

The Psychological Dimensions Shaping Teacher Trainees' Transitioning to Professionals: Morocco's CRMEFs as Case Study

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Abstract

This study examines the psychological dispositions of pre-service teachers as they transition into their professional roles. The study aims to explore how trainee teachers perceive themselves as professionals and to what extent the self-efficacy variable may influence their personal and professional dispositions. Quantitative method was used to answer the research questions. The study's findings indicated that pre-service teachers have favorable perceptions of their professional identities and also a strong correlation between how trainee teachers perceive themselves as professionals and the confident level of their abilities. The findings indeed contribute to understanding this phenomenon in-depth with useful implications for better designing teacher's education programs.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, identity, trainee teacher, CRMEF, transition, psychological state, Moroccan Education

1. Introduction:

In educational psychology, transitioning from a trainee teacher to a professional can be a complex process that impacts personal and professional characteristics. This is especially pertinent when contemplating the psychological effects of teacher education. Pre-service teachers enter their training programs with preconceived notions and expectations about teaching formed by their prior experiences (Fajet, Bello, Leftwich, Mesler, & Shaver, 2005). Together, these expectations and the value system that the school imposes can greatly affect teachers' professional development and the rapport they may build with their students.

It is crucial to understand the psychological aspects of teacher education, with the hope to establish a healthy context able to transform a generation of teachers in Morocco. This study seeks to investigate the psychological factors that influence the efficacy of teacher training programs. It will look at how the past experiences, expectations, and values of trainees affect how they perceive teaching and learning, particularly in the training stage. The study will also look into how the school's value system may affect the trainees' psychological readiness to teaching as a profession. Hence, this research aims to contribute to developing a solid teacher training programs that promote teacher competency and professionalism, with a focus on those psychological dimensions. The finding of this study can also be used to develop creative ways to help trainee teachers' transition into professionals with a high sense of commitment and professionalism. Overall, this study seeks to focus on this essential element which is often neglected in teacher education.

1.1 Research questions:

The following research questions will be addressed in this study:

1. What is trainee teachers' perception of their professional (teacher's) identity?
2. To what extent does self-efficacy influence the personal and professional traits of trainee teachers?

1. Review of Literature:

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the concept of psychological states and how they relate to an individual's mental health and happiness. A psychological state can be described as the emotional experiences that are caused by the way the human mind processes sensory information as a result of interacting with the real world (Abdrakhmanova et al., 2017). Personal traits and qualities impact these experiences, which in turn affect people's mental health with the potential to be displayed through a variety of professional dispositions. Understanding in-depth such psychological dimensions from an educational context can illuminate the literature by highlighting novel practices helping the teacher trainees to self-assess their actions and behavior. However, in this study, we try to focus on teacher's identity and self-efficacy, two significant variables that affect how teachers perceive themselves professionally. By looking at how these ideas relate to psychological protection, we hope to explore better ways that might lead to increased teachers' mental health and well-being, particularly in a context that needs much care.

1.1 Identity of the Teacher:

The discipline of teacher identity has gained popularity in recent years (van Veen & Slegers, 2005; Richards, 2006; Clarke, 2008; Day et al., 2006). Indeed, Day and Kington (2008) illustrated that, "Identity is the way we make sense of ourselves to ourselves and the image of ourselves that we present to others" (p. 9). Teacher identity is often shaped by emotional, psychological, and social complexities (Tran & Nguyen, 2013). This self-awareness in other words is a vital aspect of personal development and validation for a future professional profession (Graza et al., 2016). Thus, teacher education programs (Stark (1991) should be designed in a way that help teachers see teaching as "being" rather than "doing" (p. 307). Reflecting on their actions and interactions helps novice teachers develop novel strategies and mechanism for more professional growth. Yet, teacher's identity may be influenced by different elements. Britzman (2003) claimed that those dispositions can be split into two groups:

- The visible ones may include classroom management, planning and material adaptation, assessment, and evaluation, etc. These roles often called the technical or practical part of teaching.
- The other part of the teacher's identity is not visible and may involve more personal things such as feelings, expectations, beliefs, or thoughts.

Nevertheless, Choosing teaching as a career is regarded as a significant step in constructing a teacher's identity. This identity is promoted more during the training stage, where the trainee teacher starts developing a sense of belonging to this community (Britzman (2003). Other elements that may contribute to developing this new professional identity are subject matter mastery which often facilitates the access to this new community with much confidence. The teaching experience is also seen as a major variable influencing teachers' engagement with this community (Wenger, 1999).

