An Extended Literature Review on EFL Teachers' Self-Concept

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Abstract: The current systematic review focused on the term "EFL teachers' self-concept". To investigate self-concept related articles for the field, many studies including meta-analysis, systematic reviews and other sort of studies have been taken into consideration. The terms "self-concept", "teachers' self-concept", "language teachers' self-concept" were searched in several databases and accessed 15 relevant studies in EFL context in the last 10 years. The following databases provided these papers: Elsevier, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, Google Scholar, ERIC (EBSCO), Research Online and Research Gate. To investigate EFL teachers' self-concepts, an in-depth analysis was employed particularly in this study. The initial purpose of the study was to discover several fundamental factors such as theories, instruments and variables which have been generally employed in each of these studies. Furthermore, it is aimed that with this study the term "self-concept" may be better investigated via complex dynamic system theory (CDST) perspective for further research and EFL teachers' self-concept can be enhanced in future.
Keywords: *self-concept, EFL teachers' self-concept, extended literature review, systematic review, complex dynamic systems theory (CDST)*

INTRODUCTION

In an increasing number of studies, individual perceptions of the self are the main focus of research recently (Yılmaz, 2018). Obviously, individuals' sense of self has an important role in interpreting their experiences, managing their learning and teaching process, and affecting their achievement. The term "self-concept" is defined in various ways since it is difficult to limit this term to peripheries. According to research studies, there is a disagreement regarding defining the self and measuring it (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 1992). In general, "self-concept" can be explained as one's self-descriptions of himself/herself or abilities, which reflect individuals' perceptions about themselves, not the facts. In other words, self-concept is seen as an evaluation of competence and feelings of self-worth (Pajares & Schunk, 2005). Mercer (2011a) claims that self-concept includes all the beliefs of an individual about himself/herself, "what one believes to be true about oneself" (p.14). Additionally, Leary and Tangney (2003) propose that the self is accepted as the set of mechanisms and processes at a psychological level that allows people to consider and evaluate themselves consciously.

Recently, a great majority of research (Mercer, 2011a; Henry, 2009; Pellegrino, 2005; Dörnyei, 2009; Ellis, 2008) has focused on self-beliefs, and this issue is characterized by a notable amount of research into self-concept, which is considered as an umbrella term of such beliefs. Self-concept has a vital function for teachers to boost teacher well-being and student-teacher engagement and this may lead to positive outcomes during the language learning and teaching process. Many studies, including systematic reviews, meta-analysis studies, and other sorts of studies, have been conducted in the field of education to investigate the self-concept and its relation with other areas such as motivation, emotion, and burnout. In 2016, Mehrad undertook a systematic review on self-concept

by focusing on the changes and dynamism of it because of several factors such as an individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and reactions towards his/her social and personal life. In a meta-analysis study, O'mara, Marsh, and Craven (2006) examined self-concept interventions by using multi-level modeling to support their previous study about self-concept in 2004. In their previous study (2004), they focused on the actual effects of self-concept interventions, and they suggested some improvements such as cognitively oriented interventions and academic self-concept improvement scales to increase the effectiveness of self-concept. In a systematic review study, Martinez, Chocano, Leon, and Jimenez (2021) explored the relationship between self-concept and academic stress. In their study, they found that as the participants progress academically, their academic stress increases and their self-concept decreases. As a result of this situation, they suggested some training for pre-service teachers' academic stress to overcome this problem and increase their self-concept with some support. Similarly, another systematic review on pre-service teachers' self-concept was conducted by Filiz, Early, Thurston, and Miller (2020). They aimed to find out how pre-service teachers' self-concepts can be enhanced. The results indicated that the self-concept is continuously constructed by internal and external factors such as motivation, achievement, educational outcomes, different teaching methods, and attitudes. Likewise these studies, the current study aims to focus on EFL teachers' self-concepts in the form of an extended literature review and additionally, this paper aims to discover common self-concept theories and instruments used for EFL teachers' self-concepts by offering possible insights into the psychology of language teaching.

