaknesses in terms of the subject matter)* with a mean difference of 0.085, t=0.386, at 874 **degree** freedom and p>0.05. Indicator B3 (*knowledge of his/her strengths and weaknesses in terms of pedagogical skills*) yielded a mean difference of 0.020, and t=0.386 at 874 **degree** of freedom, was not significant since p>0.05, while indicator B4 (*knowledge of the subject matter of Economics*) yielded a mean difference of 0.019, and t=0.973 at 874 degree of freedom was also not significant since p>0.05.

Table 2. t-test analysis on importance attached to indicators of teachers' professional knowledge between Economics teacher educators and Economics teachers.

Variables	Me	Mt	MD	Std. Error	Df	t	p-value
B1	3.774	3.489	.085	.043	874	.581	.190
B2*	2.593	2.713	-.120	.053	874	-2.271	.023
B3	3.236	3.216	.020	.052	874	.386	.700
B4	3.628	3.747	-.019	.040	874	-.973	.323
B5*	3.106	2.962	.144	.066	874	2.180	.030
B6	2.789	2.731	.058	.052	874	1.116	.265
B7*	3.025	2.897	.129	.051	874	2.535	.011
B8*	1.995	2.436	-.441	.044	874	-9.919	.000
B9	3.307	3.080	.026	.051	874	.442	.702
B10	3.724	3.519	.034	.046	874	.423	.681
B11*	3.030	2.424	.606	.057	874	10.610	.000

Me: Mean score for Educators **Mt**: Mean score for Teachers **MD**: Mean Difference
α= .05, * significant at p< .05

Indicator B6 (*knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates* to the teaching of Economics) yielded a mean difference of 0.058, and t=1.116 at 874 **degree** of freedom was not significant since p>0.05. Again, as shown in the Table indicator B9 (*knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Economics*)

and B10 (*knowledge of suitable curriculum materials for Economics education*) yielded mean differences and t-values that were not statistically significant since in each case, $p>0.05$. In view of the level of congruence in the opinions of respondents on the importance of these indicators, they constitute the canon of truth in respect of their validity as essential components of the Economics teachers' professional knowledge as shown in the conceptual framework of Figure 1.