Beijaard et al. (2004) conducted a study on how new teachers develop their professional identities. They used a qualitative method to understand this phenomenon. They found that people who wanted to become teachers have a clear idea about their future profession. Brouwer et al. (2016) through a mixed-method approach found that potential teachers who were already assigned roles as teaching assistants or performed volunteer work had a stronger sense of who they were as professionals. Those prospective teachers who

participated in this study were able to express in a clear manner what is expected of them as teachers, with high sense of commitment and fulfillment.

In a nutshell, these studies revealed that prospective teachers are more likely to develop a robust professional identity if they have a clear idea of their profession or they already held a prior job in an education-like workplace. This has significant implications for teacher education programs, with recommendations for providing more opportunities for prospective teachers to develop their professional identities through practical experiences along with ongoing self-reflection on their own personal beliefs and values.

1.2 Self-Efficacy of Teachers:

The concept of self-efficacy has gained prominence in the field of school psychology, particularly in relation to the function of teachers in the classroom. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to be good teachers, with the potential to help their students do better in school (Klassen et al., 2009; Klassen & Tze, 2014). According to this research, instructors with high levels of self-efficacy experience greater job satisfaction and can better manage difficult classroom situations, such as dealing with discipline issues. Similarly, Bandura's (1977) through his social-cognitive theory of behavior change argued that "perceived self-efficacy is how people think they can reach certain performance levels and affect what happens in their lives. People's feelings, thoughts, motivation, and behavior are all influenced by their self-efficacy beliefs. Such beliefs produce these many consequences via four primary processes. Cognitive, motivational, emotional, and selection processes are among them". (p.2)

In the same vein, Capara et al. (2006) defined teacher self-efficacy as "the simple belief that the teacher can handle their professional tasks, responsibilities, and problems successfully." Researchers are interested in self-efficacy since it is closely linked to personality traits. For example, Djigi et al. (2014) discovered that teachers who were more open to experience and consciousness had a stronger sense of efficacy. Sousa et al., (2012), on the other hand, conducted another study in which frontline service professionals claimed exceptional self-efficacy based on personal values (self-direction) and self-enhancement values (achievement).

Individual values, together with dialogue values (conformity) and self-transcendence values (benevolence), can be characterized as trans-situational goals that vary in importance and serve as guiding principles in people's lives, according to (Schwartz, 1992)'s model of human values. Schwartz (1992) listed ten fundamental values:

- Power (social standing),
- Achievement (personal success),
- Hedonism (the pursuit of pleasure),
- Independence (self-direction),
- Benevolence (protecting the well-being of loved ones),
- Stimulation (challenge),
- Universalism (tolerance),
- Tradition (culture and religion),
- Conformity (abiding by social expectations),
- Security

Schwartz's values can be split into two categories. The first has a social perspective that is concerned with "the others" and the social system. The second is more individualistic because it emphasizes outcomes for oneself.

2. Methodology:

2.1. Research Objective:

The purpose of this study is to emphasize the fact that the psychological aspect of training and teaching is the foundation of the teacher's personal and professional development. It attempts to answer the following questions: What is the professional identity of trainee teachers? To what extent does self-efficacy influence the personal and professional traits of trainee teachers?

A quantitative research approach is used to get information from the sample and answer the research questions for this study. According to Creswell (2009), the rationale for using quantitative research methods is to obtain numerical data and dependable and objective outcomes. The researcher's subjectivity needs to be recognized more in the researcher's methodology, which looks at links between variables and can establish cause and effect in highly controlled situations along with testing theories or hypotheses.

1.3 The sample and sampling method:

1.2.1 Intended Audience:

The target population comprises English-trainee teachers from Morocco's CRMEFs (Regional Centres for Education and Training Professions).

1.2.1 Sampling Methodology:

The sample was chosen using randomized random sampling. That is, in order to minimize bias, every element in the population had an equal chance of being selected. The sample included 78 trainee teachers. The table below shows the gender and training center distribution of respondents in detail:

1.3 Instruments for data collection:

1.2.2 Questionnaire:

This study used two questionnaires: one for teacher identification and the other for teacher self-efficacy. The former consists of five questions that must be answered using one of three options: "Yes," "No," or "Neutral." The latter consists of five questions derived from Bandura's Instrument Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale and is to be measured on a Likert scale with four items to be ticked: "nothing," "very little," "some influence," "quite a bit," and "a great deal."

