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Teachers' Interpersonal Role Identity

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This article investigates the link between teachers' appraisal of specific interpersonal situations in classrooms and their more general interpersonal identity standard, which together form their interpersonal role identity. Using semi-structured and video-stimulated interviews, data on teachers' appraisals and interpersonal identity standards were collected and analyzed using appraisal and interpersonal circumplex theory. Results show a variety of interpersonal identity standards, although the majority of the teachers mentions standards focusing on the codes steering and being friendly. The situation "reacting to student positive behavior" evoked most appraisals that confirmed identity standards. For 13 of the 29 teachers, their identity standard matched with their appraisals. In most cases, however, this match was only to some extent (10 teachers) and sometimes not at all (six teachers). The results suggest that teachers can enhance their relationship with students by becoming more aware of the meanings teachers attach to this relationship in specific situations.

Keywords: teacher identity, teacher-student relationship, appraisal, identity standard

During the last two decades, an increasing number of studies have focused on the professional identity of teachers (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). In these studies, the teacher-student relationship was found to play an important role. For example, Sikes, Measor, and Woods (1991) stated that the teacher-student relationship was one of the three main features of teachers' professional identity, next to the subject they teach and teachers' role conception. Furthermore, O'Connor (2008) showed in an ethnographical study, that a positive professional relationship with students is seen by teachers as "being an integral part of their professional identity" (p. 121). Next to that, in a study on secondary school teachers' professional identities, Beijaard (1995) elicited 14 themes that—in his opinion—were relevant for shaping teachers' professional identity. The themes were the results of a literature study on professional identity, the sources for which were selected by researchers and experienced teachers on the basis of consensus. The majority of the themes were related to teacher-student relationships, namely: (1) respect for students; (2) respect of students; (3) interaction with students; (4) bond with students; (5) preference for

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(certain groups of) students; (6) keeping distance from students; (7) affective neutrality; and (8) commitment to helping students. From these studies, we know that novice teachers face many identity-related tensions and problems that pertain to classroom management and developing a good relationship with students (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Macdonald, 1999; Pillen, Beijaard, & Den Brok, 2012; Veenman, 1984; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998). In this study, we will therefore focus on the professional identity of teachers concerning the teacher-student relationship, henceforth referred to as teachers' interpersonal role identity. The interpersonal role identity is a specific part of the professional identity of teachers, since it focuses on the element of teacher identity that deals with the teacher-student relationship.

A teacher has several roles to enact while teaching, varying from being a subject matter to an interpersonal expert who interacts and builds a relationship with students. The result of the meanings a teacher attributes to themselves while in a particular role is called one's role identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). The internalized set of meanings related to teacher-student relationships that teachers apply to themselves and enact in practice is called the interpersonal role identity (*ibid*).

Following Burke and Stets (2009), the interpersonal role identity is seen as a system in which two main aspects influence each other: first, the interpersonal appraisal, which is the process of evaluating an interpersonal situation with respect to its importance and effect for a teacher's well-being; second, the interpersonal identity standard, a frame of reference that consists of the set of self-relevant meanings or ideas that define the character of the role identity (*ibid*). In this study, the *interpersonal* identity standard is defined as the *interpersonal* frame of reference of a teacher. Both the appraisal and the identity standard influence each other: someone's appraisal is influenced by and will influence their interpersonal identity standard. Teachers' interpersonal role identity is in this study empirically researched by using semi-structured interviews to collect data about the interpersonal identity standard and by using video-stimulated semi-structured interviews to collect data about the appraisal. Despite the acknowledged importance of professional identity on the one hand and teacher-student relationships on the other, empirical research about a specific role identity, such as the interpersonal role identity, or about the effect of appraisals of specific interpersonal classroom situations on interpersonal identity standards, is, to our knowledge, non-existent. Therefore, a first step in exploring the interpersonal role identity is to study the two elements of the interpersonal role identity as well as their associations, using a descriptive approach. By doing so, insight will be gained into the interpersonal role identity, enabling, for instance, teacher educators to elicit the appraisal processes of specific classroom situations and interpersonal identity standards of student teachers.

This study aims to explore this interpersonal role identity by focusing on teachers' appraisals of interpersonal classroom situations and how these are related to their interpersonal identity standards. The study was shaped by the central research question: How do teachers appraise (different) interpersonal classroom situations and how is this related to their interpersonal identity standard? Based on our theoretical framework, the main question can be subdivided into several specific sub-questions:

- (1) How do teachers appraise specific interpersonal classroom situations?
- (2) What interpersonal identity standards do teachers report?

For the purpose of this study, a conceptual model was created—the model of the interpersonal role identity—consisting of two elements: the appraisal and the interpersonal identity standard.

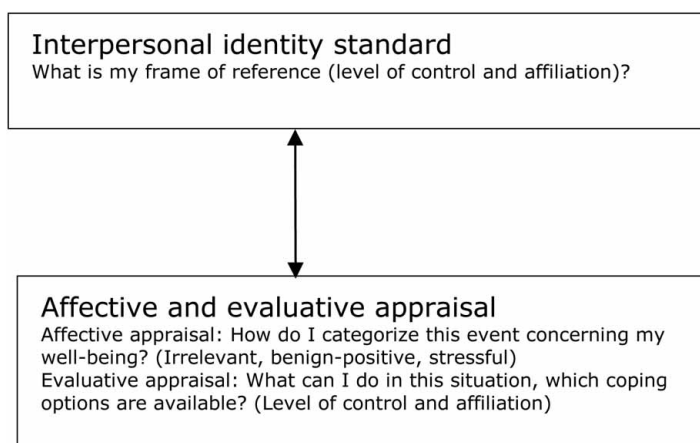


Figure 1. Schematic overview of the interpersonal role identity.

