

Emotional Labor in ELT: A Systematic Review of Pre-Service Teachers' Emotional Responses During Teaching Internships

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Highlights

Pre-service teachers experience a mix of positive, negative, and mixed emotions during teaching internships.

ABSTRACT: This study presents a systematic literature review analysing the emotional experiences of pre-service teachers during their internship teaching practices in English Language Teaching (ELT). The concept of emotional labor is explored, focusing on how individuals manage their emotions to align with professional and societal expectations. The study identifies primary emotional responses, coping strategies, and their implications on teaching effectiveness, professional identity, and emotional well-being. A structured review protocol was followed, including specific inclusion and exclusion criteria, data extraction, and synthesis. The findings highlight the complex emotional dynamics pre-service teachers navigate, encompassing both positive and negative emotions influenced by various personal, organizational, and contextual factors. The review emphasizes the importance of supportive mentorship, constructive feedback, and a collaborative teaching environment in aiding pre-service teachers to manage emotional labor effectively.

Keywords: Emotional labor, pre-service teacher, internship, teaching practice.

Introduction

In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), the emotional experiences of teachers have garnered increasing attention, particularly in understanding how emotions influence teaching effectiveness, classroom dynamics, and teacher well-being. Emotional labor refers to the effort of managing emotions, where individuals navigate the gap between "how they feel" and "how they are expected to feel" in specific situations (Benesch, 2017). During this negotiation, individuals may fake, induce, amplify, or suppress their emotions to maintain the "appropriate" mindset and behavior, adhering to the feeling rules set by society and institutions, regardless of their true emotions (Benesch, 2017, 2018; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Zembylas, 2007). Research on emotional labor is pertinent to various career fields, particularly those that are service-oriented and predominantly female, such as teaching (Humphries, 2020; Truta, 2014), and nursing (Gray, 2010; Sawbridge & Hewison, 2013).

In the educational context, two primary groups of scholars focus on emotional labor research (Benesch, 2017): the structural and post-structural camps. The structural camp breaks emotional labor into several components, including three key dimensions or strategies. These are surface acting, where individuals attempt to feel the desired emotions by hiding or faking their actual emotions, and deep acting, where they aim to display the desired emotions by altering their internal feelings, allowing

genuine emotions to emerge naturally (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Grandey, 2003; Hirschfeld A, 1983); the third component is the expression of naturally felt emotions, where individuals display emotions that align with what they genuinely and spontaneously feel (Diefendorff et al., 2005). The structural camp uses statistical analysis to examine and measure how these components of emotional labor correlate with factors such as emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, leadership practices, motivation, Confucian familism, work–family conflict, emotional exhaustion, public service motivation, and job satisfaction. In contrast, the post-structural camp does not break emotional labor into components. Instead, it typically employs qualitative methods to explore emotional labor within social contexts, arguing that it is discursively constructed and reproduced through intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup interactions (Benesch, 2017; Dewaele & Wu, 2021; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Grandey, 2003; Hirschfeld A, 1983; Humphries, 2020; Li & Wang, 2016; Truta, 2014; S. Xie et al., 2022; Yin et al., 2017, 2013; Zheng et al., 2018; X. Zhu et al., 2021).

Although the two groups have differing viewpoints, supporting one does not imply rejecting the other; instead, both perspectives can coexist and complement each other. Consider education as an example. Teaching, as a relational activity, relies on the interaction and connection between teacher and student (Miller & Gkonou, 2018), teachers' emotional labor plays a crucial role in the dynamics of teaching (Benesch, 2017; Birt et al., 2016; Dewaele & Wu, 2021; Humphries, 2020; Miller & Gkonou, 2018). In this context, teachers may engage in emotional labor in either a positive or negative way (Miller & Gkonou, 2018). From the structural perspective, whether teachers employ a single emotional labor strategy or utilize all three simultaneously depends on situational factors (such as positive or negative display rules) and their individual dispositional traits (like extraversion, neuroticism, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and self-monitoring) (Diefendorff et al., 2005). From the post-structural perspective, teachers' positive efforts typically benefit their students and also contribute to the teachers' own professional well-being and emotional fulfillment (Benesch, 2017; Miller & Gkonou, 2018; X. Xie, 2022). Importantly, both situational and personal variables are rooted in social contexts, making them otherwise meaningless.

One of the key initiatives in the education department's preparation of future teachers is the teaching practicum. Higher education institutions like colleges conduct teacher education through internship programs in practically every nation (Wedell, 2017). It is meant for the education department's final-year students. For this reason, the teaching practicum is crucial for students in the education department. A teaching practicum often lasts for four weeks or longer (Novitasari & Murtafi'ah, 2022). The dynamics of proximity and distance between teachers and students can influence the dynamics of affect that arise in the classroom, leading to diverse interpretations among educators (Ulya & Srisudarso, 2023).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), pre-service English teachers are expected to use English as the medium of instruction. This can present a challenge for some, as they may feel anxious when required to teach in the target language. This specific type of anxiety, which arises while teaching, differs from both language learning anxiety and general teaching anxiety, although all three are interconnected (Merç, 2011). Can (2018) suggested that foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) may be particularly acute for non-native pre-service EFL teachers. As

a result, these teachers are more likely to experience feelings of inadequacy when it comes to using the target language during instruction (Can, 2018).