1.4 Methodology:

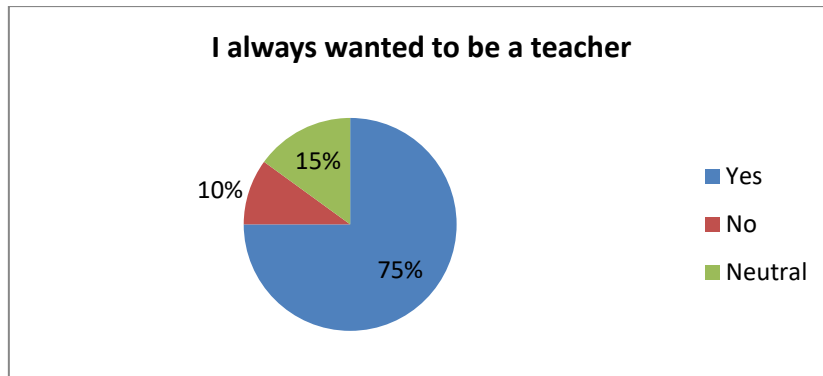
The current investigation was conducted entirely online. Trainee teachers from various regional training centers have consented to engage in this research project by completing two Microsoft Forms surveys.

3.6 Ethical considerations:

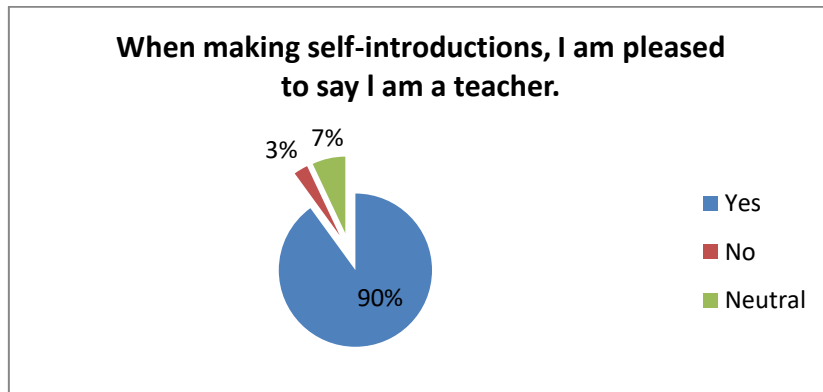
Participants in this study provided informed consent. The participants were given adequate information about the research goal and implications ahead of time. To preserve the participants' privacy, any identifiable information was removed from the reports. Additional ethical considerations include voluntary engagement and protecting the safety of participants.

2. Data presentation and analysis:

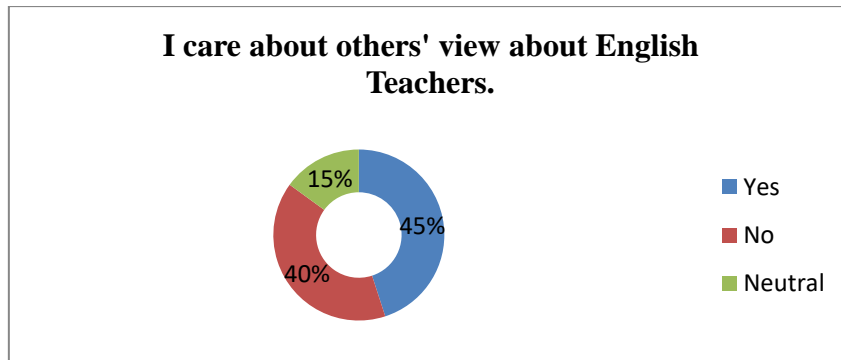
2.1 Questionnaire on Teacher Identity



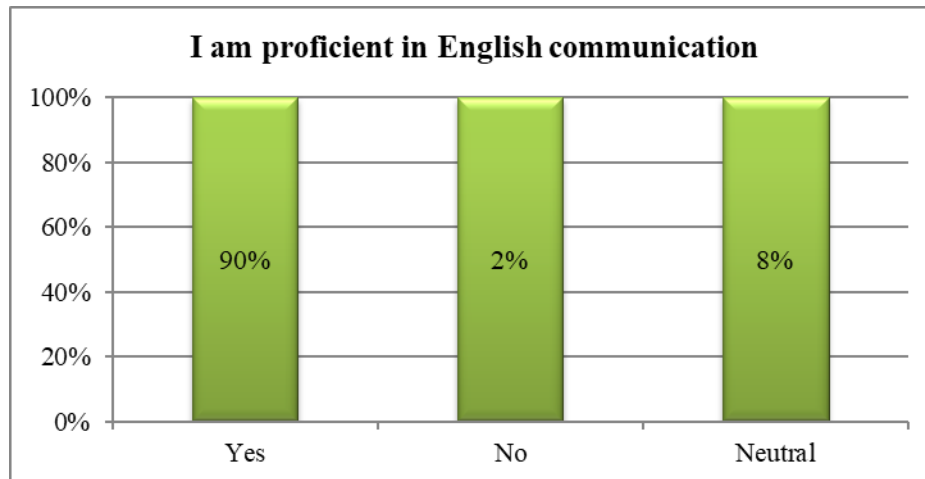
According to 1st graph, 75% of trainee teachers (58 people) selected the profession out of enthusiasm, while 10% of the participants (8) had other goals before applying to teach. The remaining 15% (or 12 people) elected to be neutral.