In Figure 1, the interaction between the interpersonal identity standard and the appraisal of the situation is displayed. Every person experiences and evaluates situations. During this evaluation, the appraisal of the situation is compared with someone's frame of reference: the identity standard. The model of the interpersonal role identity we use in this study (Figure 1) draws upon the identity theory of Burke and Stets (2009), in which the appraisal of a situation (cf. Admiraal, 1994; Admiraal, Korthagen, & Wubbels, 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) influences and is influenced by the interpersonal identity standard.

For example, when at the start of the lesson the students enter the classroom talking loudly to each other, the teachers can evaluate this situation in different ways: they can think that it is important to let the students settle down and have a minute to talk informally to their peers, or they can think that it is very important to use all the available time to teach the subject to the students and therefore everyone should be quiet and be prepared to begin the lesson immediately. Depending on their interpersonal identity standard, a teacher will evaluate a situation differently and, consequently, will also behave differently. This interpersonal identity standard is thus influenced by and influences the appraisal of a situation, and vice versa.

Taken together, the appraisal and the interpersonal identity standard are someone's interpersonal role identity. Insight into the interpersonal role identity can help teacher educators to understand how (student) teachers react in specific classroom situations interpersonally.

Theoretical Framework

The Appraisal of Interpersonal Classroom Situations and the Interpersonal Identity Standard

The concept of appraisal can be understood as the process of evaluating a situation with respect to its importance and effect on a teacher's well-being (cf. Admiraal, 1994; Admiraal et al., 2000; Arnold, 1960; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Consciously or unconsciously, the appraisal process takes place continuously: every situation is evaluated by individuals (Am

I in trouble? Is this harmful for myself? What should I do now?). In line with Burke and Stets (2009), the appraisal process is the starting point of the interpersonal role identity that guides the behavior of the person. The appraisal literature distinguishes different elements of an appraisal (cf. Admiraal, 1994; Admiraal et al., 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001). A distinction is often made between an affective appraisal (in some studies referred to as “first” or “primary” appraisal) and an evaluative appraisal (in some studies referred to as “second” or “secondary” appraisal), which together form the appraisal process (Admiraal, 1994; Admiraal et al., 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The affective appraisal, summarized in the question “Am I in trouble or being benefited, now or in the future and in what way?”, is often expressed in an emotion or feeling and can be divided into three kinds of affective appraisal: irrelevant, benign-positive, and stressful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When a situation is appraised as *irrelevant*, this means that a teacher experiences no implications for their well-being/teaching and the situation impinges on no value, need, or commitment or other part of the teacher's identity standard. *Benign-positive* appraisals can be found in classroom situations that teachers experience as enhancing or preserving their well-being. When an event is appraised as *stressful*, a teacher evaluates it as being harmful or threatening for themselves.

The evaluative appraisal is a complex evaluative process that takes the following factors into account: (1) which options are available to deal with the situation; (2) the likelihood that a given option will accomplish what it is supposed to (outcome expectation); and (3) the likelihood that one can apply a particular strategy or set of strategies effectively (efficacy expectation). The central question for the evaluative appraisal is, “What can and might be done about it?”, as well as, “Who is accountable for this situation?” (ibid, p. 35).

Although someone's interpersonal role identity is continuously under (re)construction (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004), there are certain components of a person's role identity that are more stable and function as a personal frame of reference (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 63). This frame of reference, the identity standard, “defines the character of the role identity according to the individual” (ibid, pp. 32, 63). In addition, a teacher's interpersonal identity standard represents the interpersonal ideals of the teacher (ibid, p. 3). Higgins (1987) emphasizes the importance of separate identity standards and argues for a distinction between someone's ideal standard and one's expected standard, since a discrepancy between those two standards can also cause stress. However, we agree with Burke and Stets, who state that, “although Higgins frames his work in terms of different types of standards, we think it is more useful to consider the different sources of the meanings held in the identity standard” (2005, p. 48).

According to Burke and Stets (2009), teachers continuously verify their interpersonal role identity in classroom situations. In a situation in which the identity standard is confirmed during the appraisal, interpersonal role identity verification occurs. Interpersonal role identity verification means that appraisals of the teacher in the situation are consistent with a teacher's interpersonal identity standard. A lack of identity verification occurs when the appraisal of the person in the situation does not match with the person's interpersonal identity standard (ibid). If there is a lack of identity verification, “people become upset or distressed in varying degrees” (ibid, p. 208). According to Burke and Stets, people will try to change this mismatch of appraisals and identity standard into a matching couple. This can be done by either changing the appraisal of a situation (“Maybe the classroom wasn't as chaotic as I thought it was”) or by changing the identity standard (“Maybe in general students do not have to be quiet all the time and listen to me; it can be good for them to chit chat a bit and walk around every now and then”).

Interpersonal Relationships

Teacher-student relationships can be conceptualized and described in terms of two dimensions that are both independent and necessary to give a complete picture of the teacher-student relationship: a control dimension and an affiliation dimension (Wubbels, Brekelmans, Den Brok, & Van Tartwijk, 2006). In this study, the evaluative appraisal and the interpersonal identity standard are analyzed using the Teacher Interpersonal Circle (Wubbels et al., 2006).

Previous studies have shown the value of depicting interpersonal relationships between students and teachers using the Teacher Interpersonal Circle (ibid). The Teacher Interpersonal Circle consists of two dimensions: (1) the *control* dimension describes the degree of control the teacher has (as experienced by the students) when interacting with students, and (2) the *affiliation* dimension describes the degree of cooperation or opposition between the teacher and the students. The two dimensions are shown in Figure 2 and can be subdivided into eight different interpersonal categories depending on different combinations of the level of the control and affiliation dimensions: (1) steering, (2) friendly, (3) understanding, (4) accommodating, (5) uncertain, (6) dissatisfied, (7) reprimanding, and (8) enforcing (ibid).