While research on the emotional dynamics of teaching has been conducted, studies specifically focusing on emotional labour in pre-service teachers' internship experiences remain underexplored, particularly in the form of literature reviews. The limited availability of comprehensive reviews on this topic highlights an opportunity to develop a more in-depth analysis. Such research could provide valuable insights into the role of emotional labour in shaping teaching practices, emotional well-being, and professional development, thereby contributing new perspectives to the existing body of literature in English Language Teaching (ELT).

This systematic literature review synthesizes existing studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of pre-service teachers' emotional experiences during their internships in ELT contexts. By analyzing trends, themes, and patterns in the literature, the paper seeks to illuminate the impact of these experiences on teaching effectiveness, professional identity development, and emotional well-being.

The review aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the primary emotional responses pre-service teachers experience during internships in ELT.
2. To explore the coping strategies pre-service teachers employ to manage emotional labour.

To address these objectives, the paper follows a structured outline. It begins by summarizing existing literature reviews to establish a foundation for the study. Next, the methodology section outlines the research questions, search strategies, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and data extraction processes. The findings section provides a detailed analysis of the results, identifying key themes and gaps in the literature. Finally, the paper concludes by discussing limitations and offering recommendations for future research, with a focus on developing effective strategies to support pre-service teachers in managing emotional labour during internships.

Method

The approach utilized in this study is a systematic review of the literature (Kitchenham et al., 2010; Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). The systematic literature review (SLR) is a structured research methodology aimed at identifying, evaluating, explaining, and synthesizing existing literature produced by scholars, researchers, and practitioners. An SLR (Systematic literature review) is a methodical examination of a clearly defined research question, employing systematic and explicit strategies to identify, select, and critically assess relevant studies (Moher et al., 2009).

The research adheres to the methodology outlined by Kitchenham and Charters (2007), which consists of six essential phases: establishing a review protocol, defining inclusion and exclusion criteria, conducting a search procedure, implementing a selection process, evaluating quality, and extracting and synthesizing data. The study's objectives are consistent with the findings, and it follows the systematic literature review's steps for planning, execution, and reporting to ensure a thorough analysis.

Review protocol

A review protocol outlines the methods that will be utilized to conduct a specific systematic review. It is essential to have a pre-defined protocol to minimize the risk of researcher bias (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). In this study, the protocol included

several key elements which consist of clearly defined research questions and objectives, inclusion and exclusion criteria, a detailed search strategy with specific keywords, the process for study selection, quality appraisal standards, data extraction techniques, and plans for data synthesis. By specifying these components in advance, the review process ensures greater transparency, consistency, and reproducibility, allowing other researchers to critically evaluate the rigor of the study (Butler et al., 2016; Moher et al., 2009).

Inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined to ensure that only studies highly relevant to this analysis are considered (Table 1). The criteria are aligned with the research question (content, timeline) and ensure the maintenance of a specific quality level (type of literature) and consistency (language, subject area).

Table 1

Inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion	Exclusion
Relevant keywords are found in the titles or abstracts or keywords section	Studies where relevant keywords (e.g., emotional labor, pre-service teachers, emotional responses, internship teaching experiences) are not found in the titles, abstracts, or keywords section.
Empirical studies based on the pre-service teachers' emotional respond to intership program	Studies not related to emotional labor or not involving pre-service teachers in ELT.
Research papers published between 2018 and 2024	Research papers published before 2018 or after 2024.
Research involving pre-service teachers or teacher candidates in internship or practicum settings.	Studies that do not involve pre-service teachers or teacher candidates in internship or practicum settings.
Articles that are freely accessible without requiring payment or subscription.	Articles requiring payment (paywall) or with restricted access, including subscription-based access.

Search procedure

The search process consists of a single step, namely manual search. ScienceDirect, Wiley, Semantic Scholar, and ResearchGate were extensively examined. These platforms provide wide-ranging access to journal and conference papers, enabling a more thorough examination of the topic. (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). A thorough set of keywords was used in the search to reduce the likelihood of missing any important documents. Boolean operators were applied in the search queries to retrieve the most relevant papers. In the first step of the search, combinations of ("emotional labour" OR "emotional responses") AND ("pre-service teacher" OR "student teacher") AND ("internship" OR "teaching practice") were used.

