

Teaching Efficacy and Enneagram Personality Types: A Correlational Study Among Pre-Service Early Childhood Educators in Quezon City University

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between Enneagram personality types and teaching efficacy among pre-service early childhood educators. Grounded in Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, the research aimed to identify the dominant Enneagram types, measure levels of teaching efficacy, and determine if a significant correlation exists between the two variables. A descriptive-correlational design was employed with 114 third-year Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECED) students from Quezon City University. Stratified random sampling was used, and data were collected using the Enneagram Personality Assessment and the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale, which assesses efficacy in classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Descriptive statistics revealed that Type 2 (Helper) and Type 9 (Peacemaker) were the most prevalent personality types, reflecting nurturing and collaborative traits. Participants also demonstrated high levels of teaching efficacy across all domains. However, Pearson correlation analysis showed no statistically significant relationship between Enneagram types and teaching efficacy. The findings suggest that while personality traits may support reflective practice, they do not directly influence teaching confidence. The study highlights the importance of robust teacher education programs in developing efficacy and recommends further research on personality's role in coping strategies and instructional behaviour.

Keywords: Enneagram theory, teaching efficacy, pre-service teachers, early childhood education, personality traits

INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of teacher education, understanding the psychological and personal factors that influence effective teaching is increasingly recognized as essential. Among these factors, personality traits have drawn growing interest in their potential to shape beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors within the classroom. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy posits that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities significantly affect their performance, motivation, and persistence [1]. In educational contexts, teacher efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to facilitate student learning, has been linked to improved instructional quality and learner outcomes. However, despite the acknowledged influence of personality on self-efficacy, limited research has explored this dynamic within the context of early childhood teacher training.

Recent studies have explored how personality typologies, such as the Enneagram, can contribute to educator development by fostering self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication. The Enneagram, a psychological framework that categorizes individuals into nine core personality types, has been applied in educational contexts to support reflective teaching practices and emotional regulation [2]. Research by Rebele et al. [3] suggests that personality-informed training helps educators better understand their strengths, challenges, and interpersonal tendencies, ultimately influencing how they relate to students and manage classroom environments. Devall-Martin [4] also found that personality-based self-reflection tools can enhance teacher preparation by promoting a deeper understanding of one's instructional behaviors.

Despite these insights, little is known about how Enneagram personality types relate specifically to teaching efficacy—defined as the belief in one’s ability to teach effectively [5]. This is particularly significant in early childhood education, where teacher dispositions are central to fostering nurturing, responsive, and developmentally appropriate learning environments [6]. The gap in understanding how personality traits intersect with efficacy beliefs underscores the need for further research, especially in the context of pre-service early childhood educators.

This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the correlation between Enneagram personality types and teaching efficacy among pre-service early childhood educators. Specifically, it seeks to: (1) identify the predominant Enneagram types among these educators; (2) determine their levels of teaching efficacy; and (3) assess whether a significant relationship exists between personality types and perceived teaching efficacy.

By investigating these connections, the study contributes to the broader field of teacher education by offering insights into how personality-based frameworks like the Enneagram can inform training programs and support the professional growth of future early childhood educators. This inquiry is guided by the hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between Enneagram personality types and teaching efficacy.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored in Bandura’s self-efficacy theory, which posits that individuals’ beliefs in their capabilities significantly affect their actions, motivation, and resilience in the face of challenges [1]. Within the educational setting, teaching efficacy is a crucial construct influencing teacher behavior, instructional quality, and student outcomes. Bandura emphasized that efficacy beliefs are shaped by various factors, including personal characteristics, past experiences, and social influences. In this study, personality traits, as categorized by the Enneagram model, are examined as potential predictors of teaching efficacy among pre-service early childhood educators.

The Enneagram typology offers a nuanced lens through which to view individual differences in coping styles, interpersonal interactions, and problem-solving approaches. These personality-driven tendencies may influence key domains of teaching efficacy: classroom management, instructional strategies, student engagement, and adaptability to diverse learners. For instance, a Type Two personality (The Helper) may naturally excel in building nurturing relationships with students, enhancing engagement, while a Type Five (The Investigator) might approach instructional strategies with analytical rigor but require support in fostering dynamic classroom interactions. By mapping Enneagram types against specific dimensions of teaching efficacy, this study seeks to uncover patterns that can inform more personalized teacher training and development.