In this study, three interpersonal classroom situations will be used to elicit appraisals. These interpersonal classroom situations are the start of the lesson, reacting to student misbehavior, and reacting to student positive behavior. In previous research, all three classroom situations have been found to be important with respect to the teacher-student interpersonal relationship (Admiraal, 1994; Admiraal, Wubbels, & Korthagen, 1996; Wubbels et al., 2006).

Method

Participants

This study was conducted with 29 teachers in general secondary schools in the Netherlands. Selection criterion for participation was the teachers’ interpersonal expertise. To

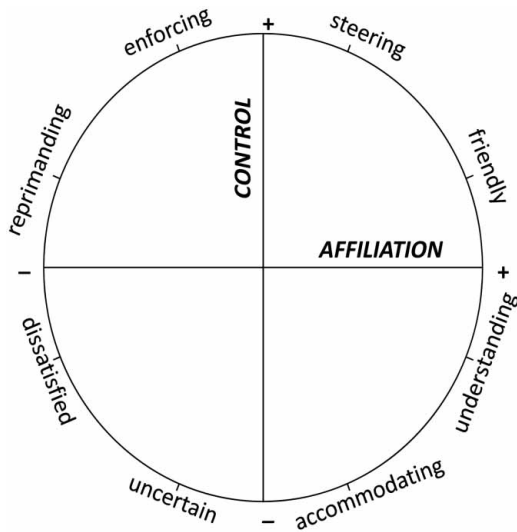


Figure 2. Teacher Interpersonal Circle.

select participants, we invited teachers through large internet fora by using a network of schools from teacher training institutes and by advertising in teacher magazines/journals. In total, 180 teachers (from 60 schools) responded to our calls. From these 180 teachers, a stratified random sample of 29 secondary school teachers was selected with different teacher-student interpersonal classroom climates in their classroom, according to the following procedure.

All 180 teachers were asked to distribute the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) among the students in one of their classes and to facilitate time during the lesson for students to complete this questionnaire (Wubbels, Créton, & Hooymayers, 1985). From the 180 teachers, 135 returned to the researchers the questionnaire completed by their students. The QTI measures the teacher-student interpersonal relationship, or interpersonal classroom climate, in terms of the Teacher Interpersonal Circle (cf. Figure 2) as perceived by students (student perception) and by teachers (teacher perception). Only the student perception was used in this study to map the interpersonal classroom climate. Class results on the QTI can be characterized in several types or profiles of teacher-student relationship (e.g., Wubbels et al., 2006), representing a variety of teacher-student relationships in terms of the two interpersonal dimensions (cf. Figure 3). The teachers who were selected to participate in this research had relationships with their students that could be characterized across each of the eight types. The Authoritative (three teachers), Tolerant/Authoritative (three teachers), and Tolerant (three teachers) types are teachers who are seen by their students as being cooperative with them and having an influence on what happens in the classroom, without being strict or very dominant. The Directive (three teachers) type of teacher is regarded by their students as having a lot of influence on what happens in the classroom and being, to a certain degree, cooperative. The Uncertain/Tolerant (four teachers) and the Drudging (four teachers) types are seen by their students as less cooperative (than the other types) and as having insufficient influence in the classroom. The Repressive (five teachers) and the Uncertain/Aggressive (two teachers) types of teacher are regarded by their students as barely cooperative, in which the former type is very dominant and the latter is not (ibid).

As can be seen in Table 1, the selected teachers also differed in terms of subject taught and gender.

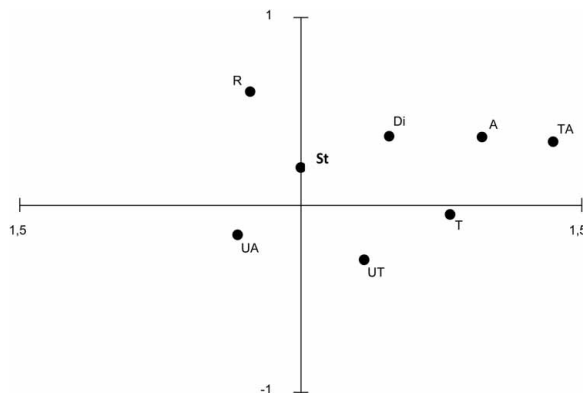


Figure 3. Main points of the eight types of patterns of interpersonal relationships.

A = Authoritative, Di = Directive, St = Struggling, T = Tolerant, R = Repressive, TA = Tolerant/Authoritative, UA = Uncertain/Aggressive, UT = Uncertain/Tolerant.

Table 1
General Characteristics of the 29 Respondents

Alias / Name	Gender	Age	Subject taught	Interpersonal profile
Carin	Female	40	Dutch	Repressive
John	Male	25	Physics	Repressive
Andrew	Male	50	Chemistry	Drudging
Paul	Male	34	Physics	Drudging
Ben	Male	29	Social Studies	Directive
Matthew	Male	24	Physics	Authoritative
Peter	Male	28	Biology	Tolerant-Authoritative
Patrick	Male	43	Physics	Tolerant
Louise	Female	39	Physics	Uncertain-Tolerant
Jane	Female	28	Chemistry	Uncertain-Tolerant
Denise	Female	29	Chemistry	Uncertain-Aggressive
Joyce	Female	47	French	Repressive
Daniel	Male	46	Economics	Drudging
Dorothy	Female	42	Biology	Directive
Charlotte	Female	50	Dutch	Authoritative
Lucy	Female	35	Dutch	Tolerant-Authoritative
Billy	Male	35	Arts	Tolerant
David	Male	47	Physics	Uncertain-Tolerant
Beth	Female	40	Social Studies	Repressive
Michael	Male	34	History	Drudging
Jane	Female	56	Arts	Repressive
Rosy	Female	55	Economics	Drudging
Thomas	Male	59	Arts	Directive
Christine	Female	42	Physics	Authoritative
Luke	Male	50	Physics	Uncertain-Aggressive
Angel	Female	53	Latin	Tolerant-Authoritative
Mark	Male	53	Arts	Tolerant
Adrian	Male	54	Geography	Uncertain-Tolerant
Philip	Male	56	Geography	Repressive