Selection Process

The selection process, as illustrated in Figure 1, began with a manual search on databases such as ScienceDirect, Wiley, ResearchGate, and Semantic Scholar. Using the search string ("emotional labour" OR "emotional responses") AND ("pre-service teacher" OR "student teacher") AND ("internship" OR "teaching practice"), a total of 620 research articles were identified. These articles were screened based on predefined exclusion criteria, as well as their titles and abstracts. Consequently, 603 articles were excluded, leaving 17 articles for further review.

Following this, all 17 articles underwent a rigorous quality assessment to evaluate their suitability for inclusion in the review. During this stage, 5 articles were

excluded for not meeting the required quality standards, leaving a total of 12 articles for the final review.

In Figure 2, VOSviewer is used solely for mapping the relationships between key terms or relevant concepts in the articles based on text data from the 12 reviewed articles. This tool visualizes the connections between key terms, which are represented as nodes on a map.

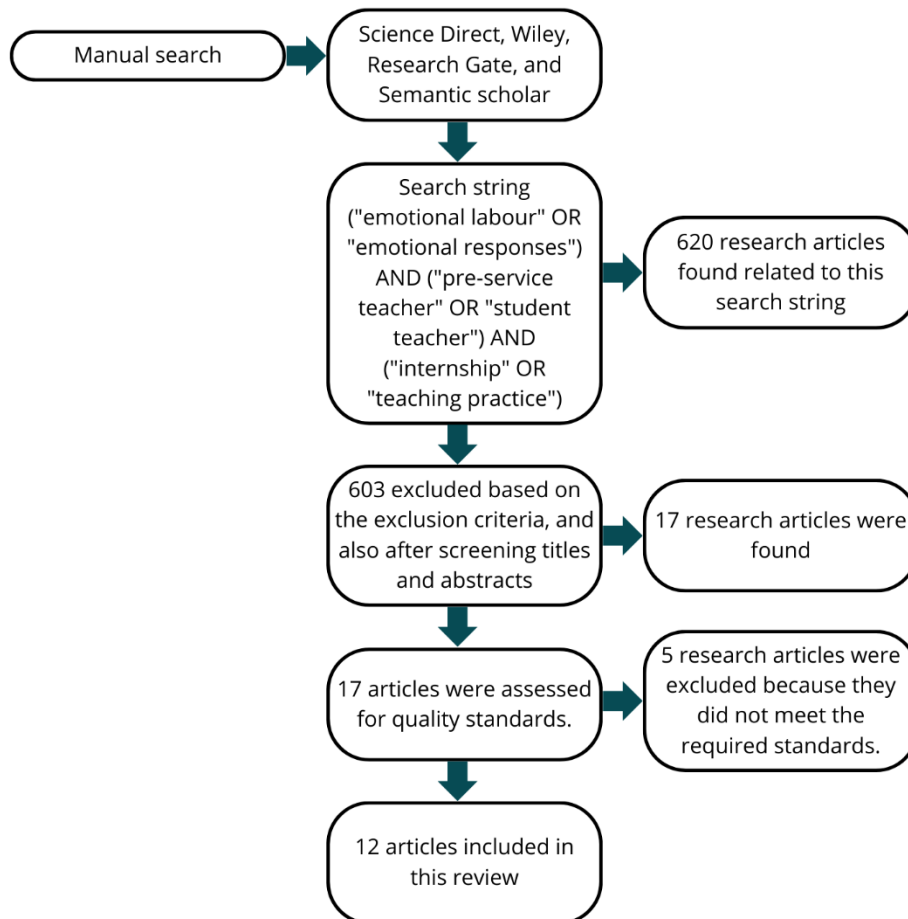


Fig 1. Selection Process

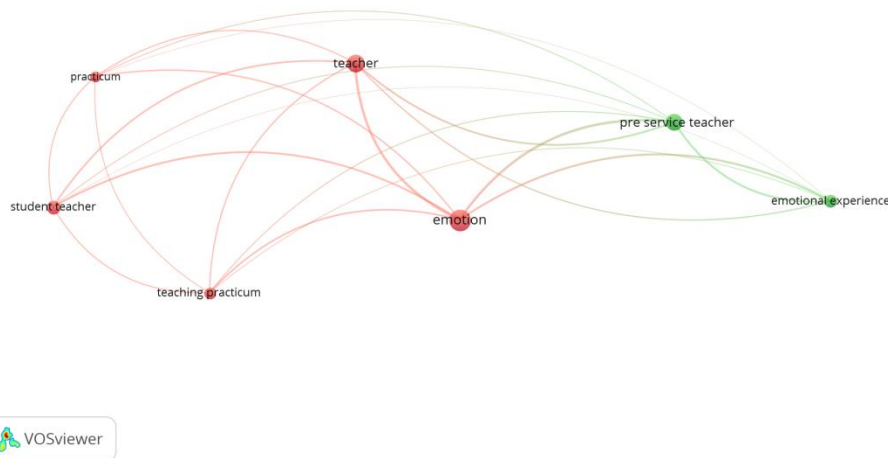


Fig 2. The relationships between key terms

Assessing quality

According to Kitchenham and Charters (2007), the evaluation process is crucial for assessing the quality of a study. This evaluation may involve a checklist or a set of questions. A list of criteria and a series of questions are used to assess the quality of each study. In this research, four quality measurement standards were established to evaluate the effectiveness of each study. The following are the criteria used for assessing quality (AQ):

AQ1. Does the study specifically focus on emotional labor in English Language Teaching (ELT) within the context of pre-service teacher internships?

