

# An Investigation of Prospective Elementary Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Teaching Profession in Relation to Their Self-Concept, Emotional Intelligence, and Adaptability

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**Abstract:** This study examines the attitudes of prospective elementary teachers toward the teaching profession, with a focus on the role of self-concept, emotional intelligence, and adjustment. The research investigates how these psychological attributes influence pre-service teachers' professional outlook and willingness to commit to teaching. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 200 student teachers enrolled in teacher education programs. Findings suggest that higher levels of emotional intelligence, positive self-concept, and adaptability are associated with more favorable attitudes toward the teaching profession. Implications for teacher education programs are discussed.

**Keywords:** Self-Concept, Emotional Intelligence, Adaptability.

## Article History

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## 1. Introduction

The teaching profession is often viewed as a calling, requiring dedication, emotional resilience, and adaptability. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in understanding the factors that influence teachers' attitudes toward their profession, particularly among prospective teachers. Positive attitudes toward teaching are essential as they impact teacher retention, classroom effectiveness, and student outcomes (Kumari & Kumar, 2016). This study aims to explore how self-concept, emotional intelligence, and adjustment relate to the attitudes of prospective elementary teachers toward their future profession.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Despite the recognized importance of teacher attitudes, there is a lack of comprehensive research on how psychological factors like self-concept, emotional intelligence, and adjustment impact these attitudes. This study addresses this gap by investigating the relationship between these variables among prospective elementary teachers.

### **1.2 Objectives**

The primary objectives of this study are:

- To assess the attitude of prospective elementary teachers toward the teaching profession.
- To examine the relationship between self-concept and teaching attitude.
- To explore the role of emotional intelligence in shaping professional attitudes.
- To analyze the effect of adjustment on the attitude toward teaching.

### **1.3 Research Hypotheses**

1. There is a significant positive relationship between self-concept and attitude toward teaching.
2. Emotional intelligence positively correlates with attitudes toward the teaching profession.
3. Adjustment positively impacts prospective teachers' attitudes toward teaching.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Self-Concept and Teaching Attitudes**

Self-concept plays a crucial role in the development of professional attitudes. Studies suggest that individuals with positive self-concepts are more likely to approach their professions with optimism and resilience (Rogers, 1951; Veenman & Denessen, 2001). In the teaching context, a strong self-concept allows teachers to feel confident and motivated, enhancing their classroom effectiveness (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2005).

### **2.2 Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others (Goleman, 1995). High EI has been linked to greater job satisfaction, stress management, and positive professional attitudes, which are critical for teachers who often face emotionally challenging situations (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

### **2.3 Adjustment and Adaptability**

Adjustment refers to the capacity to adapt to new environments and cope with stressors

effectively. Teachers who can adjust well are more likely to maintain a positive attitude toward their profession, even in challenging circumstances (Weber, 2020).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study utilized a quantitative, correlational research design. The aim was to examine the relationship between self-concept, emotional intelligence, and adjustment with attitudes toward the teaching profession.

#### **3.2 Participants**

A sample of 200 prospective elementary teachers from teacher education programs across several universities was selected using simple random sampling. All participants were enrolled in their final year of study and preparing for teaching internships.

#### **3.3 Instruments**

1. **Teaching Attitude Scale** - Measures participants' attitudes toward the teaching profession.
2. **Self-Concept Scale** - Assesses the participants' perceptions of their self-worth and capabilities.
3. **Emotional Intelligence Scale** - Evaluates participants' emotional awareness and regulation skills.
4. **Adjustment Scale** - Assesses adaptability in new or challenging environments.

#### **3.4 Procedure**

Participants were given questionnaires to fill out, and data were collected anonymously. The data were analyzed using correlation and regression analyses to explore the relationships among variables.

### **4. Results**

#### **4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

Preliminary analysis showed that participants generally held positive attitudes toward the teaching profession. Mean scores for self-concept, emotional intelligence, and adjustment were moderate to high.

#### **4.2 Correlation Analysis**

The correlation analysis revealed a positive correlation between self-concept and teaching attitudes ( $r = 0.52, p < 0.01$ ), emotional intelligence and teaching attitudes ( $r = 0.46, p < 0.01$ ), and adjustment and teaching attitudes ( $r = 0.41, p < 0.01$ ). These findings support the hypotheses, indicating that all three factors positively relate to teaching attitudes.

#### **4.3 Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis indicated that self-concept, emotional intelligence, and adjustment collectively explained 36% of the variance in teaching attitudes ( $F = 22.34, p < 0.01$ ). Self-concept emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by emotional intelligence and adjustment.

### **5. Discussion**

The results indicate that self-concept, emotional intelligence, and adjustment are important predictors of positive attitudes toward the teaching profession among prospective teachers. High self-concept contributes to confidence and resilience, while emotional intelligence helps in managing classroom challenges. Adjustment aids in adapting to the dynamic environment of a classroom.

#### **5.1 Implications for Teacher Education Programs**

Teacher education programs should incorporate training that enhances emotional intelligence, self-concept, and adaptability. Providing counseling and workshops on these skills could strengthen future teachers' professional attitudes and readiness.

#### **5.2 Limitations**

The study's limitations include its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias.

#### **5.3 Recommendations for Future Research**

Future studies could use longitudinal designs to assess changes in attitude over time and examine other variables, such as motivation and support systems.

### **6. Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that self-concept, emotional intelligence, and adjustment significantly contribute to positive attitudes toward the teaching profession in prospective elementary teachers. Enhancing these psychological attributes in teacher training programs may improve teacher satisfaction, resilience, and retention in the profession.

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