METHODOLOGY

An extended literature review was carried out in this study systematically. The initial purpose of the study was to discover several fundamental factors such as theories, instruments, and variables which have been generally employed in each of these studies. Authors, publishing years, locations, instruments, samples, and study findings have been emphasized in this paper. This current systematic review research attempts to investigate teachers' self-concept studies in different contexts around the world. The researcher searched for the terms "self-concept", "teachers' self-concept", and "language teachers' self-concept" in several databases and accessed 15 relevant studies in EFL context. These academic journal articles were published over the previous 10 years (2012 – 2022). The following databases provided these papers: Elsevier, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, Google Scholar, ERIC (EBSCO), Research Online and Research Gate. Additionally, some of these studies were derived from some journals such as: English Language Teaching, Canadian Center of Science and Education, SGEM 2015 International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conferences on Social Sciences and Arts, The Journal of English Language Studies, Journal Of Foreign Language Teaching & Learning, Action in Teacher Education and Journal of Baltic Science Education. To investigate EFL teachers' self-concepts, an in-depth analysis was employed particularly in this study. The search for relevant articles for this topic was conducted in March 2022, and resulted in June 2022 with 160 articles after removing duplicates. The empirical ones were selected, and studies about learners' self-concepts were checked out from the total. Precisely, the articles about EFL teachers were chosen and the years between 2012-2022 were taken into consideration. Then, through the selected studies, the abstracts, authors, participants, methodologies and findings were reexamined again and 15 studies were included as a result of this selection process. After the selection of relevant articles, the following research questions were generated to guide this review:

1 - What is the literature on EFL teachers' self-concepts (2012 – 2022)?
2 - What are the common self-concept theories and instruments used for EFL teachers' self-concepts (2012 – 2022)?

FINDINGS

Articles About Self-Concept of EFL Teachers

In this systematic review, 15 self-concept articles were analysed and their authors, years, contexts, data collection tools and participants were displayed for each article in Table 1.

Table 1. General idea about selected articles

No.	Topic / year	Journal / Author	Method / Instrument	Number of participants / Contexts
1	The Relationship Between Teacher Self-Concept, Teacher Efficacy And Burnout 2018	Taylor & Francis Online Mingjing Zhu, Qian Liu, Yao Fu, Tianan Yang, Xingli Zhang & Jiannong Shi	Quantitative Questionnaire	1892 teachers China
2	Teachers' Self-Concepts And Emotions: Conceptualization And Relations 2018	Elsevier Annette Lohbeck, Gerda Hagenauer, Anne C. Frenzel	Quantitative Questionnaire Scales	248 Teachers Germany
3	Teacher's Self-Concept And Self-Esteem in Pedagogical Communication 2014	Elsevier Galina Glotova, Angelika Wilhelm	Mixed Scale and Descriptive Analysis	196 Teachers Russia
4	Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Professional Self-Concept: English Teaching Efficacy, Self Reported English Proficiency and Pedagogical strategies: A Case Study in Turkish Context 2016	Elsevier Nuray Alagözlü	Quantitative Scales	129 teacher candidates, Türkiye
5	Self-Concept And Teachers Professional Roles 2012	Elsevier Blagica Zlatkovic, Snezana Stojiljkovic, Gordana Djigic, Jelisaveta Todorovic	Quantitative Scales	120 teachers Serbia
6	Teachers' Self-Concept And Empathy 2013	Elsevier Snežana Stojiljković, Jelisaveta Todorović, Gordana Đigić, Zvonimir Dosković	Quantitative Questionnaire	120 teachers Serbia
7	Teachers' Self-Concept And Valuing Of Learning: Relations With Teaching Approaches And Beliefs About Students 2014	Taylor & Francis Online Alexander S. Yeung, Rhonda G. Craven, Gurvinder Kaur	Quantitative Survey	208 teachers Austria
8	How Do Teacher Affective and Cognitive Self-Concepts Predict Their Willingness to Teach Challenging Students? 2019	Research Online Ee Ling Low, Pak Tee Ng, Chenri Hui, Li Cai	Quantitative Surveys	108 participant teachers Singapore