AQ2. Does the article utilize an empirical research method to analyze emotional labor in ELT?

AQ3. Does the paper provide detailed insights into the emotional responses of pre-service teachers during their teaching internships?

AQ4. Does the article explicitly discuss how emotional labor is managed or experienced by pre-service teachers in internship teaching practices?

The study assessed the quality of 17 selected papers using four evaluation criteria, categorizing them as weak, medium, or high. Each paper received a score based on how well it fulfilled specific requirements: a score of 2 for fully meeting a criterion, 1 for partially meeting it, and 0 for not meeting it at all. The total score for each paper was the sum of its scores across all criteria. The studies were then classified as follows:

1. Excluded if the total score is below 6 (does not qualify for review).
2. Medium if the total score is exactly 6 (qualifies for further review).
3. Strong if the total score is above 6 (highly recommended for review).

Five articles were excluded from the review because they did not meet the established quality standards. These articles failed to fulfill the required criteria for empirical research, relevance to the topic, or other specific requirements outlined in the evaluation process. As a result, they were deemed unsuitable for inclusion in the analysis, ensuring that only studies of sufficient rigor and relevance were considered in the final review. The results of the assessment of article quality are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Assessing quality results*

No.	AQ1	AQ2	AQ3	AQ4	Score
1	2	2	2	2	8
2	2	2	2	2	8
3	2	2	2	2	8
4	2	2	0	0	4
5	2	2	0	1	5
6	1	2	2	2	7
7	1	2	2	0	5
8	0	2	2	1	5
9	2	2	2	2	8
10	2	2	2	2	8
11	2	2	2	2	8
12	2	2	2	1	7
13	2	2	2	2	8
14	2	2	2	2	8
15	1	2	2	0	5
16	2	2	2	0	6
17	2	2	2	1	7

Synthesis and extraction

A total of 13 studies were analyzed to finalize the data extraction and synthesis process. The key information was meticulously gathered after thoroughly examining the selected papers. This step aimed to consolidate the necessary data from the studies (Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023). The methods used for data extraction and synthesis are explained in the following sections.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The emotional responses pre-service teachers experience during internships in ELT

Pre-service teachers navigate dual roles during their teaching practice, acting as both educators and learners. Their emotional experiences as novice teachers often differ from those of experienced in-service teachers. Throughout the teaching practice, they encounter a mix of positive and negative emotions stemming from their interactions with mentors, students, fellow pre-service teachers, and other school staff members. Previous studies explored the emotional responses of pre-service teachers during internships in ELT, highlighting the presence of positive, negative, and mixed emotions. These emotions emerged in various teaching and learning contexts, influenced by interactions with students, mentors, peers, and other school staff (Ji et al., 2022).

1. Negative emotional responses

One of the most common emotional experiences of student teachers during their practicum is anxiety. This emotion is strongly shaped by the quality of support provided by mentor teachers, particularly in terms of feedback, guidance when handling mistakes, and the degree of autonomy offered (Hagenauer et al., 2024). When communication with mentors is ineffective, support is insufficient, or the environment feels unsupportive, pre-service teachers often experience a loss of confidence. Unapproachable attitudes, constant interruptions, and public reprimands create feelings of inadequacy, reduce motivation, and hinder classroom performance

(Karşlı & Yağız, 2022). For many pre-service teachers, this anxiety is intensified by their lack of teaching experience, especially in the early stages of their practicum. They often feel uncertain at the beginning of each lesson, unsure of how to deliver content effectively or foster a positive classroom atmosphere (Novitasari & Murtafi'ah, 2022).

Beyond anxiety, pre-service teachers also reported feelings of disengagement and disorientation when they felt unsupported both morally and emotionally. Entering a new environment often created insecurity and loneliness, which compounded their sense of helplessness and isolation (Imamyartha et al., 2023). These emotions shaped the way they perceived themselves in the school community, with some forming an “outsider” identity as a result of isolation and loneliness. Others linked their feelings of powerlessness to difficulties in communicating with students, which reinforced their sense of being disconnected. In some cases, pre-service teachers adopted a detached attitude toward their placement schools because they did not intend to pursue teaching as a long-term career, which limited their willingness to build meaningful relationships with students (Deng et al., 2018).

