

Investigating the Relationship between EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Professional Self-Image and their Teaching Performance

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the relation between the professional self-image and the teaching performance of 3rd year pre-service teachers at Faculty of Education, Fayoum University during the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024. It intended to explore whether positive professional self-image could possibly induce better teaching performance or rather creates a motive for improvement in poorer cases. It poses questions of whether the relationship between the two variables is a direct positive relation or a negative one. The study adopted a 5-point Likert-scale for both the professional self-image scale and a teaching performance checklist to gather data, and employed both descriptive and inferential statistics for the analysis of the gathered data. The findings of this study revealed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables. The professional self-image scale dimensions including; physical-competence, social acceptance, creativity, and professional responsibility and growth, were positively related to the skills of the checklist. The results of this

study implied that the respondents' total level of positive self-image of themselves, including the physical competence, social acceptance, professional responsibility and growth, and creativity, was high. It also reflected a noticeable development in the necessary skills for teaching performance. The problems and needs of pre-service teachers, experiencing school practical education first handed, is a fertile area for consideration and analysis, so the current study recommends that more research is to be conducted to investigate how they develop beliefs about their professional self-image in relation to their teaching performance.

Key words: Self-Image, Professional Self-Image, Teaching Performance.

ملخص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث لدراسة العلاقة بين الصورة الذاتية المهنية والأداء التدريسي لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية قبل الخدمة في عامهم الدراسي الثالث بكلية التربية جامعة الفيوم خلال الفصل الدراسي الاول من العام الدراسي 2023-2024. وقد تم اجراء هذا البحث للوقوف على ما إذا كان وجود صورة ذاتية إيجابية قد يعني بالضرورة أداء تدريسي متميز، أم أن العلاقة بينهم قد تكون متفاوتة، بمعنى انه قد يؤدي وجود صورة ذاتية متدنية لوجود دافع وبالتالي تحسين الاداء التدريسي. ولذلك فإن هذا البحث يطرح تساؤلاً مفاده ما إذا كانت العلاقة بين هذين المتغيرين وهما الصورة الذاتية المهنية والاداء التدريسي هي علاقة طردية إيجابية. وقد تبنى هذا البحث الإحصاء الوصفي والإستدلالي لجمع وتحليل البيانات وذلك من خلال إستبيان خماسي بأبعاد الصورة الذاتية المهنية وبطاقة ملاحظة للأداء التدريسي. وقد كشفت نتائج هذا البحث عن وجود علاقة طردية إيجابية بين كلا المتغيرين ككل وبين أبعاد الصورة الذاتية المهنية ومهارات الأداء التدريسي. وهذا ما يعني أن نسبة كبيرة ممن يحملون صورة ذاتية مهنية إيجابية عن انفسهم، سواء من ناحية صورتهم الجسمانية، قدرتهم الإبداعية، القبول الإحتماعي وحتى مسئوليتهم المهنية، يتوفر لديهم أداء تدريسي أفضل. توصي الدراسة الحالية بمزيد من البحث في حقل مشاكل وإحتياجات معلمي قبل الخدمة في أثناء تأديتهم للتربية العملية وتفاعلهم مع المجتمع المدرسي ووقع ذلك على صورتهم الذاتية المهنية وأدائهم التدريسي.

كلمات مفتاحية: الصورة الذاتية، الصورة الذاتية المهنية، الأداء التدريسي.

Introduction

There are 3 mental processes that control performance: The conscious mind manifested in our thoughts, the subconscious mind displayed in our skills and how well you prepare, and the self-image, reflected in our beliefs in our own abilities, habits and attitudes. Our skill takes a back seat if our self-image doesn't believe we are as ready or as skilled as we truly are. Therefore our professional self-image is actually in control of our teaching performance Furthermore, teaching entails more than just lecturing learners (Zlatković et al., 2012). Teachers not only supplement a student's intellect, but also contribute to the regular development of his or her personality. Teaching requires a flair for interacting with the students, the capability of explaining things in clear lucid terms to the students and rousing the students from their apathetic slumber and watching their interest grow (Rajendran & Anandarasu, 2020). Consideration of teachers' roles is important because their implementation in the educational process ensures better outcomes. Much study literature demonstrates that knowledge of the self is a crucial element in the way teachers construe and construct the nature of their work and that events and experiences in the personal lives of teachers are intimately linked to the performance of their professional roles (Day et al., 2006). Positive self-image contributes to self-confidence especially in our thoughts and actions. Negative self-image, on the other hand, decreases satisfaction on areas involving physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being. With a positive self-image, we acknowledge our potentialities while being realistic with our limitations. The concept of self-image can be incorporated in teaching. Teachers' perception of themselves and their beliefs

and perceptions of their own teaching abilities make an essential part in the practice of their profession (Capito, 2021).

