



# Professional Identity: A Conceptual Approximation

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## Summary

It presents the construction of the theoretical foundations of the project “Pedagogical professional culture and Latin American and Cuban cultural identity”, which contributes, from its scope, to the improvement of the process of training education professionals, based on the formation of a pedagogical professional culture and the consolidation of Cuban and Latin American cultural identity from a fundamentally professional approach, which will affect the improvement of the quality of graduates pedagogical careers, the consolidation of the sense of belonging from the knowledge of Cuban and Latin American pedagogical traditions and cultural heritage, and consequently work in the educational institutions of the different educational studies, enhancing the school as the main cultural center of the community, and strengthening the integrationist processes in Latin America from the educational activity. The logic of the work proposes a partial result that is achieved as part of the systematization of scientific results related to the subject.

## Abstract

It is presented the construction of the theoretical foundations of the project pedagogic professional Culture and identity cultural Latin American and Cuban”, which contributes, from their reach, to the improvement of the process of professionals’ of the education formation, on the base of the formation of a pedagogic professional culture and the consolidation of the Cuban cultural identity and Latin American from a focus, fundamentally professional, that which will impact in the improvement of the quality of the egresados of the pedagogic careers, the consolidation of the sense of ownership starting from the knowledge of the traditions and the Cuban and Latin American pedagogic cultural patrimony, and consequently of the work in the educational institutions of the different educations, potenciando to the school like main cultural center of the community, and strengthening the processes integracionistas in Latin America from the educational activity. In the logic of the work he/she intends a partial result that it is reached like part of the systematizing of the scientific results related with the thematic one.

**Keywords:** Projects; Pedagogic Professional Culture; Cultural Identity

## Introduction

As part of the scientific research work of the Ministry of Higher Education in Cuba and sponsored by Vice-Rector of Research and Postgraduate at the Central University of Las Villas, the Cuban and Latin American Cultural Identity Program is developed. Routes for its strengthening in the face of the economic and social transformations of the contemporary world, which opened its doors to the conception of research projects in the country. Among the projects approved is Professional Pedagogical Culture and Latin American and Cuban cultural identity, whose main executing entity, is teachers of the University of Oriente in Santiago de Cuba. The overall objective of the project is to propose actions to perfect the formation of pedagogical professional culture from university processes as a contribution to the consolidation of Cuban and Latin American cultural identity. In this sense, we recognize the

data provided by various authors that describe and establish relationships and allowed to select valuable contributions to produce new theosomic constructs. It constitutes a background in the development of this project, the results of research and projects related to the school as a cultural center of the community, the school culture as a space for the systematization of the educational sciences, the formation of the professional historical culture in education professionals, as well as results of doctoral thesis, master’s and student science work developed and/or tutored by members of the collective of researchers.

## Materials and Methods

In the initial design of the proposed project, methods of the theoretical level were delimited whose definition will depend

on the operationalization of the conceptualized variables in the process of constructing the theoretical reference framework, a task that takes into account:

- a. Knowledge of the content of pedagogical professional culture concepts, and pedagogical professional identity.
- b. Traits of professional pedagogical culture.
- c. Degree of identification with the profession (positive and negative factors affecting that identification)
- d. Teacher vision of teachers, students, society.
- e. Knowledge of the tradition of the Latin American, Cuban and Santiaguero Magisterium (contributions to the pedagogy, life and work of outstanding educators)
- f. Criteria about whether there is a Cuban and Latin American pedagogy.
- g. Contribution of initial and permanent training processes to the construction of pedagogical professional identity.
- h. Inadequacies of training processes that have a negative impact on motivation and identification with the pedagogical profession.

Three aspects are significant in the implementation of the project: the delimitation of activities, objectives and expected results. The systematization of scientific results related to pedagogical professional identity, as well as the development of a conceptual theoretical framework for the analysis of the process of formation of professional pedagogical culture in its interrelationship with the building Cuban and Latin American cultural identity, were the first activities, with the intention of developing the conceptual theoretical framework, this proposal will only address the professional identity category. The theoretical methods used in this systematization are documentary analysis, which has facilitated the study and analysis of specialized and updated literatures, as well as articles that allow to assume dissimilar positions. The hermeneutic method for the understanding, explanation and interpretation of the data contained in the literature consulted.