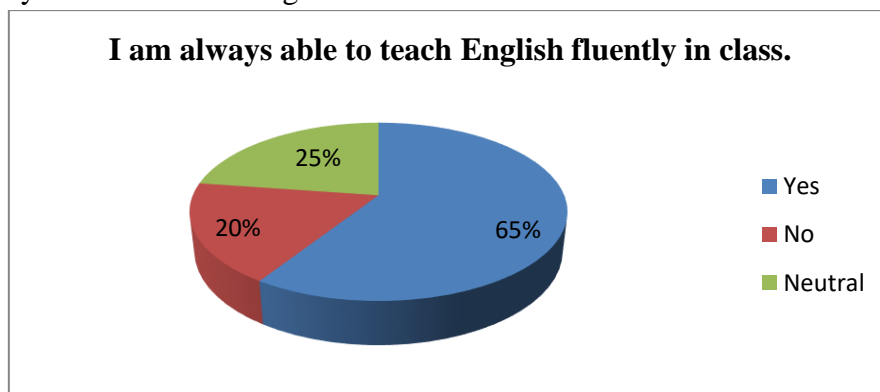
The 2nd graph shows that 90% of trainee teachers (almost everyone) expressed pride and appreciation for teaching, while the other 10% either voted no or remained indifferent.



The 3rd graph demonstrates that 40% of the subjects exhibited disinterest in other people's opinions on English teaching. 45% (the majority) indicated the opposite, while 15% were neutral.



The 4th graph shows that 90% of those polled claimed to be fluent in English conversation. 2% are thought to be less skilled, and 18% chose "neutral," which could mean they aren't very good at communicating or aren't sure how they feel about their English communication skills.



The 5th graph clarifies that in class, 50 teachers-to-be, or 65%, proved they knew how to teach English fluently and consistently. 16 (20%) said they could not, while 12 (15%) were neutral.

2.2 Questionnaire on teacher self-efficacy:

(BANDURA'S Instrument Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale)

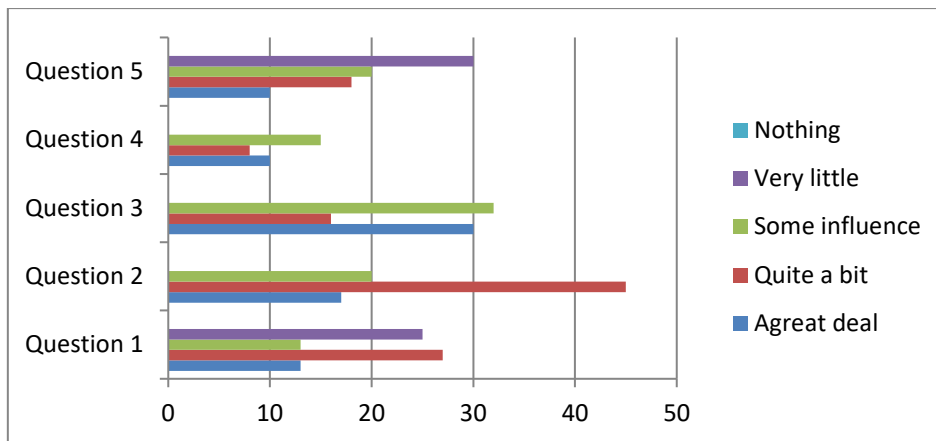
Question 1: How openly do you voice your opinions on crucial school issues?

Question 2: How much can you do to motivate kids who are disinterested in their studies?

Question 3: How can you encourage students to obey classroom rules?

How much can you help other teachers improve their skills?

Question 5: How much can you do to persuade pupils that they can succeed in school?



The 6th graph depicts the degree to which 78 trainee teachers regard themselves as being able to carry out their professional duties in the classroom. For example, answers to the first question demonstrate that 27 trainee teachers may openly voice their opinions on school affairs, 13 of them would do the same but more frequently, 13 others with some influence, and 25 others believe they can do very little.