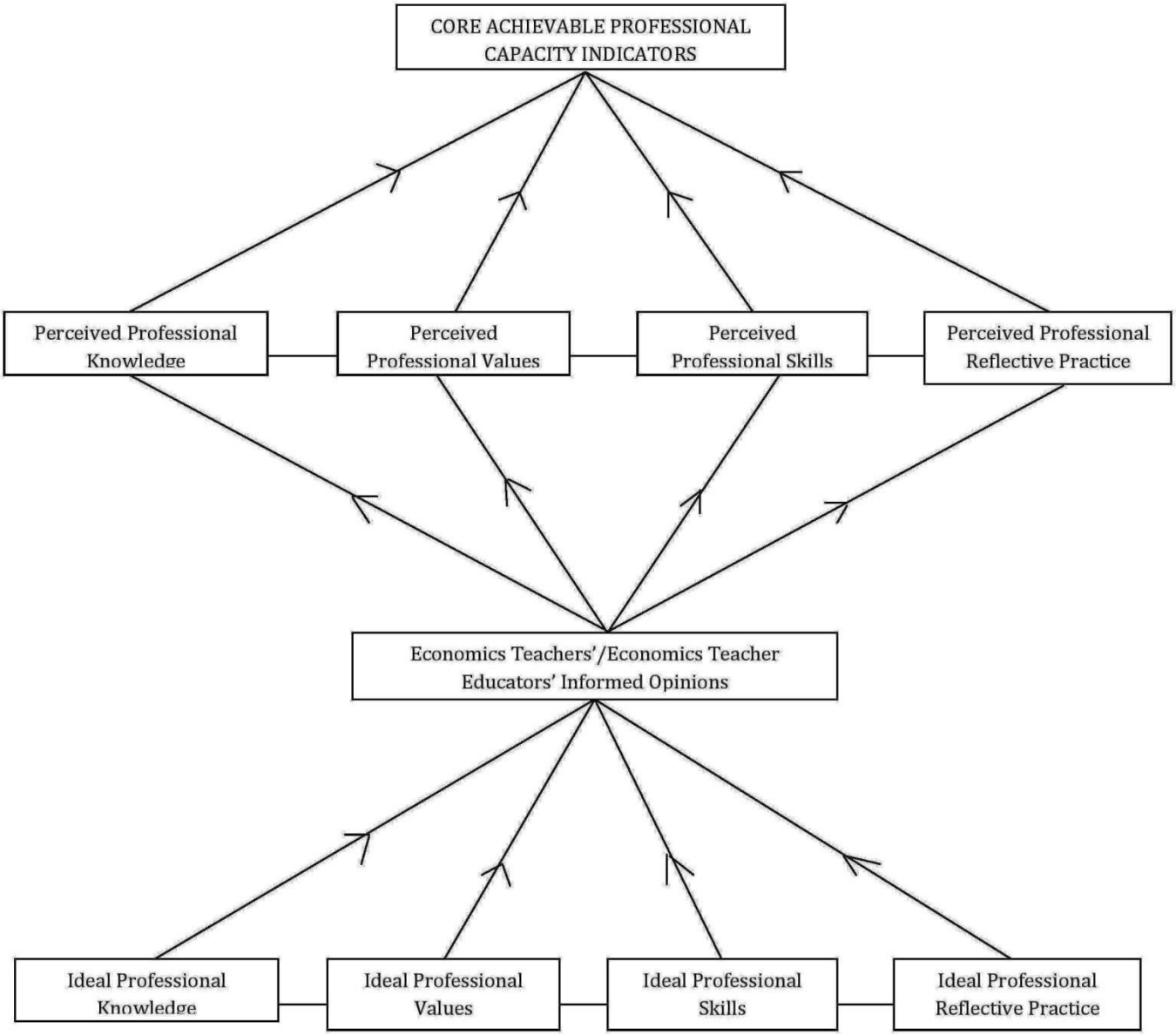

Figure 1. A Capacity-Analysis Paradigm for Senior High School Economics Teacher's Professional Identity (Adapted from Lawal, 2006, 2011).

$H_0$3: There will be no significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the *professional values* aspect of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity. The result as shown in Table 3 suggests that the respondents did not differ significantly in opinion concerning the level of importance they placed on indicators C1 (*a positive attitude towards the subject at all times*), C2 (*belief in his/her ability to influence students' achievement in Economics*), C3 (*maintaining a collaborative working relationship with his/her colleagues*), C5 (*being enthusiastic towards his/her students*), C7 (*total commitment to the teaching of the subject*), C9 (*participation in professional development*

programmes such as workshops and seminars) and C10 (*inspiring students towards high level achievement in Economics*). All these indicators yielded mean differences and t-values that were not statistically significant since p>0.05. With respect to the unanimity of respondents' opinions on the importance of these aspects of teachers' professional values, and with reference to the conceptual framework in Figure 1 these indicators are validated as essential elements of the Economics teachers' professional values.

Table 3. t-test analysis on importance attached to indicators of teachers' professional values between Economics teacher educators and Economics teachers.

Variables	Me	Mt	MD	Std. Error	df	t	p-value
C1	3.578	3.774	-.096	.037	874	-.675	.538
C2	3.141	2.708	.033	.064	874	.621	.612
C3	3.106	3.085	.021	.051	874	.404	.687
C4*	3.256	2.923	.333	.058	874	5.727	.000
C5	3.126	3.070	.056	.048	874	1.169	.243
C6*	3.256	2.875	.381	.056	874	6.786	.000
C7	3.122	3.049	.073	.056	874	1.307	.191
C8*	2.050	2.553	-.503	.046	874	-10.854	.000
C9	3.116	3.145	-.030	.051	874	-.583	.560
C10	3.327	3.238	.089	.049	874	1.796	.073
C11*	1.944	1.541	.403	.049	874	8.196	.000
C12*	3.075	2.931	.145	.055	874	2.610	.009

Me: Mean score for Educators **Mt**: Mean score for Teachers **MD**: Mean Difference α= .05 * significant at p< .05

$H_0$4: There will be no significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the *professional skills* aspect of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.

Table 4. t-test analysis on importance attached to indicators of teachers' professional skills between Economics teacher educators and Economics teachers.