Negative emotions also surfaced when pre-service teachers clashed with school leaders over non-teaching responsibilities. Many expressed dissatisfactions with administrative tasks that required them to spend long hours in school offices, which they felt had little to do with their primary goal of improving teaching skills. Instead of being able to learn through trial and error in the classroom, they were positioned as office assistants. This imposed identity often led to frustration, confusion, and a sense of disorientation (Ulya & Srisudarso, 2023).

Taken together, negative emotional responses such as anger, anxiety, disengagement, disorientation, distress, confusion, hopelessness, and demotivation are linked to power imbalances, high professional expectations, and insufficient emotional support. The unequal relationship between pre-service teachers and the professional community frequently placed them in a peripheral role where they felt submissive and unable to respond effectively to challenges. This imbalance often triggered confusion, hopelessness, and reduced motivation. The quality of relationships with students, mentor teachers, and peers further shaped the extent to which anxiety and anger were experienced during the practicum (Hagenauer et al., 2024; Imamyartha et al., 2023).

2. *Positive emotional responses*

Student teachers frequently reported positive emotional experiences throughout their practicum, and these feelings often amplified the initial enthusiasm they carried into the internship. For many, the practicum was their first opportunity to independently teach the subjects they had studied, a milestone that sparked excitement, curiosity, and pride (Hagenauer et al., 2024). As novice educators, pre-service teachers approached this phase with great anticipation, viewing it not only as an academic requirement but also as a symbolic beginning of their professional journey. This sense of novelty gave rise to enthusiasm, hope, and strong aspirations for their future careers. The teaching practicum thus became a foundational stage, shaping their identity and reinforcing their commitment to the teaching profession (Deng et al., 2018). In many cases, they described the practicum as the moment when they first truly “felt like teachers,” with the Internship Program serving as a gateway to envisioning themselves as professionals in education (Karşlı & Yağız, 2022).

Positive emotions were also reported in relation to classroom dynamics and student engagement. Yang (2019) identified “inspired” and “happy” as the most frequently mentioned positive feelings, particularly when pre-service teachers observed disengaged students becoming more active participants in class. This

transformation in student behaviour not only validated their teaching efforts but also reduced stress and anxiety, turning classroom challenges into opportunities for growth. These moments of success fostered a deeper sense of fulfilment, as pre-service teachers realized their capacity to influence learners positively. The emotional reward of seeing students participate more enthusiastically provided both motivation and reassurance, reinforcing their confidence in their own teaching abilities. Yang (2019) also emphasized that positive emotions play a crucial role in enabling effective thinking and actions, as they enhance creativity and innovation in instructional practices. Pre-service teachers who experienced such emotions reported being more willing to try new methods, experiment with different teaching strategies, and incorporate innovative ideas into their lessons (Yang, 2019).

Supportive relationships with mentors and peers were another significant source of positive emotions. Feedback, encouragement, and collaborative interactions contributed to feelings of belonging and professional growth. Orlova and Kamenická (2024) noted that pre-service teachers unanimously highlighted positive emotions as an integral part of their practicum, often explaining that these emotions stemmed from constructive feedback from learners, their own growing sense of competence, and the mentorship they received. Within this context, “caring” emerged as a particularly important emotion (Orlova & Kamenická, 2024). Caring was expressed through collaborative exchanges between pre-service teachers and their mentors, which helped to build trust and strengthen professional bonds within the school environment. These relationships demonstrated how positive emotions can facilitate cooperation, foster mutual respect, and sustain motivation throughout the practicum (Khoiriyah et al., 2024).

The centrality of caring as a professional emotion is further supported by Ji et al. (2022), who argue that love and care form the emotional core of teaching. Rooted in cultural values, particularly within traditional Chinese perspectives, caring is regarded as the essence of a teacher’s role. This perspective emphasizes the importance of nurturing and sustaining strong teacher-student relationships, not only for academic outcomes but also for the holistic growth of both students and teachers. For pre-service teachers, embodying this sense of care allowed them to experience teaching as a relational practice, grounded in empathy and responsibility. Such emotional engagement elevated their practicum beyond skill development, transforming it into a meaningful and human-centered professional experience (Ji et al., 2022).

Positive emotions also contributed significantly to the formation of self-concept and self-efficacy among pre-service teachers. As they progressed through their teaching practice, many began to view teaching not merely as a temporary role but as a career path capable of fulfilling multiple aspirations. They expressed optimism that teaching could provide personal satisfaction, social recognition, professional development, economic stability, and an overall improvement in their quality of life (Karlı & Yağız, 2022). In this way, teaching practice was understood as a transformative period, reinforcing both their professional identity and personal growth. The cultivation of these positive emotions during practicum encouraged resilience, sustained motivation, and a stronger belief in their long-term capacity to succeed as teachers.