In addition to personality traits, the study acknowledges the role of demographic factors as moderating variables. Characteristics such as age, gender, and prior teaching experience may influence both personality expression and efficacy beliefs. For example, older or more experienced pre-service teachers might report higher teaching efficacy regardless of Enneagram type, owing to accumulated life skills and familiarity with educational settings. Gender differences may also interact with personality traits in shaping self-perceptions of teaching competence. Thus, demographic factors are considered to better understand the complexity of how personality and efficacy interact in pre-service early childhood educators.

By situating personality within the broader framework of self-efficacy and accounting for moderate influences, the study adopts a holistic approach. This conceptual framework not only guides the research design but also aims to contribute to a more differentiated understanding of teacher preparation, supporting strategies that honor individual differences in the journey toward professional competence.

RELATED LITERATURE

Enneagram Theory and Personality in Education

The Enneagram is a personality typology system that divides individuals into nine distinct types, each defined by core motivations, fears, and behavioral tendencies [7]. In recent years, the Enneagram has gained traction in

educational research for its potential to enhance teachers' self-awareness, professional growth, and relationship-building skills. Sotiriou et al. [8] emphasized the tool's usefulness in promoting personal reflection and improving team dynamics within school environments. Schewee III [2] further demonstrated that Enneagram-based interventions foster reflective teaching practices and support personal alignment with pedagogical goals, suggesting that understanding one's personality can improve overall instructional effectiveness.

Within teacher preparation programs, specific Enneagram types appear to recur more frequently. Research by Mechelke [6] found that Type 2 (The Helper) and Type 9 (The Peacemaker) are commonly represented among pre-service educators, as these types are associated with empathy, nurturing behaviors, and a preference for harmony—traits highly valued in early childhood settings. These findings point to a natural alignment between personality types and career choice in education. However, while personality profiles may indicate general teaching preferences or dispositions, there remains a limited understanding of how these traits translate into actual teaching competencies, particularly in relation to teaching efficacy.

Teaching Efficacy in Pre-Service Teachers

Teaching efficacy refers to a teacher's belief in their capacity to facilitate student learning and manage classroom dynamics effectively [1]. This construct plays a critical role in determining instructional success, teacher persistence, and student achievement. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy [5] identified three core domains of teaching efficacy: classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Each of these domains reflects essential competencies that influence how educators interact with learners and manage the complexities of the classroom.

Existing literature highlights that personality traits impact self-efficacy. For example, Okechi and Okere [9] found that extraversion and conscientiousness, traits typically associated with assertiveness, organization, and sociability, positively correlate with teaching confidence. However, these findings are grounded largely in Big Five personality models. Few studies have examined how Enneagram personality types, encompass deeper emotional and motivational dimensions, relate specifically to teaching efficacy, especially within the unique context of early childhood education. This presents an important area for investigation, as early educators often rely on affective and intuitive skills closely aligned with personality.

Personality and Coping Mechanisms in Teaching

Teaching, particularly for those in training, can be an emotionally demanding and high-stress occupation. Pre-service teachers frequently encounter anxiety related to classroom control, lesson preparation, and performance expectations [10]. Personality not only shapes perceptions of these challenges but also determines the coping strategies that teachers employ. Lingfang [11] suggests that personality-driven coping mechanisms range from task-oriented behaviors to emotion-focused responses.

Several Enneagram types offer insights into these tendencies. For instance, Type 1 (The Reformer) is often characterized by a desire for order and high standards, which can lead to both effective problem-solving and vulnerability to burnout. In contrast, Type 4 (The Individualist) may experience emotional intensity but also draw on creativity and empathy to navigate stress. Cuartero and Tur [12] found that individuals with high emotional stability, traits often associated with Type 9, exhibited greater resilience and adaptability under pressure. These insights highlight the importance of personality-aware training that not only builds competencies but also equips future teachers with coping strategies tailored to their individual traits.