Variables	Me	Mt	MD	Std. Error	df	t	p-value
D1	3.347	3.404	-.057	.041	874	-1.378	.169
D2	3.508	3.227	.080	.047	874	1.987	.146
D3*	3.015	2.658	.357	.064	874	5.574	.000
D4*	2.944	2.509	.435	.058	874	7.465	.000
D5*	3.111	2.867	.244	.056	874	4.390	.000
D6	3.231	3.175	.056	.051	874	1.108	.268
D7*	2.168	2.525	-.357	.056	874	-6.402	.000
D8*	3.347	3.055	.291	.046	874	6.334	.000
D9	3.317	3.234	.083	.045	874	1.850	.065
D10	3.407	3.347	.060	.057	874	1.058	.291
D11	3.161	3.261	-.085	.042	874	-1.404	.162
D12	3.879	3.684	.096	.039	874	1.075	.168
D13	3.327	3.197	.029	.058	874	1.033	.226
D14*	3.286	3.019	.267	.041	874	6.497	.000
D15*	3.266	3.036	.231	.036	874	6.386	.000
D16	3.070	3.061	.009	.055	874	.169	.866
D17*	3.794	3.525	.269	.043	874	6.176	.000
D18	3.950	3.715	.035	.036	874	1.455	.104
D19*	2.602	3.950	.520	.050	874	10.409	.000

Me: Mean score for Educators **Mt**: Mean score for Teachers **MD**: Mean Difference α= .05

Table 4 shows that indicators D1 (*skills of assessing students' needs to help identify learning goals*), D2 (*skills of selecting and sequencing any given Economic content*), D6 (*skills of outlining learning activities that enhance attainment of instructional objectives),* D9 *(skills of logical delivery of Economic content*) and D10 (*skills of using instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of students*). All these indicators yielded mean differences and t-values that were not statistically significant since in each case, p>0.05. With reference to the conceptual framework in Figure 1, these indicators constitute the canon of truth in respect of their validity as core elements of the ideal Economics teachers' professional skills.

$H_0$5: There will be no significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the *professional reflective practice* aspect of the teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity.

The result in Table 5 shows that indicators of Economics teachers' professional reflective practice such as E1 (*reflecting on his/her weaknesses and strengths in terms of knowledge of subject matter*), E3 (*reflecting on his/her knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of Economics*), E4 (*reflecting on his/her knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Economics*), E6 (*reflecting on his/her attitude and disposition towards the* subject), E8 (*reflecting on his/her working relationship with colleagues and auxiliary staff*), and E9 (*reflecting on his/her attitude towards students particularly during instructional sessions*). All these indicators yielded mean differences and t-values that were not statistically significant since in each case p>0.05. In view of the consensus in the opinions of respondents on the importance of these indicators, and with reference to the conceptual framework in Figure 1, they are validated and considered as essential components of the ideal Economics teachers' professional reflective practice.

Table 5. t-test analysis on importance attached to indicators of teachers' professional reflective practice between Economics teacher educators and Economics teachers.

Variables	Me	Mt	MD	Std. Error	df	t	p-value
E1	3.633	3.558	.075	.043	874	1.741	.082
E2*	2.955	3.091	-.136	.051	874	-2.654	.008
E3	2.764	2.751	.013	.054	874	.244	.807
E4	2.975	3.028	-.053	.053	874	-1.004	.316
E5*	2.030	2.437	-.407	.043	874	-9.414	.000
E6	3.322	3.342	-.021	.046	874	-.452	.651
E7*	3.191	2.763	.428	.060	874	7.172	.000
E8	3.131	2.841	.029	.053	874	.451	.581
E9	3.146	3.284	-.038	.051	874	-.916	.107
E10*	3.427	3.132	.295	.057	874	5.174	.000
E11	3.045	3.040	.005	.053	874	.093	.926
E12	3.769	3.558	.009	.048	874	.098	.901
E13*	2.940	2.617	.322	.063	874	5.079	.000
E14*	3.025	2.458	.567	.060	874	9.430	.000
E15	3.146	3.055	.091	.047	874	1.955	.051
E16*	2.111	2.398	-.287	.053	874	-5.450	.000
E17	3.121	3.325	-.025	.055	874	-.755	.611
E18*	3.513	3.028	.484	.042	874	11.590	.000
E19	2.980	3.025	-.045	.039	874	-1.164	.245
E20	3.136	3.095	.041	.042	874	.971	.332
E21*	3.779	3.523	.256	.050	874	5.096	.000