In like manner, the concept of professional self-image could also be useful for pre-service teachers in their practical education. Practical education provides pre-service teachers an opportunity to experience all the responsibilities of being a teacher. They consider their experiences from the program as an important and integral part for their professional life because they develop a better image of their duties (Capito, 2021).

During pre-service teacher education, instructors assess achievement within the specific courses, documenting the extent to which students have learned and are able to apply the pedagogical principles covered. Assuming that (a) the content of each course contributes to the development of a competent teacher and (b) course assessments cover the content taught, each course assessment verifies achievement of essential pedagogical knowledge and/or skills. Also during pre-service training, faculty evaluates the performance of students as they participate in field experiences, such as their student teaching experience. Whether evaluating course achievement or student-teaching performance, the use of sound assessment methodology is very important. In either case, sound assessments are those that sample teacher performance in a representative manner according to clearly specified course outcome and/or classroom performance criteria (Stiggins, 2012). The self is viewed as the set of psychological mechanisms or processes that allows individuals to think consciously about themselves and be able to make deliberate attempts to regulate their behavior (Yilmaz, 2018).

Statement of the problem

It is clear that third- year EFL pre-service teachers are new to the field of practical education in schools. They are merging into a loop of interaction with senior teachers, students, school administration, subject supervisor, colleagues, and other school staff. Although this interaction offers a multi-layered experience for them, it clearly displays some lack of systemization surrounding the development of their performance whether it be inside the classroom or outside. This performance is controlled and anchored by how they see themselves and how they think others perceive them. Thus, there is a real need to investigate this situation to find out how third-year EFL pre-service teachers perceive their professional self-image and how they act upon and relate to their performance. It also examines the different aspects of their professional self-image and how satisfied they feel about the sufficiency of their performance. Therefore, this study provokes the following questions:

- 1- What are the dimensions of professional self-image of third-year EFL pre-service teachers?
- 2- What are the skills framing the teaching performance of third-year EFL pre-service teachers?
- 3- How do third-year EFL pre-service teachers perceive their teaching performance in relation to their professional self-image?

Purpose of the study

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between third-year EFL pre-service teachers' professional self-image and their teaching performance in in Fayoum University. This study was anchored on addressing the following objectives:

1. To investigate whether there is a significant positive relationship between the professional self-image and

- teaching performance of third-year EFL pre service teachers in Fayoum University.
2. To investigate which of the dimensions of the professional self-image can be considered significantly related to the skills of teaching performance.

Significance of the study

The results and findings of this study may help in:

1. highlighting the importance of professional self-image for EFL pre service teachers' teaching performance.
2. finding out which dimensions of professional self-image affect EFL pre service teachers' teaching performance mostly

Findings of this study would also provide relevant insights regarding self-image and its relevance to the teaching performance of third-year EFL pre service teachers in Fayoum University. It would offer an answer to the question of whether every positive professional self-image could possibly indicate a better teaching performance, and whether a negative professional self-image will possibly negatively affect the teaching performance of third-year EFL pre service teachers in Fayoum University.

Hypothesis of the study

The researcher posed the following hypothesis for investigation:

“There is a statistically significant positive correlation between the mean score of the study participants in the administration of the professional self-image scale and teaching performance checklist”.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were adopted in the current study:

Professional self-image

Professional self-image was defined as a person's perception of themselves professionally, including their physical appearance, creativity, social acceptance and their professional responsibility and growth. It is the way in which an individual views and evaluates themselves, and it can be influenced by various factors such as culture, family, friends, and personal experiences (Chishti, 2018).

Teaching performance

It was defined according to several axes, such as: teacher personality, student learning, knowledge of subject matter, competencies and attitudes (Krull & Leijen, 2015). It is all the teacher's performances in the classroom verbal or kinesthetic, whether explanation or impressions given or made by the teacher during the teaching process or even his movements in the classroom. It is perceived as a series of procedures and practices that the teacher performs before and during the classroom session, and includes: planning, implementation, evaluation, classroom management and control, the teacher's behavior and the interrelation between him and the student.

Review of literature

In their study on the “image of teaching profession”, Erarslan & Yavuz (2023) stated that the teaching profession is a profession that requires specialized knowledge and skills as well as more qualifications and competences beyond transferring and giving information. They considered that if he cannot be a teacher of himself, he cannot be a teacher of anyone else.