9	Self-concept of EFL Pre-service Teachers: A Reflection from a Teacher Practicum in Indonesia Context 2017	The Journal of English Language Studies Dina Rachmawati	Quantitative Questionnaire	50 Teachers Indonesia
10	Teachers' Self-Concept And Its Benefits For Science Education 2019	Journal of Baltic Science Education Jelena Ž. Maksimović, Jelena S. Osmanović	Quantitative Scale	442 Teachers Serbia
11	The Development Of A Positive Self – Concept in Preservice Teachers 2014	Action in Teacher Education Marcia M. Meyer, Malcomb E. Linville, Gilbert Rees	Mixed Scale Training Programme	93 teacher candidates the USA
12	Investigating Pre-service EFL Teachers' Self-concepts within the Framework of Teaching Practicum in Turkish Context 2018	English Language Teaching (Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education) Cevdet Yılmaz	Qualitative Interviews Journals	five pre-service EFL teachers Türkiye
13	Gaps Too Large: Four Novice EFL Teachers' Self-Concept and Motivation 2013	Elsevier Masako Kumazawa	Qualitative Interviews	four novice EFL teachers Japan
14	Professional Self-Concept Of Pre-Service Teachers 2015	SGEM 2015 International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conferences on Social Sciences and Arts Mgr. Blanka Pravdová, Ph.D.	Qualitative Interviews	204 teachers Czech Republic
15	EFL Teachers' Linguistic Self-Concept in a Study Abroad (SA) Program 2017	Journal Of Foreign Language Teaching & Learning Arifah Mardiningrum	Qualitative Interviews	six EFL teachers Indonesia

In Table 2, the countries around the world are shown for this review; there are 11 countries, including Turkey, Serbia, Germany, Singapore, the USA, Czech Republic, Japan, Indonesia, Russia, Australia, and China. It is possible to see global perceptions of self-concept of EFL teachers in these countries from different locations worldwide. The total number of participants is 3825, who are both in-service and on-service EFL teachers all around the world.

Table 2. Number of articles and their countries for EFL teachers' self-concept topic (2012 – 2022)

Country	Number Of Articles
SERBIA	3
TURKEY	2
INDONESIA	2
GERMANY	1
JAPAN	1
RUSSIA	1

AUSTRALIA	1
CHINA	1
THE USA	1
SINGAPORE	1
CZECH REPUBLIC	1

Starting with Zhu et al. (2018), in their quantitative study, they investigated the relationship between teacher self-concept, burnout, and self-efficacy. Additionally, the study was conducted to discover whether this relationship is valid for all groups of teachers from different regions and gender as well as different teaching experiences in China. A questionnaire about self-concept, self-efficacy, teacher burnout, and demographic variables was conducted on 1892 teachers across China. The results displayed that a decrease in accomplishment affects teachers' self-efficacy, and this causes emotional exhaustion as an element of burnout. These situations influence teachers' self-concept regardless of gender, different regions, or teaching experience. Similarly, in 2018 Lohbeck, Hagenauer, and Frenzel examined the relationship between self-concept and emotions. The results have highlighted that all emotions are related to teachers' self-concept however, they linked one emotion to one context, such as:

- Enjoyment is linked to pedagogical self-concept in a positive way.
- Anger is linked to pedagogical self-concept in a negative way.
- Anxiety is linked to subject content knowledge in a negative way.

In literature, some other studies include pedagogical strategies and communication with the term self-concepttogether (Glotova & Wilhelm, 2014; Alagözlü, 2016). Glotova and Wilhelm (2014) studied teachers' self-concept and self-esteem together in the light of their pedagogical communication. In this quasi-experimental research, 196 teachers were asked to prepare a reflection about their types of behaviors considering their implicit theories as "real" and also they added the "ideal" behaviors for each situation. After that, according to these reflections, a 10-point scale was developed for them to assess. The results have shown that 72% of teachers perceived themselves and their behaviors as "ideal" in their pedagogical contexts. Furthermore, teachers' self-concept influences their well-being and job satisfaction as well as teachers' self-esteem as a communicator. Teachers with low self-esteem and self-concept need psychological maintenance to increase their well-being. Another study from Alagözlü (2016) focused on teachers' professional self-concept in the light of their pedagogical strategies. In this quantitative study, it is found that teachers' professional self-concepts are mostly high and positive especially in their classroom management skills, teaching ability and preparing instructional materials. For personal growth, language teachers should be encouraged and informed through training which includes pedagogical strategies and problem-solving skills to face any challenges and do well in the future to improve their self-concept.