3. Mixed emotional responses

Pre-service teachers often display mixed emotional responses during their practicum, which reflect the complex interplay between expectations, classroom realities, and professional growth. These responses can be categorized into negative-negative

combinations, where one negative emotion triggers another, and negative-positive or positive-negative shifts, where an initial emotional state evolves into its opposite as circumstances change. Such patterns highlight how emotions are not static but dynamic, adapting to challenges and opportunities that arise in the teaching process.

In the case of negative-negative responses, feelings of shock and embarrassment frequently emerged. These emotions arose when pre-service teachers encountered unexpected situations in the classroom, particularly when their expectations about students' readiness did not align with reality. For instance, a pre-service teacher experienced shock when realizing that students had a higher level of knowledge than anticipated. The material prepared was too basic for the class, resulting in disengagement from the learners who found the tasks unchallenging. The mismatch between expectations and actual classroom needs created frustration and disappointment. This shock was soon followed by embarrassment, as the pre-service teacher observed students becoming inattentive and distracted, which led to feelings of inadequacy. The sense of embarrassment reflected an internalized belief that the lesson had failed to meet learners' needs, undermining the teacher's confidence and making them feel self-conscious about their ability to manage the class effectively. These emotions illustrate how unanticipated classroom realities can reinforce doubt and discomfort, potentially hindering the development of professional identity (Deng et al., 2018).

However, not all mixed emotional experiences remained negative. In some cases, pre-service teachers experienced a shift from negative to positive states, such as moving from stress and anxiety to joy and inspiration. One example occurred when students initially appeared disengaged from the lesson because the content, such as population geography, seemed irrelevant to their lives. At first, this disinterest heightened the pre-service teacher's stress, as it appeared to signal failure in connecting with learners. Yet, rather than persisting in frustration, the teacher adapted their approach by linking the course content to real-life experiences. By drawing comparisons between local communities and distant or international settings, the pre-service teacher contextualized the material in a way that resonated with students. The result was increased engagement, which in turn reduced stress and transformed the lessons into more enjoyable experiences. The transition from anxiety to joy underscored the teacher's emotional growth, as well as their ability to transform challenges into opportunities for creativity. This process not only enhanced their teaching effectiveness but also strengthened their confidence, reinforcing the importance of adaptability and innovation in classroom practice (Yang, 2019).

Mixed emotional responses also arose during the early stages of the practicum, when optimism and enthusiasm coexisted with uncertainty, anxiety, and confusion. For many pre-service teachers, beginning the practicum brought excitement about stepping into a professional role and optimism about future possibilities. At the same time, the unfamiliarity of the school environment, coupled with uncertainty about expectations, created stress and confusion. These blended emotions reflected the transitional nature of practicum, where personal aspirations were shaped and sometimes tested by external circumstances. The variations in emotional responses depended largely on how pre-service teachers positioned themselves in relation to mentors, peers, and students, as well as the degree of support and encouragement they received. Interactions with cooperating teachers and students were particularly influential, since positive relationships often nurtured enthusiasm while difficult interactions could heighten anxiety or confusion (Deng et al., 2018).

Taken together, mixed emotional responses reveal the dynamic and evolving nature of the practicum experience. They demonstrate how pre-service teachers oscillate between confidence and doubt, between joy and stress, depending on how they interpret and respond to challenges. Rather than being viewed as contradictions, these mixed emotions can be understood as essential components of professional growth, highlighting the emotional resilience required to navigate the complexities of teaching practice.

The coping strategies pre-service teachers employ to manage emotional labour

The experiences of pre-service teachers in managing their emotions during their practicum highlight the concept of emotional labor, as they navigated the emotional challenges of teaching. In this context, the teachers encountered various emotional responses, such as stress, vulnerability, frustration, and anxiety, stemming from the gap between their expectations and the realities of their teaching experiences (Yang, 2019).

In this situation, the pre-service teachers, experienced the emotional labor of navigating professional relationships in the teaching environment. Despite their efforts to maintain friendliness and professionalism, they faced challenges in building deeper connections with the teachers, which led to feelings of being outsiders. This scenario illustrates how emotional labor plays a role in managing emotions and behaviors to adapt to the dynamics of the teaching practice while attempting to maintain positive relationships despite initial barriers (Imamyartha et al., 2023). As student teachers interact with peers, mentors, or students, they engage in emotional regulation to maintain productive relationships. In this case, as student teachers engage with others and adapt to the professional environment, their ability to shift their emotional state contributes to a more positive and fulfilling learning experience (Hagenauer, et al., 2024).