Teachers should accompany the learning journey in terms of their own development. Similarly, the skills that pre-service teachers should possess have been increasing. In addition to transferring knowledge in the traditional sense, pre-service teachers today have to fulfill many extra tasks such as using technology effectively, working as a team, and contributing to school management.

Professional image is the thoughts, knowledge and emotional reactions of professional employees and the society to which the profession provides service. It consists of a combination of many dimensions that teachers leave on the public; a person's perception of themselves professionally, including their physical appearance, creativity, social acceptance and their professional responsibility and growth.

Aypay (2009) ,whose study aimed at evaluating pre-service teacher training of a faculty of education based on graduates' responses, indicate that there is a high positive correlation between teachers' feeling of preparedness and the likelihood of becoming effective in teaching. For example, graduates of certain teacher training institutes believe that they contribute student learning more than their peers, home environment, and other factors. Although study results do not provide concrete evidence, there is a close relationship between teacher preparation to teaching and teachers' belief towards their effectiveness and the teaching environment (Aypay, 2009).

Generally speaking, the quality of teachers' performance is influenced by numerous factors. Some are considered internal factors like teacher's abilities, personality traits, motivation etc. while some are external factors such as; school equipment, legislation etc. (Zlatković et al., 2012).

Measuring teaching performance

The observation and evaluation of teachers' performance in the classroom represents one of many excellent sources of information on teacher capabilities and the effectiveness of instruction. There are various ways to determine the quality of teaching performance. These include tests that assess teachers' knowledge or skills, their involvement in professional development, committees, or mentoring, instructional artifacts such as lesson plans and assignments, self-reporting by teachers through instructional logs, and feedback provided by parents, peers, or administrators (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2018).

The Utah State University established a **Pre-service Teacher Evaluation Rubric (UTC-PAES rubric)** which was based on the Utah Effective Teaching Standards and the Utah Teaching Observation Tool 4.0 (*Utah Teacher Candidate Performance Assessment and Evaluation System Rubric*, 2017).

The Rubric defines the following skills:

- **Planning:** The teacher plans instruction to support students in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas.
- **Implementation:** The pre-service teacher is skilled in a variety of efficient teaching techniques that give students the chance to practice and produce the new language through a variety of activities while taking into account the objectives of the curriculum, other subject areas, the academic needs, learning preferences, and the backgrounds of the students. In order to support learners' self-improvement, track learners' advancement, direct lesson preparation and delivery, and ascertain whether the objectives outlined in content standards have been

reached, pre-service teachers employ a variety of assessment techniques.

- **Assessment:** In order to help students take ownership of their own development, track their progress, inform lesson preparation and delivery, and ascertain whether the objectives outlined in the curriculum standards have been reached, the teacher employs a variety of assessment techniques.

Image Types and Classifications

According to (Day et al., 2006) an individual's self-image is perceived from different angles. It is perceived as; present (current) image and desired (ideal) image according to the time of image perception, internal image and external image according to the perceiver, tangible and abstract according to the nature of the message that creates the image, and lastly, as positive and negative image which relates to the perception of the pre-service teachers' about their professional self-image and consequently their performance.

Positive Self-Image

The term "positive self-image" describes how well someone feels about their physical attributes, personality, and other aspects of who they are. It is the positive manner in which a person sees and assesses himself, and it can be impacted by a number of things, including encouraging relationships, fulfilling experiences, and individual accomplishments (Rajendran & Anandarasu, 2020).

Negative Self-Image

A person with a low self-image has a bad opinion of their physical attributes, personality, and other aspects of oneself. It is the negative way that a person sees and assesses oneself, and it

can be influenced by a number of things, including abusive or traumatic experiences in the past, unfavorable societal messages, unfulfilling expectations, and unfavorable influences from friends and family.

Dimensions of professional self-image

- **Physical Competence:** it refers to the perception of someone's own physical ability, appearance, conditions and attractiveness and the level of satisfaction with these physical features (Denche-Zamorano et al., 2023).
- **Creativity:** It refers to the ability to use one's own imagination to produce new ideas, create things and be innovative. This concept overlaps with teacher's creativity which involves making learning more interesting and effective, using imaginative approaches in the classroom and identifying children's creative strengths and fostering their creativity. It entails the teacher's personality, personal creativity and its manifestations in everyday practice (Lapeniene & Dumciene, 2014).
- **Social acceptance:** it refers to subjective assessment of someone's own social value and the adjustment to social framework and relationships, i.e. it includes information about ourselves that we get from the others. It defines the individual's perception of the quality of his or her actions in his or her own environment; or how the individual perceives his or her interaction in the immediate social environment and in interpersonal relationships (Denche-Zamorano et al., 2023).