Apart from pedagogical issues, teachers' roles are crucial in society as they ensure the quality of education and social resources with their classroom implementations and practices (Zlatkovic & Petrovic, 2011). A study about teachers' self-concept and professional roles (Zlatkovic, Stojiljkovic, Djigic & Todorovic, 2012) indicated that global competence is accepted as a dimension of self-concept and related to all teachers' roles. In this quantitative study from Serbia with 120 teachers, it is found that teachers' self-assessments are practical for successful performance, and teachers' self-evaluated success is associated with their self-concept. A year later, Stojiljkovic and Todorovic focused on teachers' self-concept and empathy with Digic and Doskovic from Serbia (2013). They aimed at understanding teachers' perceptions of themselves and investigating the connection between self-concept and empathy. A quantitative study with a questionnaire was conducted with 120 teachers. According to the results, teachers' self-concept and empathy connected to each other in a positive way, and the degree of these elements were observed to be high in participant teachers; additionally, social self-concept is the most influential dimension that affects empathy.

Another study about teachers' roles and self-concept includes teaching approaches and teachers' beliefs and values. Yeung, Craven, and Kaur (2014) conducted a study in Australia with 208

participant teachers. A survey about self-concept and valuing of learning was conducted in order to investigate teachers' self-concept and learning values as predictors, while teaching approaches and their beliefs about students stood for outcome variables. As a result of this study, teaching approaches have been found to be highly associated with teachers' self-concept; on the other hand, beliefs about students are not related to this element. Thus, they concluded that it is required to provide self-concept enhancement training for teacher preparation programs in order to develop teaching skills. In 2019, affective and cognitive self concepts were taken as predictors to understand teachers' willingness to teach challenging students (Low, Ng, Hui & Cai, 2019). In this study, survey data were collected from 108 teachers from Singapore to see the difference between affective self-concept and cognitive self-concept in terms of their willingness to teach under challenging circumstances because of the learners. Results have highlighted that affective self-concept is a better predictor than cognitive self-concept during this situation. It is also essential to develop and improve a strong sense of self-concept as a teacher for professional enjoyment while teaching challenging students.

Among quantitative studies, Rachmawati (2017) focused on EFL pre-service teachers' self-concepts in the light of practicum in Indonesia. The author divided the term "self-concept" into three categories: (a) academic self-concept, (b) social self-concept, (c) emotional self-concept. 50 EFL teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire and as a result of this study, it is observed that most of the participants have a high degree of self-concept in all categories. According to the results, the author concluded that the participants positively perceive themselves as prospective English language teachers. Maksimovic and Osmanovic (2019) focused on self-concept considering its benefits for science education. In this quantitative study, teachers' perceptions about themselves were investigated in relation to job and salary satisfaction and work experience. According to the results, work experience affects teachers' perceptions, but not their salary. The study also emphasized that both work experience and job satisfaction have an impact on self-satisfaction and self-improvement, whereas teaching qualities did not depend on these variables. Similarly, Meyer, Linville and Rees (2014) examined the development of positive self-concept in pre-service teachers. For this study, 93 volunteer teachers completed two scales about self-concept and self-acceptance. As a part of experimental research, the participants were divided into two groups and a training program was provided for two weeks. A significant difference was found after the training program, that is, an increase in self-acceptance and self-concept for the experimental group. It is noted that in order to observe a high degree of self-concept and self-acceptance among teachers, a kind of training program is required to develop for in-service teachers.

On the other hand, when the term "self-concept" was studied qualitatively, case studies were observed, which were mostly conducted through interviews and journals. As an example from Turkey, Yılmaz (2018) investigated self-concept within the framework of teaching practicum by using the complex dynamic systems theory. In his study, he emphasized the importance of complexity and dynamism of self-concept and a longitudinal case study was employed for five pre-service EFL teachers. By using interviews and journals, he found that pre-service EFL teachers' self-beliefs affected their self-concept development in a positive and negative way. The experiences shaped teachers' self-concepts which can be once dynamic and also stable according to their beliefs. The study suggested that there is a need for a teacher training program to help EFL teachers' self-concept in the form of positive and realistic. Another case study was conducted in Japan by Kumazawa (2013) with four novice EFL teachers. The purpose of the study was to discover the relationship between self-concept and motivation by using narrative analysis. The study pinpointed that novice teachers' challenges, and conflicts negatively affected their possible selves and motivation; however, by time and experience, their self-reflection reshaped their perceptions, and they regained their motivation with a high self-concept. According to this study, it is essential to support novice teachers in their first years. Likewise, an Indonesian case study was conducted in 2017 by Mardiningrum to explore the linguistic self-concepts of six EFL teachers in a study abroad program. The participants were in the program in the USA and the data were collected through online interviews. The study results have shown that those teachers' linguistic self-concepts were formal, and they were not proficient enough in English to communicate in social-daily life.