Pre-service teacher's experiences during the teaching practicum highlight the significant role that constructive feedback and support from both supervising teachers and lecture supervisors play in easing teaching anxiety and enhancing self-confidence. Feedback, such as advice on relaxation and time management, provides reassurance and guidance, while the sharing sessions with lecture supervisors offer valuable insights and communal learning opportunities. These interactions contribute to the pre-service teachers' emotional well-being and professional growth, helping them navigate the challenges of the practicum with greater ease and motivation (Novitasari & Murtafi'ah, 2022). The presence of these emotions emphasises the need to understand the dual identity of pre-service teachers - as they are both students as well as teachers. Despite the anxiety experienced, it is essential to emphasise that our participants were not afraid to ask their learners for feedback, moreover they were willing to learn the learners' feedback as the basis for self-reflection. This can be interpreted as a sign of their growing professionalism (Orlova & Kamenická, 2024). In addition, seeking internet-based resources and collaborating with peers provides pre-service teachers with practical tools and emotional support. This not only helps them feel more prepared but also reduces the feeling of being overwhelmed by the demands of lesson planning and instruction. Such strategies contribute to their confidence and ability to manage the challenges of the teaching practicum effectively (Ulya & Srisudarso, 2023). Pre-service teachers navigated emotional challenges by cultivating a supportive network of friendships, allowing them to share their struggles and alleviate emotional burdens, ultimately fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual support (Imamyartha et al., 2023).

Traditional Chinese teacher culture—emphasizing respect for teachers and their moral standing—creates an environment that supports emotional well-being. The respect and societal image attached to teachers can act as a buffer against emotional stress and labor, providing a positive emotional experience for pre-service teachers (Ji et al., 2022). This cultural context helps pre-service teachers cope with emotional challenges during their internships, while recognizing that feelings of confusion, frustration, and regret are natural parts of the practicum experience allows pre-service teachers to reframe negative emotions as opportunities for growth. This mindset helps them build emotional endurance, which is essential for managing the ongoing emotional demands of teaching (Deng et al., 2018).

Discussion

Most studies indicate that during the internship period, students experience mixed emotions, including anxiety, excitement, confusion, and pride (Hagenauer, et al., 2024; Yang, 2019). These emotions are closely related to their interactions with mentors, students, and colleagues. Pre-service teachers initially experienced feelings of longing and anxiety at the start of their teaching internship, followed by shock and embarrassment after teaching, and guilt and regret at the conclusion of the internship. In this regard, creating an engaging and enjoyable learning environment can help alleviate some of these negative emotional experiences by fostering positive and motivating classroom interactions (Witjaksana & Daulay, 2025).

Their emotional states evolved over time (G. Zhu, 2017). Other researchers have explored how these emotional shifts influence the development of pre-service teachers' professional identity, identifying a pattern of emotional changes throughout the internship. These include anticipation and anxiety at the start, shock and embarrassment after teaching, anger during the internship, and confusion, helplessness, and loneliness towards the end, culminating in guilt and regret after the internship (Deng et al., 2018). In line with Han et al. (2020), pre-service teachers often experience significant tension when stepping into the classroom for the first time, driven by the challenge of meeting students' expectations, gaps in subject knowledge, and limited teaching experience. The disparity between their idealistic views of teaching and the realities they encounter further complicates their journey, making it difficult to manage relationships with students, teaching responsibilities, and interactions with colleagues. Nervousness emerges as the most common negative emotional response, profoundly influencing their self-confidence, increasing the likelihood of burnout, and impacting their overall professional well-being (Han et al., 2020).

In summarizing the findings regarding the sources of pre-service teachers' emotional experiences, it can be concluded that the factors influencing these emotions primarily operate on three levels: organizational, personal, and contextual. Notably, school leadership, social culture, and educational reforms are key factors contributing to the emergence of negative emotions. This aligns with Yin and Li's (2011) findings, which highlight that teachers experience heightened stress and anxiety during periods of educational reform. Teachers' negative emotions are linked to the frequency of educational reforms and societal expectations placed on them. A surprising finding is that pre-service teachers may have conflicts with school leaders' authority, resulting in negative emotions. Many pre-service teachers express dissatisfaction with non-teaching tasks assigned by school leaders, often spending excessive time on administrative duties that they believe are unrelated to teaching. This situation

frequently leads to feelings of anger and confusion (Deng et al., 2018). Similarly, early-career teachers experience distress related to the authority of school leaders, particularly when they feel overwhelmed by non-teaching responsibilities (Tsang & Kwong, 2016).

Research by Ji et al. (2022) shows that a positive relationship with mentors significantly reduces anxiety in interns, which is consistent with findings by Hagenauer et al. (2024), who identified mentor support as a key factor in building students' confidence. However, some studies, such as those by Ulya & Srisudarso (2023), indicate that insufficient support from mentors can actually worsen anxiety and uncertainty. This suggests that while mentor support can play a crucial role in alleviating emotional challenges, a lack of adequate guidance may exacerbate feelings of stress and confusion during the internship experience.