Data Collection and Procedure

In order to answer our research question about the appraisals of the three classroom situations (start of the lesson, student misbehavior, and student positive behavior) and identity standards of teachers, we chose qualitative methods of data collection. As stated in the theoretical framework, the three selected classroom situations are of major importance for teacher–student relationships and occur in each lesson. Two interviews per teacher, conducted on the same day, were used for data collection, and included one semi-structured interview and one video-stimulated interview. The semi-structured interview was conducted to gain insight into teachers’ interpersonal identity standard; the video-stimulated interview, which was also semi-structured, was held to study teachers’ appraisals of the three specific classroom situations.

The two interviews lasted approximately one hour in total and were conducted between March and September 2011. The interviews took place at the school of the teacher (with the

Table 2
Interview Questions per Fragment of the Video-stimulated Interview

Component	Question
1. Description:	Can you describe what is happening here? How do you describe this event and how relevant is this event for you?
2. Affective appraisal:	What did you feel and think at that moment?
3. Evaluative appraisal:	What were your options at that moment? What were you planning to do?

consent of both school management and respondent). Prior to the interviews, though on the same day, one of the teacher's lessons was video-taped and observed by the researcher (students were informed beforehand by the teachers and were given the opportunity not to be visible on camera).

The semi-structured interview was conducted prior to the video-stimulated interview and focused on the interpersonal identity standard of the teachers, including questions concerning the teacher's views on their teacher-student relationship.

The video-stimulated interview was conducted directly after the semi-structured interview and focused on the appraisal of the specific classroom situations. Using fragments of their video-taped lesson, the teacher was asked to watch and comment on specific fragments of the lesson. All respondents were asked to watch and comment on the start of the lesson. In addition, all respondents were asked to select two fragments: one fragment of student misbehavior and one fragment of positive student behavior. The respondent was asked to indicate when the fragment started and finished. Therefore, the length of the fragments ranged from a few seconds to several minutes. Each teacher was asked to reflect on the fragments by answering three questions per fragment, which are shown in Table 2. Each of the questions asked was related to one of the components of the theoretical framework. The first question dealt with the description of the situation, followed by questions regarding the affective and evaluative appraisal (cf. Table 3) and questions to relate this appraisal to the teacher's identity standard.

Analysis

To analyze the semi-structured interview that focused on the interpersonal identity standard, the Teacher Interpersonal Circle (containing the categories steering, friendly, understanding, accommodating, uncertain, dissatisfied, reprimanding, and enforcing) was used.

To analyze the video-stimulated interview that focused on the appraisals of the three classroom situations, two methods of analysis were used. The affective appraisal was analyzed with the three categories of Lazarus and Folkman (1984): (1) benign-positive, (2) stressful, and (3) irrelevant. The evaluative appraisal was analyzed, similar to the analysis of the interpersonal identity standard, using the Teacher Interpersonal Circle (Burke & Stets, 2009; Wubbels et al., 2006). As mentioned in our theoretical framework, previous research has shown the high value of the Teacher Interpersonal Circle in describing teachers' behavior (Wubbels et al., 2006). Since teachers describe their interpersonal identity standard and their evaluative

Table 3
Affective and Evaluative Appraisals per Situation^a

Evaluative appraisal	Start of the lesson			Student misbehavior			Positive student behavior			Total
	Affective appraisal (number of teachers = 27)			Affective appraisal (number of teachers = 27)			Affective appraisal (number of teachers = 25)			79
	Benign-positive (n = 9) ^b	Stressful (n = 9)	Irrelevant (n = 9)	Benign-positive (n = 2)	Stressful (n = 16)	Irrelevant (n = 9)	Benign-positive (n = 22)	Stressful (n = 0)	Irrelevant (n = 3)	
Steering	6	6	3	1	2	8	10	–	1	31
Friendly	4	3	4	–	2	1	10	–	0	24
Understanding	4	1	1	–	0	0	4	–	0	10
Accommodating	4	5	8	–	4	0	3	–	0	24
Uncertain	–	4	2	1	6	0	1	–	0	14
Dissatisfied	–	6	2	2	8	0	3	–	1	22
Reprimanding	1	5	2	1	11	8	1	–	1	30
Enforcing	2	1	1	0	2	0	1	–	–	7
Total	21	31	23	5	40	17	33	–	3	162

^aTeachers with missing affective appraisals in a specific situation were left out.

^bNumber of appraisals. For the evaluative appraisals, the total number of appraisals is higher than the total number of teachers since the teachers could give a maximum of three evaluative appraisals per situation.

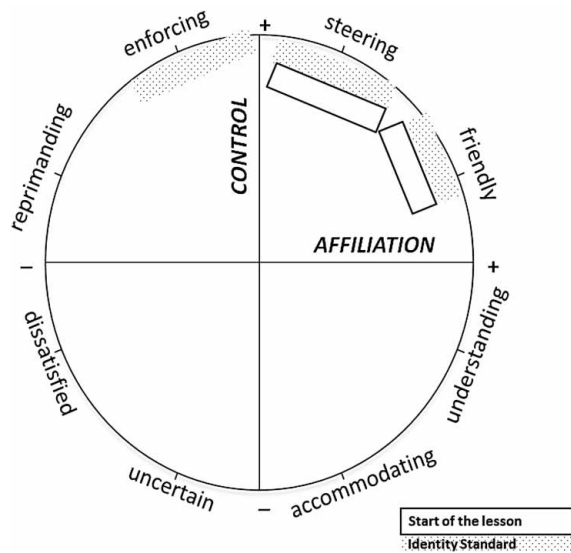


Figure 4. The interpersonal role identity of Matthew.

appraisal in terms of their behavior, the Teacher Interpersonal Circle offers an excellent instrument for our analysis. An example of analyzed data can be found in Figure 4.