- **Professional Responsibility and growth:** entails demonstrating the highest standard of legal, moral, and ethical conduct in accordance to school policy. Here, the teacher is a reflective practitioner who uses evidence to continually evaluate and adapt practice to meet the needs of each learner (Krull & Leijen, 2015).

Methodology

Study Design

This study was a correlational study in which the researcher designed a professional self-image scale and a teaching performance checklist to administer to pre-service teachers. Initially, the teaching performance checklist was employed to gather data based on three skills; planning, implementation and assessment. Then, the professional self-image scale was applied to participants to gather data related to four dimensions; physical competence, social acceptance, creativity, and professional responsibility and growth. This study, then, used the correlational statistical analysis to examine if there is a significant relationship between the professional self-image and the teaching performance.

Participants of the Study

This study was conducted to 30 third-year EFL pre-service teachers in English majors in the faculty of Education- Fayoum University. The participants were randomly-sampled and the study tools were administered during the academic year of 2023-2024.

Study Tools

The researcher designed a professional self-image scale. The scale consisted of four dimensions; physical competence, social acceptance, creativity, and professional responsibility and growth. The 5-point Likert scale, which the respondents were

required to complete, had 45 statements. The range was as follows: 5= strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=completely disagree. Then, the researcher administered a teaching performance checklist to the participants in which she observed their performance during the micro-teaching sessions. The checklist consisted of 38 statements with 3 skills: planning, implementation and assessment. The range of the 5-point checklist was as follows: 5=always, 4=usually, 3=often, 2=occasionally, 1=never.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher administered the 5-point Likert professional self-image scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Then, the researcher used the teaching performance checklist to observe the performance of participants along with the help of a co-rater.

Reliability of the tools

- The teaching performance checklist

Reliability of the checklist was measured using Cronbach Alpha coefficient which was satisfactory in all skills: Planning= (0.872), Implementation= (0.889), and Assessment=(0.606). All these values are considered high values and are statistically significant at a (0.01) level. The total reliability of the checklist is (0.926)

- The professional self-image scale

Reliability of the professional self-image scale was calculated using Cronbach Alpha coefficient and was satisfactory in all dimensions: Physical Competence=(0.856), Creativity=(0.690), Social Acceptance=(.0710), and Professional Responsibility and

Growth=(0.814). The total Reliability of the scale is (0.853) which is considered statistically significant at (0.01) level.

Validity of the tools

To ensure the validity of the checklist, the researcher submitted it to a group of EFL specialists to judge its items concerning the following:

- Relatedness of the skills to the general term (Teaching Performance)
- Relatedness of indicators to each general skill.
- Clarity of instructions and wording of the statements.
- The suitability of the checklist as a whole for assessing EFL pre-service teachers' teaching performance.

A- Internal consistency of teaching performance checklist.

The researcher conducted a pilot study on a random sample of (55) students for the teaching performance checklist. The validity of the checklist was confirmed by calculating the correlation coefficient between the scores obtained from each of the 3 skills in the checklist and the overall score. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, v21) was used to calculate the correlation coefficients as illustrated in the table below:

Table 1
Correlation between the scores of skills in the teaching performance checklist and the total score of the teaching performance checklist

Factors	Correlation with total
Planning	0.857**
Implementation	0.976**

Factors	Correlation with total
Assessment	0.721**

The symbol (**) indicates the skill is significant at (0.01) level.

As illustrated in the table above, the consistency coefficients of the scores obtained from each of the 3 skills in the checklist and the overall score of the checklist ranged from (0.721: 0.976), and they are all significant at (0.01) level and are considered high scores. This indicates the possibility of looking at the checklist as a comprehensive unit with the possibility of dealing with its overall score, that is: the teaching performance checklist has good internal consistency, and this indicates the veracity of the teaching performance checklist.

Analysis of data

This study aimed to investigate whether there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the mean score of the study participants in the post administration of the professional self-image scale and teaching performance checklist. Therefore, the studyer calculated the correlation coefficient of the scale and the checklist. As shown in the table below, the correlation was found to be (0.648) at a (0.01) level which is considered statistically significant.