Apart from the case studies, Pravdová (2015) conducted a qualitative study on the professional self-concept of pre-service teachers with 204 participants. In this research, grounded theory was employed to describe the professional self-concept of the teachers. The data were collected through free response, observation and interviews. The results have highlighted that the professional self-concept is a dynamic element which can be influenced by internal and external factors. Additionally, a person's past and current selves shape their possible/future selves. It is important to consider the formation process of self-concept with key factors and individual stages.

Figure 1

The number of methods used in the articles
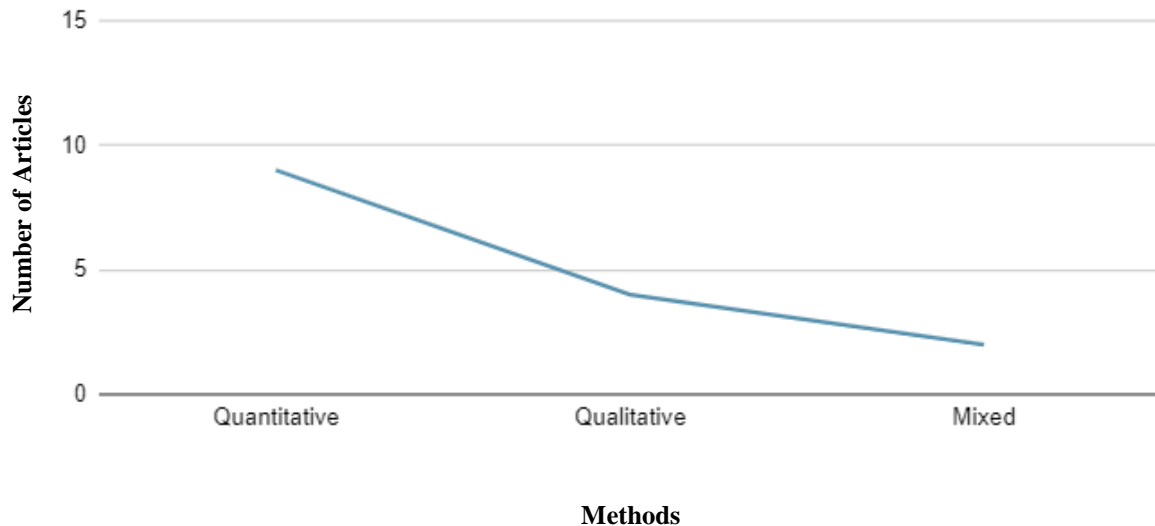
Methods

In the 15 articles reviewed, almost 75% of these studies were conducted in quantitative methods or correlational studies (see Figure 1). Among the articles aforementioned above, nine of them were conducted as a quantitative studies, whereas four of them were qualitative, and only two of them were mixed-methods studies. However, Mercer (2011b) stated that in order to understand the nature and dynamism of self-concept, more qualitative methods are required by using complex dynamic systems theory. When these quantitative studies were analyzed, it was found that most of them were concluded in a reductionist perspective or a linear way. These studies mainly focused on statistics results without considering the particularity and the uniqueness of individuals. Self-concept and related topics such as self-efficacy, burnout, self-beliefs, teaching approaches, motivation, empathy, self-esteem, emotions, and willingness to teach are different components that interact and develop interdependently. It is difficult to make generalizations or predictions among them since their situation changes dynamically in a non-linear way. The term "self-concept" is a continuous, developing, active, and changing element for an individual (Demo, 1992), and for this reason, the growth of self-concept can not be predicted easily. It can be concluded that generalizable results were found in most of the studies in this sample. Only Yılmaz (2018) and Pravdova (2015) claimed and admitted the dynamism of "self-concept" as an essential structure for individual teachers' psychological development. The researchers of these 15 articles may be aware that self-concept is a dynamic and complex element; however, their research method and linear/reductionist findings were not suitable for this complexity and dynamism.