To test the usefulness and completeness of the coding categories for the analysis of the semi-structured and the video-stimulated interviews, 12 interviews (six semi-structured and six video-stimulated interviews) were randomly selected from the total of 58 interviews and were transcribed verbatim and coded using Atlas-ti 6.2.

Semi-structured Interview: The Interpersonal Identity Standard

Fragments were selected that pertained to teacher-student relationships in which the respondent talked directly or indirectly about their identity standard. The following steps were undertaken in the process of analysis for the semi-structured interview in order to answer our first research question:

- (1) Each fragment was given one or more codes from the Teacher Interpersonal Circle (steering, friendly, understanding, accommodating, uncertain, dissatisfied, reprimanding, and enforcing). The maximum number of codes given to one fragment was three.
- (2) After six interviews had been transcribed and coded, a matrix was constructed in order to create an overview of the data. The matrix columns contained the respondents and the rows showed the interpersonal identity standard.
- (3) The remaining 23 interviews were directly coded in this matrix.

Video-stimulated Interview: Affective and Evaluative Appraisal

For the video-stimulated interview, similar steps were taken. After the first step, each fragment was further analyzed by labeling with codes related to the affective appraisal (benign-positive, stressful, and irrelevant) and codes related to the evaluative appraisal

(steering, friendly, understanding, accommodating, uncertain, dissatisfied, reprimanding, and enforcing).

Inter-rater Reliability

A second researcher coded the interview fragments of ten respondents. Per respondent, all classroom situations were coded for the affective and evaluative appraisal as well as their interpersonal identity standard. The coding by the first and second researcher showed an agreement of 84% for the coding of the affective appraisals. For the evaluative appraisal, inter-rater reliability was calculated by comparing the most prominent codes per situation for each appraisal (since for the evaluative appraisal several codes could be assigned to a situation, it was decided to mark the most prominent code in the coding per fragment). This resulted in an agreement of 94%. After discussion of the fragments on which no initial agreement was found, agreement on all the coded fragments was found (100%). For the interpersonal identity standard, the same procedure as for the affective appraisals was followed. This resulted in an initial agreement of 83% of the codes and, after discussion, agreement on all coded fragments was found (100%).

Analysis of Identity Verification: Four Levels

In order to answer the third sub-question (How is a teacher's appraisal of specific classroom situations related to their interpersonal identity standard?), we compared the interpersonal identity standards (first sub-question) with the evaluative appraisals teachers gave to the specific classroom situations (second sub-question). A (strong) relation between a teacher's appraisal of specific classroom situations and their interpersonal identity standard is, following Burke and Stets (2009), called "interpersonal role identity verification."

In our coding system with the eight codes (steering, friendly, understanding, accommodating, uncertain, dissatisfied, reprimanding, and enforcing), we distinguished four levels of interpersonal identity verification:

- (1) *Identity verification*: The coding of the interpersonal identity standard exactly matches the coding of the appraisals.
- (2) *Almost identity verification*: The codes of the interpersonal identity standard and the evaluative appraisals were not identical, but were positioned directly next to each other in the categories of the Teacher Interpersonal Circle. Looking at, for instance, the start of the lesson, the label "almost identity verification" was given if, for example, the interpersonal identity standard was coded "friendly" and the appraisal for the start of the lesson was coded "understanding" (cf. Figure 2).
- (3) *Partial identity verification*: The codes of the interpersonal identity standard and the evaluative appraisals differed in the Teacher Interpersonal Circle by a distance of two categories from each other. The label "partial identity verification" was given if, for instance, the interpersonal identity standard was coded "friendly" and the appraisal was coded "accommodating" (cf. Figure 2).
- (4) *No identity verification*: The codes differed in more than two categories. For example, when someone's appraisal of the start of the lesson was "dissatisfied" and their interpersonal identity standard was "friendly," this was labeled as no identity verification.

An Example of the Coding: Physics Teacher Matthew

Figure 4 shows an example of the result of two coded interviews with one respondent, the 24-year-old physics teacher, Matthew. The example shows the results for a part of the two interviews: the interpersonal identity standard and the appraisal of the start of the lesson. In Figure 4, we see the Teacher Interpersonal Circle with two dimensions: the control dimension (vertically) and the affiliation dimension (horizontally). A combination of the scores on both dimensions results in a so-called sector score. The appraisal of each situation in interview fragments was labeled with one, two, or maximum three sector scores, depending on the number of different statements made by the teacher. Matthew discusses the start of the lesson in his video-stimulated interview:

I give the students some time to get ready and 'finetune' on me. I see them enter the classroom and I make some comments or chit chat with the students [*friendly*]. I cannot start immediately and stand still all the time so I chose to walk around and allow the students to settle down [*accommodating*]. After they have settled, I start the lesson [*steering*]. I am positive about this [*benign-positive*]; I like this, otherwise I feel in a hurry and I do not like that.