Me: Mean score for Educators **Mt**: Mean score for Teachers **MD**: Mean Difference α= .05, * significant at p< .05

DISCUSSION

The finding shows significant difference in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the **identity** indicators of teachers' professional capacity. This finding supports the assertion of Smith (2005) that unlike **teachers** who are mainly required to be good practitioners, teacher educators are expected to be self-aware of what constitutes components of teacher education. The finding also lends credence to the opinion of Celik (2011) that the professional knowledge of teacher educators should be more comprehensive, in terms of

subject matter and the educational system that goes beyond their own personal teaching context. Teacher educators set the quality requirements and specific competencies for teachers. They are responsible for the quality of teachers. On account of these factors, Economic teacher educators are bound to have a better appreciation of the important indicators of teachers' professional capacity.

With regards to hypothesis two, the finding shows a mismatch in the opinions of respondents on the importance of *Economics teachers' knowledge in other related subjects*. Knowledge in other related subjects is a necessary condition for the interdisciplinary teaching of Economics. By implication, it appears the Economics teachers do not practice nor appreciate the merits associated with the interdisciplinary teaching of Economics, which in the opinion of Abbot and Nantz (1994) enhances students' retention and application of Economics concepts. The finding also reveals a lack of consensus in the opinions of respondents on the importance of *Economics teachers' knowledge in the methods of* ***inquiry*** *in Economics education* as a worthwhile requirement of their professional knowledge as suggested by Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) and Hammerness (2006). Teacher **inquiry** is alien to the SHS Economics teachers in Ghana because, unlike the teacher educators, this does not form part of their terms of reference as teachers at that level.

In respect of hypothesis three, the finding reveals a mismatch in respondents' opinions on the importance of certain indicators of Economics teachers' professional values. Specifically, the finding shows a certain level of divergence in opinion concerning the role of *emotional stability* as an indicator of Economics teachers' professional values, as suggested by (Lasky, 2000; Schmidt, 2001; and Zembylas, 2002). In this respect, the finding also shows a mismatch in the opinions of respondents on the importance of *teachers' moral uprightness* as an indicator of Economics teachers' professional values. This finding does not seem to provide support for the views of Wayne (1993) that unique morality of contemporary teaching **consist** of the teachers' deep moral obligation to help the student learn. Teachers need the support of parents so as to achieve maximum results (Eugenia, 1991). However, the finding of this study does not seem to support this opinion, As Lawrence-Lightfoot (2004) suggests, probably most teachers are not specifically trained in the skills they need to communicate effectively with parents.

Hypothesis four examined the difference in opinion between Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the professional skills aspects of teacher identity indicators as they relate to teachers' professional capacity. Specifically, the finding shows a mismatch in the opinions **of** respondents concerning *the skills of drawing the scheme of work*. This finding does not provide support for the views of Head (2009) that the scheme of work provides suggestions for organizing and supporting students' learning activities in Economics. In addition, the finding does not support the opinions of respondents in respect of the importance of Economics teachers' skills **by** *reviewing students' entry behaviour.* The finding is at variance with the exhortation of Saunders (1989) and Yuksel (2012) that activating students' prior knowledge, which demands expert skills on the part of the teacher, is an essential component of effective learning and teaching. The finding also shows a mismatch in the opinions **of** respondents concerning the importance of the acquirement of skills that enable Economics teachers to compose *essay-type and multiple-choice test items*. These two types of test items serve different purposes in the assessment of students' learning. In principle, they are not to be used arbitrarily. This finding gives credence to the assertion of Reiner, Bothell, Sudweeks and Wood (2002) that many essay-type test items are poorly designed and ineffectively used due to teachers' lack of interest and skills.