Table (2)
Correlation between professional self-image scale and teaching performance checklist

Dimensions Skills	Physical Competence	Social acceptance	Creativity	Professional responsibility and growth	Total
Planning	0.492**	0.624**	0.625**	0.672**	0.641**
Implementation	0.495**	0.591**	0.615**	0.653**	0.625**
Assessment	0.441**	0.433**	0.451**	0.382**	0.434**
Total	0.516**	0.618**	0.638**	0.674**	0.648**

Results and discussion

The results in table (1) above revealed that the correlation between the skills of the teaching performance and the dimensions of the professional self-image scale ranged from (0.382: 0.672). The highest of which belonged to **planning** and **professional responsibility and growth**. These results indicate that third-year pre-service teachers expressed higher levels of professional responsibility when it comes to committing to the school rules and regulations as well as planning skill and adhering to the guidelines of planning and preparation of a lesson. In a study by (Rusznayak & Walton, 2011), they stressed the importance for pre-service teachers to develop the capacity to plan instruction so that it meets the needs of learners and the demands of content. However, the assessment skill didn't reflect the same significance which may be an indicator of the novelty of those pre-service teachers to the field unlike their senior counterparts (Capito, 2021). In his study on pre-service teacher's

preparedness to implement competence-based curriculum, Paulo (2014) implied that majority of the pre-service still rely on traditional paper-pencil assessment methods despite changes in curriculum which demands the adoption of authentic and performance-based assessment methods (Tarmo, 2014). What was also noticeable was the significant correlation between the dimension of **creativity** and the **planning** of the teaching performance in which the pre-service teachers seemed to adopt a more innovative approach in their choice of teaching methods rather than the traditional methods which seemed to take the backseat. This result is incongruent with a study by (Sahin-Taskin, 2017) who mentioned that pre-service teachers pointed out that they have difficulty finding appropriate activities for their students' learning levels. Also, (Tarmo, 2014) mentioned that pre-service teachers reported group discussion, question/answer and lecture as the most used teaching method. As for the physical competence and social acceptance in relation to the teaching performance, they seemed to display values that hang in the middle and which reflected a moderate view of the professional self-image of the pre-service teachers. These findings were consistent with study by (Lý & Tran, 2019) on professional identity. They revealed that pre-service teachers reported increased motivation to teach. They thought that their ideal image was presented through testing and assessment, and classroom management. They gained positive relationship and interaction with their mentors, peers and students, as well as their positive opinion about their roles as pre-service teachers. After participating in teaching practicum, all teachers increased their motivation to teach (Lý & Tran, 2019). All in all, this implies that the EFL pre-service teachers perceived themselves

as having a relatively healthy self-image which positively correlates and reflects on their teaching performance.

These results goes in line with the findings of the study done by (Zlatković et al., 2012) who studied the relation between self-concept dimensions with teachers' professional roles. The results revealed that the relationship between dimensions of self-concept and success in the performance of teachers' role is partly confirmed. Conversely, the findings of this study do not go with the study done by (Capito, 2021). In her study, Capito stated that the self-image of College of Education (COED) seniors in terms of their positive and negative self-image is not significantly related to their student teaching performance. The same applies for the study done by (Rajendran & Anandarasu, 2020) who studied the academic self-image and its relation to variables such as; gender, marital status, year of study and subjects.

The results also go in harmony with previous study. Tsagem (2021), (Yahaya Tsagem, 2021) ,for example, investigated the relationship between academic achievement and self-concept. His results revealed the positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of college students.

Additionally, it goes in line with the findings of a cross-sectional questionnaire conducted by Stadnicka and Zarzycka (2023) (Stadnicka & Zarzycka, 2023) to investigate how the professional image of nurses and midwives varied in relation to themselves and society. It showed there is a statistically significant difference in the image of these two professions in terms of the ability to think and act creatively and critically, as well as innovation and evidence-based practice. The study showed a particularly unfavorable social image of nurses and

midwives, which significantly influences how they see themselves.

Conclusion and recommendations

From the results of the current study, it can be concluded that EFL third-year pre-service teachers have a relatively positive professional self-image of themselves when it comes to their physical competence, creativity, social acceptance, and professional responsibility and growth. These aforementioned dimensions were positively related to their teaching performance. They have developed the necessary skills for teaching and can excellently practice these skills and positive attitudes in teaching in preparation for the real world of teaching profession.

In light of the current study results, the researcher recommends the following:

- The problems and needs of pre-service teachers who are experiencing school practical education for the first time is a fertile area for consideration and analysis, so more research studies to investigate how they develop beliefs about their professional self-image are needed.
- -A follow up system should be established in order to follow on pre-service teachers' issues and concerns regarding their interaction with the school community and how this interaction reflects on both their professional self-image and their teaching performance, whether it be through an online platform, a form, or even an offline monthly assembly.

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