As can be seen in Figure 4, his affective appraisal of the start of the lesson (on the bottom left of the figure) is positive. Looking at Matthew's evaluative appraisal, the white marked sectors show that the appraisals Matthew gives to the start of the lesson are accommodating, friendly, and steering. The dotted sectors depict Matthew's identity standard, which he describes as "Students might think I am strict, but I am also easy to approach, and clear. When students have a problem, they can approach me." This statement illustrates the code of Matthew's identity standard as enforcing, steering, and friendly. Matthew comments, "I want to have a relaxed atmosphere, some chit chatting is allowed."

When comparing Matthew's appraisal of the start of the lesson and his identity standard, we see that the appraisal of the start of the lesson (white rectangle) can be coded in the figure with two categories: "steering" and "friendly." The identity standard (dotted rectangle) occurs in the figure at three categories: "enforcing," "steering," and "friendly." Two categories ("steering" and "friendly") occur in the figure for both the identity standard and for the appraisal of the start of the lesson; "enforcing" does not occur for the appraisal of the start of the lesson. Since two categories ("steering" and "friendly") are identical for both the appraisal of the start of the lesson and the interpersonal identity standard, and one category ("steering") is positioned directly next to the other categories, this means that there is almost identity verification between the identity standard and the start of the lesson.

Results

Teachers' Affective and Evaluative Appraisal of Interpersonal Classroom Situations

To answer the first sub-question (How do teachers appraise specific interpersonal classroom situations?), we studied the appraisal teachers gave to three interpersonal classroom situations: (1) the start of the lesson; (2) reacting to student misbehavior; and (3) reacting to student positive behavior.

Affective Appraisal

Table 3 shows the results of the affective and evaluative appraisal per classroom situation. The teachers' affective appraisal of all classroom situations taken together can relatively often be evaluated as *benign-positive* (33 out of 79 affective appraisals). This means many of the teachers' affective evaluations in a situation are positive: teachers evaluate the situation as positive for their well-being. For example, concerning the start of the lesson, Paul, a novice physics teacher, commented: "I like this; this is the way I want it to be" (benign-positive affective appraisal). The other affective appraisals were coded as irrelevant (21 out of 79 affective appraisals) and stressful (25 out of 79 appraisals). When focusing on the *stressful* affective appraisal, we see that quite a number of teachers (nine out of 30 teachers) mentioned that they had difficulty with the start of the lesson: they felt that they started too late and they did not know how to begin sooner or how to change the situation so that they felt comfortable and were able to teach. For example, Andrew, a novice chemistry teacher, stated: "I said to the students 'listen to me' but they continued talking; I don't feel comfortable in this situation and I want it to change but I do not know what to do" (stressful affective appraisal). Teachers with an irrelevant affective appraisal often referred to their routine (Latin teacher, Angel: "this is just the way I always do it") or stated the importance of "keeping it small," like social science teacher Ben, who stated when correcting students' misbehavior: "I notice that girl is chewing gum. One of my rules this year is 'no chewing gum in the classroom' so she has to spit it out. She does not do this to bully me or something; it is no big deal. I just tell her that she has to put her gum in the dustbin" (irrelevant affective appraisal). Ben did not feel offended; he just corrected the student's misbehavior.

Evaluative Appraisal

As shown in Table 3, when focusing on the evaluative appraisals of the respondents in the three classroom situations, statements that could be coded as "steering" were mentioned the most often (31/162), followed by "reprimanding" (30/162), "accommodating" (24/162), and "friendly" (24/162). In some cases, "accommodating" and "steering" were coded for the same situation by one respondent. For instance, Thomas, a late-career arts teacher, described the start of his lesson: "so I give them some time to settle [accommodating]. Afterwards I make contact with them and consequently will start my lesson with some announcements" [steering]. In this statement, both codes can be applied. "Enforcing" and "understanding" were the least-often coded appraisals when looking at all three classroom situations. This means that teachers' evaluations within the situation could be coded as "steering" and "reprimanding," but without being strict or enforcing. In addition, teachers mentioned that they did give students some freedom in the situation ("accommodating"), but they were not particularly understanding or empathic with the students ("understanding"). For most teachers, *the start of the lesson* could be coded as "accommodating," "steering," and "friendly" (cf. Table 3). Respondents often made statements like those of Matthew and Thomas, who mentioned, concerning the start of their lesson: "I give the students some time to settle down [accommodating] and get ready and then I start talking to them and then after a short time the students listen." A similar appraisal could be found for the situation of reacting to *positive student behavior*, which for most teachers could be coded as "steering" and "friendly." Many respondents stated that they complimented students to build their self-esteem, to

acknowledge or confirm their good behavior, or to simply give them attention. In contrast, the situation reacting to *disturbing student behavior* often resulted in the codes “reprimanding,” “dissatisfied,” and “steering.” This shows that, when the respondents reacted to disturbing student behavior, they experienced them as taking control of the situation. In addition, the respondents were dissatisfied with the situation in which the student misbehaved and felt a need to correct the student. However, there were also respondents whose appraisal resulted in the codes “uncertain,” “dissatisfied,” and “enforcing.” For instance, 24-year-old physics teacher, John, discussed a misbehaving student:

At first, I hope the student will listen and sit behind his desk instead of walking around, when he doesn't listen, I hope he will go when I tell him to leave the classroom, and finally I hope my manager is strong enough to remove him from the classroom.

The code “understanding” did not occur when analyzing the appraisals of this situation. This indicates that teachers, when reacting to student misbehavior, did not mention understanding the misbehaving students.