3. Discussion

RQ1: What is trainee teachers' perception of their professional (teacher's) identity?

The study results display that potential teachers have a good idea of who they are as professionals. For example, the fact that trainees have always wanted to be teachers showed clearly those individuals' passion for joining this community. Moreover, the evidence concluded from the data that trainees are proud to be teachers indicate their lofty feeling towards their profession. This sense of job satisfaction expressed through their feelings is a concrete sign for more commitment and fulfillment as professionals.

These findings are compatible with some past studies. For instance, in a study by Beijaard et al. (2004), trainee teachers were found to have a strong sense of professional identity, which was characterized by a clear vision of the role of a teacher, a commitment to students, and a desire to make a positive impact on their lives. Similarly, Brouwer et al. (2016) highlighted that trainee teachers' professional identity was positively influenced by their prior experiences in the field of education, such as volunteering or working as a teacher's assistant.

RQ2: To what extent does self-efficacy influence the personal and professional traits of trainee teachers?

Nevertheless, the fact that trainee teachers at CRMEFs pay attention to what others are saying about their jobs suggests that this perception may impact them. While it is essential for prospective teachers to consider the perspectives and opinions of others, they must also develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and a professional identity that is not overly dependent on external validation.

According to the study results, self-efficacy is more related to how new teachers see themselves as professionals. Self-efficacy is a person's confidence in their own ability to do certain things or reach specific goals. High levels of self-efficacy are linked to good personal and professional traits, like confidence, motivation, persistence, and the ability to change. These traits are essential for good teaching because they help teachers deal with difficult learning situations while sustaining a healthy learning environment for their students.

The present studies' findings partially align with some past research. For example, Djigi et al. (2014) found that teachers who were more self-aware and open to experience felt like they did a better job. In their study, the researchers used a questionnaire to learn about the participants' personalities and feelings

about their abilities. Teachers who scored well on being open to new experiences and aware of themselves had a higher sense of efficacy, believing they could reach their goals.

Likewise, Sousa et al. (2012) found that frontline service workers had high self-efficacy based on personal values like self-direction and self-enhancement values like achievement. The researchers used a qualitative method to investigate the participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy. They showed that the personal values and beliefs of the participants about how well they could do at work also have an impact on their self-efficacy.

To sum up, these studies demonstrated that self-efficacy is affected by personal traits such as openness to experience and consciousness, as well as personal values and beliefs. These findings have important implications for teacher education and professional development programs, which should focus on practical skills and help teachers build a strong sense of self-efficacy by encouraging personal growth and reflection.

Effective teacher preparation programs offer prospective teachers real-world and group learning experiences that help them improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These experiences can help build self-efficacy and a strong sense of teacher's professional identity imbued with vitality and professionalism. Therefore, aspiring teachers must be provided with authentic experiences that will shape their routine practices and efficiently guide their professional decisions (Dottin, 2010).

4. Conclusion:

4.1 Summary

This study stressed the importance of identities and self-efficacy of pre-service teachers and their potential in helping future instructors to grow. The findings; however, suggest that novice teachers' perception of their professional identity is strongly correlated with their level of self-efficacy, which can be fostered through effective teacher preparation programs. Teacher education programs can better prepare pre-service teachers to excel teaching excellence particularly by comprehending the relationship between self-efficacy and professional identity. Certainly, the development of a strong professional identity is crucial for trainee teachers to champion this field and create more opportunities for professional development. Therefore, teacher education programs should be designed in a way that can provide for pre-service teachers with the space to reflect on their professional identities and to engage in meaningful interactions with different actors including mentors, peers, and social contexts that will best contribute to the growth of their emerging competence, professionalism, and teacher identities.

4.2 Future Research:

Future research needed in this area to focus more on identifying the specific factors that contribute to the formation of teacher identity and self-efficacy during pre-service training. Longitudinal studies can be done to look at how these factors change over time and how they affect the effectiveness and happiness of teachers. Qualitative research methods could also be employed in this context to understand in-depth this phenomenon with the potential to contribute to best practices in teachers' education.

4.3 Recommendations:

Based on the conclusion of the research, it is suggested that teacher preparation programs include components that address teacher identity and self-efficacy. This can be achieved by designing more activities that encourage pre-service teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses, set attainable objectives, and develop strategies for overcoming classroom challenges. Ongoing support and mentorship

programs can also be implemented to support new teachers maintain a strong sense of identity and self-efficacy throughout their careers.

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