## Results

It is the criterion that, in their most general access, investigative projects of any nature, constitute planned and interrelated activities coordinated with each other for a purpose or purpose, in a way that anticipates something, and involves one or more people to achieve the planned. They have impacts on society through coherently structured activities to transform existing reality. Initially the projects develop their theoretical support, hence their first task is the elaboration of the conceptual framework; in our study is part of a systematization of scientific results related to the subject, assuming systematization as the degree of generalization of knowledge for the elaboration of a new knowledge. The problem of identity is now the focus of all social sciences; from what can be inferred that the interpretative schemes around this category are essentially social associated with human action, prism through which all

other aspects of contemporary life are discovered, understood and examined [1,2]. Identity is often approached as a social construct that expresses the perception of the individual, of himself, in every moment and place, unlike another. It is a complex phenomenon, which encloses hidden trends that has moments of continuity and permanence. It begins to manifest itself at the moment when we realize a difference – which may seem paradoxical if it is identity–identity sums up something that not only exists, but we feel and collectively assume, the content of the concept of identity cultural, from its position, encompasses everything, even the national, hence considering the concept of cultural identity more comprehensive than that of nation [3]. Identity is also valued in its historically determined character, the result of social relations and man's perception of it in every moment and historical-concrete place. [4] values "identity as historical-cultural signs that determine the specificity of the region and, with it, the possibility of its recognition in a relationship with the understanding of the nexus between the equal and the different" (p. 151). As [1] points out (2006), identity is built, hence its historical meaning, and they are formed in complex contexts that include the presence of other cultures for which one's own belonging is defined, therefore, they are not immune to transformations, socio-economic and classist determinations of identity cannot be ignored. They do not have an invariable essence above history, but "are made and undone" [1], so it expresses the continuity of the story as a reflection of its becoming. Thus, identity is "knowledge and appropriation of historical memory, of the past, but a past that can be reconstructed or reinvented, but that is known and appropriate by all" [5]. The continuity of a nation in time, or the goods associated with the past, are often associated also by identity researchers, also as memory, self-recognition, reference, ways of being, values and codes in which people are recognize and resemble. The dynamic nature of identities is determined because, as they exist, they change, adapt, and make constant internal adjustments, they are even internally heterogeneous. In this regard, Polanco continues to assess, the identity groups are not fully homogeneous, harmonious and stable entities, nor are they without tensions, but they have to resolve internal conflicts permanently, to the extent that within them they there are subgroups between which contradictions and options can be generated. Therefore, there are multiple, hierarchical identities whose identity systems constitute fields for self-reflection and criticism, not just for accession; for choice and dissenso, not just consensus. Such is how the stay in an identity system goes through a thoughtful choice, the test of dissent and the voluntary choice to maintain belonging [1]. Identity according to the hero of the Republic of Cuba, José Martí, the ethical is the valued parameter of human identity (individual and social) and at the same time means to engender human quality. In this sense, identity builds cultural historical signs. This is how, at the social level, social groups produce images of themselves with which they identify and become a community of projects, judgments, shared values. We see groups that have the same tastes, values, say, intellectuals, doctors, teachers and on a macro scale, at the nation level: Cubans, Yankees, etc. This is because every person bears an identity, but he bears within himself the whole history of his people, of his race, of his nation, of his group.

For [6] "identity is not decreed. No one by theoretical or ideological conceptions, of political coexistence, or arguments of any kind can say that this people are like this or this element of identity is important. People live, remember, and perceive" (p. 8). From then on, the place that in the process of formation of identity concerns them to the experiences of the subject, elaborated from what he remembers and perceives. In the current global context, we are witnessing a process of globalization, which does not deny, but enforces various criteria respecting identities as ways of manifesting a sense of the very thing and new ways of appropriating them. Thus, identities move and dynamize, transform and transfigure at a speed not seen before, given by the current process of internationalization [7,8]. As [9] points out (2003), identity creates the foundations on which a harmonious coexistence is built, hence, it is significant to highlight the leading role of the teacher in the construction of the intercultural identity of the new generations, hence, professional identity is associated with what the individual makes of himself in relation to his professional reference group, in a space and a certain time, according to [10]. Identity is a concept that examines various human phenomena and processes, so it has become a tool for the study of a wide variety of phenomena such as power relations, division and social cohesion, the relationship between emotional and cognitive processes, the place of individuals in groups, discursive patterns and tendencies, the feeling of being similar or distinct, social recognition and, not least in the context of this monograph, the sense of educational contexts [11].