While the distribution of Enneagram types among educators has been explored, and personality has been shown to impact teaching styles and general self-efficacy, specific gaps remain. Notably, little research has directly examined how Enneagram types relate to teaching efficacy in early childhood education, a field that demands a unique blend of affective, cognitive, and interpersonal skills. Moreover, it is not yet clear whether certain Enneagram types are more strongly associated with confidence in specific teaching domains such as classroom management, instructional delivery, or learner engagement.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between Enneagram personality types and teaching efficacy among pre-service early childhood educators. A correlational approach was deemed appropriate as it allows for the investigation of potential associations between naturally occurring variables without manipulating any of them. In this context, the study focused on determining whether specific personality types, as classified by the Enneagram typology, are significantly associated with varying levels of teaching efficacy.

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of 114 third-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECed) program at Quezon City University. These pre-service teachers were selected as they have already undergone foundational courses in pedagogy and early childhood development, making them suitable respondents for assessing perceptions of teaching efficacy. To ensure representativeness across different demographics within the cohort, the study utilized stratified random sampling, categorizing students based on relevant strata such as gender or academic section, then randomly selecting participants from each stratum.

Instruments

Two standardized instruments were used in the study. The Enneagram Personality Assessment served to categorize each participant according to one of the nine Enneagram types. This tool allowed for the identification of personality-driven tendencies that may influence teaching-related behaviors and beliefs. To measure teaching efficacy, the study used the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy [5]. The TSES is a widely accepted instrument comprising three subscales: classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. It has been validated in numerous studies with high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$), ensuring reliability in measuring pre-service teachers' self-perceptions of efficacy.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through an online survey distributed via Google Forms, ensuring accessibility and convenience for participants while maintaining anonymity. The survey included demographic questions, the Enneagram personality assessment, and the full TSES. Upon completion of data collection, the responses were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and mean scores, to summarize the distribution of Enneagram types and teaching efficacy levels. To assess the strength and direction of relationships between personality types and efficacy measures, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed. This statistical test was appropriate given the study's goal of identifying significant correlations between continuous variables.

RESULTS

Predominant Enneagram Types Among Pre-Service Early Childhood Educators

Descriptive statistics revealed the distribution of Enneagram types among the 114 respondents as shown in Table 1. The most frequently reported types were Type 2 (The Helper) and Type 9 (The Peacemaker), aligning with traits commonly associated with caregiving professions.

TABLE I FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ENNEAGRAM TYPES

Enneagram Type	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Type 1 – Reformer	10	8.77%

Type 2 – Helper	28	24.56%
Type 3 – Achiever	14	12.28%
Type 4 – Individualist	9	7.89%
Type 5 – Investigator	6	5.26%
Type 6 – Loyalist	11	9.65%
Type 7 – Enthusiast	7	6.14%
Type 8 – Challenger	5	4.39%
Type 9 – Peacemaker	24	21.05%
Total	114	100%

The predominance of Types 2 and 9 reflects characteristics such as empathy, nurturing, and conflict avoidance, which are desirable in early childhood education. These types may naturally gravitate toward child-cantered fields due to their relational strengths and cooperative nature.

B. Teaching Efficacy Levels of Pre-Service Early Childhood Educators

Teaching efficacy was assessed across three dimensions: instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. The results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE II DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF TEACHING EFFICACY

Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
Instructional Strategies	7.92	High efficacy
Classroom Management	7.74	High efficacy
Student Engagement	8.06	High efficacy
Overall TSES Mean	7.91	High efficacy

The results indicate that participants perceived themselves to be confident in their teaching abilities across all domains. These findings are consistent with those of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy [5], who emphasized that early development of efficacy beliefs is critical to long-term teaching success.

C. Correlation Between Enneagram Types and Teaching Efficacy

Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between Enneagram types (coded numerically from 1 to 9) and the total and subscale scores of teaching efficacy.

TABLE III PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN ENNEAGRAM TYPE AND TEACHING EFFICACY

Variable	r	p-value	Interpretation
Instructional Strategies	-0.076	0.429	No significant correlation
Classroom Management	-0.058	0.538	No significant correlation
Student Engagement	-0.083	0.385	No significant correlation
Overall TSES Score	-0.073	0.447	No significant correlation

Results in Table 3 showed no statistically significant correlation between Enneagram types and any dimension of teaching efficacy. This supports the null hypothesis and aligns with findings by Li et al. [13], who suggested

that while personality may influence general self-efficacy, its direct correlation with teaching efficacy may be moderated by factors such as training, experience, or contextual support.