A remarkable finding in the appraising process is the elaborateness of the respondents in talking about the specific classroom situations during the interview, which resulted in a higher number of codes that were assigned to a specific situation within an appraisal (cf. Table 3). The average number of codes that was assigned for an evaluative appraisal to the specific situation differed per situation. As can be seen in Table 3, the number of codes for reacting to positive student behavior (36 appraisals of 23 respondents: 33 positive and three irrelevant) was much lower than the number for the start of the lesson (75 appraisals of 27 respondents: 21 benign-positive, 31 stressful, 23 irrelevant) and the number for the reaction to student misbehavior (62 appraisals of 27 respondents: five benign-positive, 40 stressful, 17 irrelevant). This means that the appraisals of the start of the lesson and the reaction to student misbehavior per respondent were more elaborate as well as diverse: respondents' answers required several “sectors/codes” to cover the full content of the answer. This can also be seen in the (uncoded) interview transcript as the respondents tended to speak more and longer about the start of the lesson and the reaction to student misbehavior, compared to the reaction to positive student behavior. Reactions to positive student behavior needed less explanation according to the respondents. The respondents provided short answers and even reported in some cases that they did not feel a need to elaborate because this was all there was to say. Thomas stated, “I just do it; it is important for students to receive confirmation” and physics teacher, Patrick, commented, “She does something very well so I tell her that; I don't have deeper thoughts on this.”

Interpersonal Identity Standards

The results for the first sub-question concerning the interpersonal identity standards are shown in Table 4. Most of the respondents' interpersonal identity standards consisted of two codes (i.e., two categories of the Teacher Interpersonal Circle, cf. Figure 2). The codes that were found most often in combination with each other were “enforcing” and “steering,” and “friendly” and “understanding.” The interpersonal identity standards could often be labeled as “friendly,” “steering,” or “understanding.” In the interpersonal identity standard of physics teacher Paul, all three of the mentioned codes occurred: “I think the students in general like me; I am almost friends with them and easy to approach for them [helping/

Table 4
Teachers' Interpersonal Identity Standard

Identity Standard of 29 teachers	Number ^a of codes of the interpersonal identity standards
Steering	12
Friendly	16
Understanding	10
Accommodating	4
Uncertain	5
Dissatisfied	5
Reprimanding	0
Enforcing	5
Total	58

^aThe number of codes of the interpersonal identity standard outnumbers the number of teachers, since interpersonal identity standards can consist of multiple (maximum three) codes.

friendly], but I am their teacher [steering].” All of the other eight codes occurred for one or more of the respondents, even being “dissatisfied,” “enforcing,” or “uncertain.” For instance, Andrew, a novice chemistry teacher, stated: “I do not have a good relationship with students; I do not know what to do about it and how to handle it [uncertain] but it should change because I do not like the students’ behavior [dissatisfied].” This means that the interpersonal identity standard of teachers differed widely on the dimensions of both control and affiliation.

Relation between Appraisals and Interpersonal Identity Standard

In the third sub-question (How is a teacher’s appraisal of specific interpersonal classroom situations related to their interpersonal identity standard?), the relation between the appraisal and the interpersonal identity standard was researched. Table 5 shows that, for most of the respondents, in at least one situation (almost or partial), an identity verification match could be found. For six teachers, no identity verification could be found.

Focusing on each of the specific classroom situations, Table 6 shows the identity verification per situation. From the analysis, it becomes clear that only a few respondents had identity verification in two or three classroom situations; nine respondents managed to establish

Table 5
Identity Verification of Teachers

Degree of identity verification of teachers	N
Number of respondents with identity verification in all three situations	1
Number of respondents with almost identity verification in all three situations	12
Number of respondents with partial identity verification in all three situations	10
Number of respondents with no identity verification in all three situations	6

Table 6

Number of Respondents and their Identity Verification for Each Situation

Match between:	Number of respondents with identity verification	Number of respondents with almost identity verification	Number of respondents with partial identity verification	Number of respondents with no identity verification
Start of the lesson and identity standard	9	12	7	0
Disruptive student behavior and identity standard	0	11	12	6
Positive student behavior and identity standard	2	11	9	5

identity verification for the start of the lesson and only two respondents for positive student behavior. No identity verification could be found for disruptive student behavior. On the other hand, the table also shows that most respondents did establish partial identity verification, only six respondents recognised no identity verification for the student disruptive behavior, and for five respondents, no identity verification could be found for positive student behavior.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, we set out to explore teachers' interpersonal role identity by investigating their interpersonal identity standards and appraisals of three specific interpersonal classroom situations (start of the lesson, reacting to student misbehavior, reacting to positive student behavior). Subsequently, we looked at the relation between teachers' appraisals of the three specific classroom situations and their identity standards. The results showed that teachers' appraisals and identity standards are quite diverse, but are often related to each other.

The results of this study showed a variety of codes for the interpersonal identity standard. Most interpersonal identity standards were, as expected, labeled "friendly" and "steering." These codes refer to the upper right area of the Teacher Interpersonal Circle, which refers to a teacher-student relationship with a high level of control and a medium or high level of affiliation. From previous research, it is known that this is the best teacher-student relationship in terms of student outcomes, student motivation, and teachers' self-efficacy and work engagement, and that this is the ideal teacher-student relationship as seen by both teachers and students (Wubbels et al., 2006). The other codes of the Teacher Interpersonal Circle were also identified, except "reprimanding." The diversity in the interpersonal identity standards is, on the one hand, not surprising because of the selection used for participation in this study: students of the respondents were asked to complete the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI), which resulted in their interpersonal profile on which basis they were selected. On the other hand, it is interesting to see that the results of the QTI, which show the *students'* perceptions of teacher behavior, were in many cases of a similar nature as

teachers' appraisals of interpersonal classroom situations or their interpersonal identity standard. This seems to be in line with earlier research that states that a relationship exists between appraisals or identity standards and teachers' actual behavior (Burke & Stets, 2009; Wubbels, Brekelmans, Van Tartwijk, & Den Brok, 2006).