## Results

Dis from the authors' perspective, the following are meant as general characteristics around the identity category:

- a. Identity is social construction, since it is built on a long social historical process, based on the ethnic, economic, geographical characteristics, among others, of individuals and peoples.
- b. It is based on social relations: Hence prime interaction, that is, give and receive.
- c. Identity is the perception of man: Because he tells us how it is perceived and how this is perceived by others. It stands as a differentiating axis for belonging or not.
- d. Identity is feeling, it is recognition, collective, culture, way of expressing itself: The perception of man is formed in the collective, in his social relations. It expands in expression: Language, poetry, customs.
- e. Recognizes, immediate community, broad community, open process, historical becoming: It gives us the particular and the universal of the concept, the regional, national, general of each historical time.
- f. It summarizes something that not only exists in itself, but we feel and collectively assume, it is a qualifying trait of legitimacy before the other.
- g. Being a differentiating manifestation, its differentiation occurs within the scope of a unit.

h. Identity should not be considered a differentiating medium, but a path to universality.

i. Diversity is a substantial part of the human; therefore, it does not need to be tolerated, it requires being preserved as an expression of cultural and social wealth.

j. It is formed through rebellions, accommodative and initiatives in everyday life.

Feeling identified with the profession is defined as a professional identity; is to assume the social commission for which the person has prepared himself in a specialty, with satisfaction, autonomy, commitment, responsibility and awareness of why and for what was studied that and not another and what is the position to assume in the face of the social demands to the profession. [12], goal achieved after having traveled through a lot of obstacles, that is, as a finished process [13]. The process of building and consolidating professional identity begins from the moment the student enters the race, so, there are dissimilar levels of identity construction, of greater and lower degree of generality related to each other. It is a process that never ends, that is why it is built, being essential to define it, the other. The pedagogical professional identity integrates the professional knowledge and skills necessary for the good performance of the social function of the teacher, with the obtaining of satisfactory results, with the moral and humanist values that move the attitude and behavior that is assumed in the work and before society; essential conditions required by the education professional to fulfill his social commission [14]. From a martyred perspective, it is a sense of duty, morality, human dignity, love, the way of service to be undertaken in life in the face of material appetites, power, and the vanities of glory. According to [15], it is to place in every man all the human work that has preceded it: it is to make every man a summary of the living world, until the day he lives: it is to put him at the level of his time, it is to prepare him for life" (1883), understood life as the common good, sovereignty and the building of a society as just as possible. It is the formation of a cultured man, aware of the historical moment that has come with him, endowed with the knowledge, skills and hierarchy of values for life at a concrete historical moment and to teach his disciples to live. In the case of teachers, the teacher must be distinguished by his culture, by his education, by the purity of his ideals and feelings, his correct and pleasant language and, above all, by being an example of integrity and nobility.

## Discussion

Identity sets out various factors such as: past school experience, belonging, human relations, the perception of the University as a unit, territoriality, affinities, education, bonding, rules and difficulty of membership in the institution. Hence it is agreed that identity manifests itself as the awareness of differences and similarities related to communities, social groups and entities with similar or even dissimilar historical processes, coinciding with the criteria of [16,17].

It can then be understood that the formation of the pedagogical professional identity is realized in traits such as:

- i. Sense of belonging.
- ii. Professional historical memory.
- iii. Professional pedagogical culture.
- iv. Pedagogical professionalism.

The above considerations define the need to scientifically address the phenomenon of professional identity with regard to formative processes and are reasons to channel a new epistemological alternative. The criteria about identity are rooted in the development of human society; in the construction of identity then acquires meaning the human and the experiential. Opting for identity allows you to delve into social processes in link with the individual; thus, by associating with educational practice, it creates conditions for the development of the pedagogical professional identity, which has its livelihood in our own sociocultural roots, where the pedagogical legacy must lead to the specific and the universal human, and where the essence of education engenders the cultivation of everyone's intelligence, in bond with feelings.

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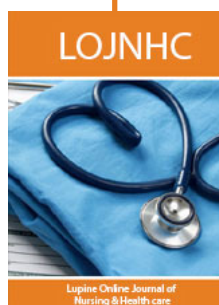


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