Hypothesis five examined **difference** in the opinions of Economics teachers and Economics teacher educators on the importance of the *reflective practice aspect of the teacher identity indicators* as they relate to teachers' professional capacity. The finding shows significant differences in the opinions of respondents on the importance of *Economics teachers' reflection on his/her knowledge of students' weaknesses, strengths and interest*. A plausible explanation for this mismatch stems from the fact that Economics teachers seem to place undue emphasis on the mastery of subject matter and its delivery, ignoring other factors such as knowledge of their students' interest, strengths and weaknesses. This finding is therefore at variance with the opinions of Shulman (1992) and Turner-Bisset (1999) that teachers should be able to identify through reflection, the strengths and weaknesses of different learners, and should have the knowledge to work with such students.

The finding further reveals a mismatch in the opinions of respondents concerning the importance of Economics teachers' *reflection on his/her ability to influence students' academic achievement in Economics*. This finding does not seem to support the assertion of Good and Brophy (2003) that teacher reflection on his/her self-efficacy may improve students' achievement. Reflection on self-efficacy leads to advances in teacher intellectualism, practitioner self-management, an increase in practitioner ability to remain current in the field, and a constructivist paradigm of life-long learning (Nolan and Huebner, 1989).

CONCLUSION

Moving from the ideal paradigm in the conceptual framework in Figure 1 through the implementable paradigm as presented in the Questionnaire, to the observed or validated paradigm as interpreted from the data, the following is a list of irreducible or benchmark indicators of the ideal professional Economics teacher in Ghana:

A. In terms of *professional knowledge*, the Economics teacher can be identified by his/her knowledge of:

The subject matter of Economics

- Strengths and weaknesses in terms of pedagogical skills
- Psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of Economics
- Current trends and developments in the teaching of Economics
- Suitable curriculum materials for Economics education

B. In the sphere of *professional values*, the Economics teacher must demonstrate:

A positive attitude towards the subject at all times

- The practice of inspiring students towards high level achievement in Economics
- A belief in his/her ability to influence students' achievement in Economics
- Total commitment to the teaching of Economics
- A culture of maintaining a collaborative working relationship with colleagues
- The habit of participating in professional development programmes

C. In the area of *professional skills*, the Economics teacher should possess and practice the skills of:

- Using appropriate communication
- Effective class management
- Selecting and sequencing any given Economic content

Using instructional techniques that ensure the active involvement of students

Assessing students' needs to help identify learning goals

Harmonizing evaluation questions with instructional **OBJECTIVES**

Logical delivery of Economics content

Illustrating Economic concepts with appropriate examples

Alternating low-order questions with high-order questions during instructional sessions

D. With respect to the rubric of *professional reflective practice*, the ideal Economics teacher should occasionally reflect on his/her:

Strengths and weaknesses in terms of knowledge of the subject matter

Knowledge of psychology of learning as it relates to the teaching of Economics

Knowledge of current trends and developments in the teaching of Economics

Attitude and disposition towards the subject

Working relationship with colleagues and auxiliary staff

Level of commitment to the teaching of Economics

Skills of communication employed during instructional sessions

Teaching/learning activities and their relationship with instructional objectives

Selection and use of instructional techniques that ensure active student participation

Competence in designing and scoring various test items

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was carried out with the intention that insights gained from it would be of assistance to Economics teachers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, education policy makers and researchers, among others. As part of the ongoing capacity-building courses for in-service Economics teachers, themes such as techniques of enquiry in Economics education, teacher emotional well-being and effectiveness and skills of designing schemes of work should be incorporated so as to bridge the gaps in their professional capacity in terms of knowledge, values and skills. Economics teachers should be constantly trained to reflect on the cognitive, affective and practical aspects of their competence. Curriculum developers should incorporate

programmes aimed at bridging the discrepancy between the ideal competency targets of Economics teacher educators and the currently held achievable targets of Economics teachers.

LIMITATIONS

Respondents were restricted to only close-ended Likert Scale items. Close-ended items do not offer opportunity for respondents to articulate divergent perspectives. Probably, divergent perspectives could have enriched this study than it is now. In addition, the research instrument sought opinions on theoretical knowledge, an opportunity to see the practical knowledge of respondents being put to use was not explored. Furthermore, since the study was indicator-driven, the t-test was found useful in the determination of valid indicators of each of the four rubrics of teachers' professional capacity. Probably, the use of other equally suitable statistical techniques such as the chi-square (X^2) could have yielded different results, which, however may or may not be significant. Regardless of all these limitations, the findings and conclusions of this study are still valid.

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