Data Collection Tools and Theories

In this section, data collection tools and theories from the 15 articles between 2012-2022 were presented. According to the evaluated articles, most of them employed questionnaires and scales. Teacher Self-concept Evaluation Scale (Villa & Calvete, 2001) was employed in the article from Zhu et al. (2018). Self-concept Questionnaire (Opacic,1995) was used by Zlatkovic et al. (2012) and Stojiljković et al. (2013), while Yeung, Craven and Kaur followed Marsh's (1992) self-description

questionnaire in their study. Similarly, Low, Ng, Hui and Cai (2019) adapted Marsh's questionnaire for their longitudinal research. Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and self-reported proficiency and pedagogical strategies scales developed by Chacón (2005) were used in Alagözlü's study (2016) to investigate teachers' professional self-concept in Turkey. In their experimental study, Meyer, Linville and Rees (2014) measured their participants' self-concept by employing Tennessee SeIf-Concept Scale (TSCS) (Clinical and Research Form, n.d., as cited in Meyer, Linville & Rees, 2014) and Berger Self-Acceptance Scale (1952). To assess teachers' self-concepts, the instrument "ERBSE" developed by Retelsdorf et al. (2014) was used in 2018 by Lohbeck, Hagenauer and Frenzel.

In another mixed method of our sample, Glotova and Wilhelm (2014) developed their own scale after collecting qualitative data about "ideal" and "real" teacher self-concept from their participants. Likewise, Rachmawati (2017) adapted a scale from the self concept of Burns, (1982) and the Teachers' Competence of Indonesia Government Regulation (2005, as cited in Rachmawati, 2017). Lastly, Maksimovic and Osmanovic (2019) developed their own scale for the purpose of their research particularly.

It is possible to say that some of the articles above have mentioned theories that have been taken into consideration during the studies. These theories and assumptions were piloted by researchers. Possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) was conducted by Kumazawa (2013) to investigate the self-concept and motivation of four EFL teachers. Yılmaz (2018) and Pravdova (2015) employed the complex dynamic systems theory for their articles which focused on EFL teachers' professional self-concept. It has been discovered that the theory of complex dynamic systems has gained popularity in the last two decades, and this situation indicates that Yılmaz (2018) and Pravdova (2015) have an awareness of current changes in the field. Apart from complex dynamic systems theory, Low et al. (2019) provided information about attribution theory in order to provide a deeper understanding of the affective self-concepts of teachers. Bandura's self-efficacy theory was also employed during the studies in which self-concept and self-efficacy were investigated together (Zhu et al., 2018; Lohbeck, Hagenauer & Frenzel, 2018). Expectancy-value theory (Wigfield & Eccless, 2000) was mentioned in the articles of Lohbeck et al. (2018) and Yeung et al. (2014) to explore participant teachers' values on the teaching and learning process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In this systematic review, 15 articles about EFL teachers' self-concept between the years 2012-2022 were deeply investigated. It is observed that the term "self-concept" can be studied with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods designs. It is possible to say that quantitative studies were mostly conducted with large samples which included large groups of participants in order to make generalizations as they were designed with contemporary approaches. However, as it is understood from the term "self-concept", the uniqueness of individuals should be taken into consideration while designing such research. In this regard, we need to know every individual's self-concept in their particular contexts and their particular timescales considering the complexity and dynamism of the self. We need to start with the individual teachers and their life capitals. Therefore, to improve and consolidate EFL teachers' self-concepts, as some of the writers of studies' advised (Yılmaz, 2018; Alagözlü, 2016; Meyer, Linville & Rees, 2014), teacher training programs and professional development activities are required. It is time to understand the teachers by looking at their inside instead of putting everything in predetermined ideas, theories, or frameworks as external factors. A teacher's self-concept may have ups and downs moment-by-moment, it can fluctuate and, there may be many components interacting with each other in the system. For this reason, it would be better to avoid single cause & effect conclusions or one-way correlated results. A teacher's self-concept emerges, it is incidental, and these are always the things we need to consider with the light of complexity theory.

To conclude, with this systematic review, the required areas in research are demonstrated, and further research is needed for language teachers. Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2019) proposed a book,

"Research Methods for Complexity Theory in Applied Linguistics" for researchers in order to explain new methods and instruments for the field. All in all, it is believed that with this study, the term "self-concept" might be better investigated via complex dynamic system theory (CDST) perspective, and EFL teachers' self-concept can be enhanced in the future.

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