Concerning the affective appraisals, we expected to see benign-positive appraisals for the positive student behavior and more stressful appraisals for the start of the lesson and for the reaction to student misbehavior (Admiraal et al., 1996, 2000). Surprisingly, there were some teachers whose appraisals for reacting to positive student behavior could not be coded as benign-positive, but were coded as irrelevant. Some teachers were not so enthusiastic about complimenting a student demonstrating positive behavior. In addition, teachers were less elaborate in their appraisals about this situation. The kind of specific interpersonal classroom situation seems to influence teachers' appraisals. This explains also the difference between our findings regarding teachers' appraisals for "reacting to positive student behavior" (irrelevant) and Admiraal et al.'s (2000) findings on teachers' appraisals of stressful situations (stressful).

For the evaluative appraisal, "steering," "reprimanding," "friendly," and "accommodating" were the most often occurring codes. Not surprisingly, in all classroom situations, "steering" was one of the most popular codes. Many teachers stated during the interviews in this study that teachers want to be the person in the classroom who decides what happens. Prior studies on the QTI underline this finding, showing that teachers' ideals can be characterized as a relationship with a high level of influence and affiliation (Wubbels, Brekelmans, Van Tartwijk et al., 2006). The relation between the affective appraisal and the evaluative appraisal is remarkable. If a teacher had a benign-positive affective appraisal, the teacher's evaluative appraisal was most often steering, friendly, or understanding. This was true for both the start of the lesson and the positive student behavior, as can be seen in Table 3. Similarly, if a teacher had a stressful affective appraisal, one would expect the majority of the evaluative appraisals to be coded as uncertain, dissatisfied, reprimanding, and enforcing. As Table 3 shows, this is the case for the appraisal of student misbehavior, but not the case for the start of the lesson. The start of the lesson had a variety of evaluative appraisals in which all eight categories occurred. This might indicate that teachers appraise different classroom situations (i.e., the start of the lesson or student misbehavior) differently and that these classroom situations may have different significance for their identity standards.

The interpersonal identity verification in this research has shown that, for most respondents, a certain degree of "match" could be found between their interpersonal identity standard and the appraisal for one or more classroom situations. While matches and mismatches were found, this study did not investigate the effect of the match or mismatch for the teachers or their students. Is it harmful for their teaching or themselves to continue like this? Does it change or remain stable? What does it mean to have a (mis)match in specific classroom situations for teachers in the long run?

For some respondents, this "match" between a situation and an interpersonal identity standard means that these teachers will have benign-positive or neutral appraisals and good teacher-student relationships, i.e., the codes in the upper-right quadrant of the Teacher Interpersonal Circle. Previous research has shown that these kinds of appraisals and teacher-student relationships will lead to high student outcomes and high job satisfaction (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Wubbels et al., 2006). Yet, one may wonder if such a situation is fruitful for teachers' professional (identity) development, because the teachers with a match and scores in the upper-right quadrant of the Teacher Interpersonal Circle might not necessarily feel a

tension between their identity standard and the situation and might possibly continue teaching in the way they were used to. Meijer (2011) identified the importance of a teacher feeling a “tension” or a moment of crisis in order to develop their professional identity. However, for some of the teachers in our sample, this tension is absent and an impetus for the interpersonal professional development of these teachers is probably lacking. They might not improve themselves interpersonally over the years because, for leaning to take place, a discomfort or discrepancy between the actual situation and the ideals needs to be experienced.

For other respondents, however, the match might have different consequences. These teachers had, for instance, both an interpersonal identity standard that is labeled “uncertain” and “reprimanding,” and the appraisal of the start of the lesson being labeled in the same way. This is similar to the findings of Pillen, Beijaard, and Den Brok (2012), who researched the identity tensions teachers experience while teaching show that 60% of the teachers in their sample experience one or more tensions or problems related to the teacher-student relationship. These teachers might not feel comfortable with the match between their interpersonal identity standard and appraisal, and, if they do not change either their interpersonal identity standard or their appraisal, they may experience dissatisfaction with their work.

Limitations, Implications, and Opportunities for Further Research

One of the limitations of this study is that, although we have now explored the important elements (i.e., appraisal and interpersonal identity standard) of the interpersonal role identity and we can see that identity verification can be found in some classroom situations, the specific influence of the appraisal on the interpersonal identity standard, and vice versa, remains unclear. Also, this study focuses on three specific classroom situations (start of the lesson, reacting to student misbehavior, reacting to positive student behavior) and does not take into account other classroom situations. Different or more classroom situations might lead to a more complete overview of the appraisals of a teacher and this would also offer more opportunities to establish identity verification. Next to that, the stability of identity verification within and across the career is one of the challenges for future research. To investigate the interpersonal role identity on a longitudinal level and to combine it with other variables such as student outcome and job satisfaction would provide insights into the consequences and the stability of a match/mismatch. Another opportunity for future research is to approach the data using a data-driven approach instead of the theory-driven approach used in this study and to study, for instance, a few respondents in more depth via a case study. On the one hand, the theory-driven approach was a strength of this study because it enabled us to analyze the mechanisms from the Teachers' Interpersonal Role Identity with the Teacher Interpersonal Circle. On the other hand, using a different theory or a more bottom-up approach might show different results, for example that teachers often feel uncomfortable talking about their own role in stressful situations. This could provide a different and more authentic view of the phenomenon of Teachers' Interpersonal Role Identity.

Our model and findings have considerable implications for practice. The model, and more specifically the interview procedures and codes of the interpersonal circle, can be used in teacher education to elicit and to recognize the appraisal processes of specific classroom situations and interpersonal identity standards of student teachers. This is important for student teachers, as mentioned earlier in this study (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, 1995; Beijaard et al., 2004; Pillen, Beijaard, & Den Brok, 2012; Wubbels et al., 2006). In this way, student teachers will get a better grip on their relationship with students, in both general and specific situations.

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