Conclusion

The emotional experiences of pre-service teachers during their internships are complex and multifaceted, encompassing both positive and negative emotions that are influenced by personal, professional, and cultural factors. These emotional responses significantly impact their professional development, confidence, and teaching effectiveness. The key to managing these emotions lies in the provision of supportive mentorship, constructive feedback, and a collaborative teaching environment that fosters both personal and professional growth. By understanding and addressing the emotional challenges faced by pre-service teachers, educational institutions can help them navigate their internships more effectively, leading to greater success and fulfillment in their future teaching careers.

The findings of the systematic literature review on emotional labor in ELT reveal several significant implications for teacher education and professional practice. First, supporting pre-service teachers in managing emotional labor is crucial for enhancing their teaching effectiveness and professional growth. Constructive mentorship, coupled with a supportive teaching environment, fosters emotional resilience and equips teachers with practical strategies to navigate classroom dynamics effectively. Moreover, addressing the emotional challenges experienced during internships can improve teacher well-being and reduce the risk of burnout, leading to better retention rates and sustained motivation among educators.

The study also underscores the need for reforms in teacher education programs. Integrating emotional labor management into training curricula through workshops, practical sessions, and self-reflection activities can prepare pre-service teachers for the complex realities of teaching. Additionally, school policies must be re-evaluated to limit non-teaching administrative tasks assigned to pre-service teachers, ensuring their focus remains on developing teaching skills. Effective engagement in classroom activities can help align internship experiences with their primary goal of skill enhancement.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Article Details for Systematic Review

APPENDIX

No.	Title	Author	Source
1	Pre-service teachers' emotional experience: Characteristics, dynamics and sources amid the teaching practicum	Yilong Ji, Mohamed Oubibi, Siyuan Chen, Yuxin Yin, and Yueliang Zhou	Frontiers in Psychology
2	Examining the Relationships between Student Teacher Professional Identity Tensions and Motivation for Teaching: Mediating Role of Emotional Labor Strategies in China	Wenjie He, Guoxiu Tian, Qiong Li, Laura B. Liu, and Jingtian Zhou	Sustainability (Switzerland)
3	Examination of the Pre-service Teachers' Experiences and Perceptions on Teaching Practices: English Language Teaching Case	Veysel Karsl and Oktay Yağız	Arab World English Journal
4	Emotions as agency: Feeling rules, emotion labor, and English language teachers' decision-making	Sarah Benesch	Elsevier
5	Motivated To Teach, but Stressed Out by Teacher Education": A Content Analysis of Self-Reported Sources of Stress and Motivation Among Preservice Teachers	Fernando Núñez-Regueiro, Geraldine Escriva-Boulley, Soufian Azouaghe, Nadia Leroy, Santiago Núñez-Regueiro	Journal of Teacher Education
6	Emotions in social interactions in pre-service teachers' team practica	Jennifer Waber, Gerda Hagenauer, Tina Hascher, and Lea de Zordo	Teachers and Teaching
7	Foreign language teaching anxiety among pre-service teachers during teaching practicum	Dilek Tüfekçi Can	International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)
8	Student teachers' emotions in anticipation of their first team practicum	Lea de Zordo, Gerda Hagenauer & Tina Hascher	Studies in Higher Education
9	EFL Pre-service Teacher's Teaching Anxiety and the Coping Strategies during Teaching Practicum	Khofifah Novitasari and Banatul Murtafi'ah	Journal of English Education and Teaching (JEET)
10	Female EFL Pre-service Teacher's Emotional Geography in Teaching Practicum during Limited Face to Face Learning	Rizki Azizatul Ulya and Mansyur Srisudarso	Journal of Education for Sustainable Innovation
11	Student Teachers' Emotions, Dilemmas, and Professional Identity Formation Amid the Teaching Practicums	Li Deng, Gang Zhu, Guofang Li, Zhihong Xu, Amanda Rutter, and Hector Rivera	Asia-Pacific Edu Res
12	The nexus between pre-service teachers' emotional experience and cognition during professional experience	Hongzhi Yang	The Australian Educational Researcher
13	Pre-Service English Teachers' Emotional Geographies and Coping Strategies	David Imamyartha, Bambang Yudi	TEFLIN Journal

		Cahyono, Khusnul Khotimah	
14	The quality of social relationships with students, mentor teachers and fellow student teachers and their role in the development of student teachers' emotions in the practicum	Gerda Hagenauer, Diana Raufelder, Mishela Ivanova, Andreas Bach, and Doris Ittner	European Journal of Psychology of Education
15	EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Anxiety During Teaching Practice	Annisa Salsabila and Leil Badrah Zaki	Journal of English Education and Applied Linguistics
16	Delving into EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Emotional Experiences: Professional Identity Construction in Online Teaching Practice Programs	Khoiriyah, Utami Widiati, Bambang Yudi Cahyono, and Sri Rachmajanti	Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies
17	Emotional Odyssey: A Journey through EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Practicum Experiences	Natalia Orlova and Jana Kamenická	Journal of Education Culture and Society