This finding also implies that teaching efficacy may be more influenced by educational experiences and pedagogical preparation than inherent personality traits. It further suggests that teacher education programs can support efficacy development across all personality types through inclusive and reflective pedagogical training.

DISCUSSION

The present study sought to explore the relationship between Enneagram personality types and teaching efficacy among pre-service early childhood educators. Grounded in Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, the study hypothesized that there would be no significant relationship between Enneagram types and teaching efficacy, which includes the domains of classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. The findings provide several insights into personality distributions and efficacy beliefs in the context of early childhood teacher training.

The data showed that Type 2 (The Helper) and Type 9 (The Peacemaker) were the most common Enneagram types among respondents. This finding aligns with earlier research by Mechelke [6] and Cuartero and Tur [12], who observed similar personality distributions among pre-service teachers. These types are characterized by empathy, patience, and a desire to maintain harmony, all essential qualities for working with young children. The high frequency of these types suggests that early childhood education may naturally attract individuals with nurturing and supportive dispositions, which are conducive to building strong teacher-child relationships and promoting a positive learning environment.

Overall, participants reported high levels of teaching efficacy across all three domains, with the highest mean score in student engagement. This is encouraging, as student engagement is critical in early learning environments where children require consistent interaction and motivation. The high scores in classroom management and instructional strategies further indicate that these pre-service teachers feel confident in their developing teaching skills. These findings resonate with prior work by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy [5], who emphasized that strong efficacy beliefs are linked to better classroom performance and long-term teacher commitment. It is worth noting that this confidence may be attributed to quality teacher education programs that provide early and structured practicum experiences, feedback, and reflection.

Contrary to expectations that personality traits might influence teaching confidence, the Pearson correlation analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between Enneagram personality types and any dimension of teaching efficacy. This outcome supports the study's null hypothesis and aligns with findings by Bardach et al. [14], who noted that while personality traits like extraversion and conscientiousness correlate with general self-efficacy, their influence on domain-specific teaching efficacy may be less direct or moderated by other factors, such as teaching experience, mentoring, or classroom support.

This result also suggests that personality type may not be a determining factor in how confident pre-service educators feel about their teaching abilities. Instead, it highlights the potential of teacher education programs to equip students with the tools and strategies needed to succeed, regardless of personality disposition. This finding reinforces the importance of accessible, inclusive, and differentiated teacher training that fosters growth in all learners, not just those who align with certain personality profiles.

These findings suggest that while personality awareness (such as through Enneagram assessments) may aid in professional development and interpersonal understanding, it should not be viewed as predictive of teaching capability. Educators and teacher mentors might still find value in integrating personality frameworks into reflective practice and communication training but should prioritize evidence-based pedagogical development when aiming to improve efficacy.

Future research could expand this study by exploring the interaction of Enneagram types with stress coping mechanisms, teaching styles, or emotional regulation in the classroom. It would also be valuable to compare Enneagram results with other personality models such as the Big Five or MBTI, and to examine these

relationships longitudinally across different stages of teacher preparation.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationship between Enneagram personality types and teaching efficacy among pre-service early childhood educators. Findings revealed that while Type 2 (The Helper) and Type 9 (The Peacemaker) were the most prevalent Enneagram types—reflecting nurturing and collaborative dispositions—there was no significant correlation between personality type and teaching efficacy in the domains of classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement.

These results suggest that teaching efficacy, as a belief in one's ability to teach effectively, may be shaped more by training experiences and contextual factors than by innate personality traits. While personality awareness through tools like the Enneagram can support self-reflection and interpersonal growth, it should not be viewed as a predictor of teaching performance or confidence.

The study reinforces the role of teacher education programs in fostering strong teaching efficacy among all pre-service educators, regardless of personality type. It also opens pathways for future research on how personality interacts with other variables—such as stress management, adaptability, and professional identity—in shaping the development of effective early childhood educators.

Ultimately, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of teacher preparation, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and supportive training environments that empower future educators to thrive.

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