

## Burned Out but Not Broken: Teaching Performance Amid Burnout in EFL Practicum Settings

**\*<sup>1</sup>Vanesya Eltriyana Asyifa Rinjani, <sup>1</sup>Majmu'atil Husni, <sup>1</sup>Muhammad Andriana Gaffar, <sup>1</sup>Riki Ruswandi**

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Islam Nusantara, Indonesia

**\*Correspondence:**

vanesyaeltriyana@gmail.com

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### Abstract

Burnout among pre-service teachers has become an increasing concern in teacher education, especially during teaching practicum, which requires high levels of cognitive, emotional, and instructional involvement. Although there is extensive literature on burnout in in-service teachers, little research has examined its relationship with teaching performance among pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Indonesia. This study explores the link between burnout and teaching performance among 45 pre-service EFL teachers at Universitas Islam Nusantara who completed the PLP 2 (Teaching Practicum) programme. Burnout levels were assessed using the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), while teaching performance was measured with a researcher-developed Pre-service Teacher Performance Assessment Questionnaire (PTPAQ). Both tools were validated and found reliable, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.721 and 0.779, respectively. Because the data were not normally distributed, Spearman's rho correlation analysis was performed. Results showed a weak and non-significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.219$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) between burnout and teaching performance. These findings indicate that only. Pedagogical competence and support systems influence pre-service teaching performance more than burnout. The study emphasises the importance of teacher education programmes implementing structured mentorship and resilience-building initiatives to improve teaching quality during practicum.

**Keywords:** Pre-service teachers, teaching practicum, burnout, teaching performance, EFL.

### INTRODUCTION

The teaching practicum represents a critical phase in teacher education programs, functioning as the primary context where pre-service teachers engage in hands-on instructional experiences. It enables them to implement pedagogical knowledge acquired through coursework, develop essential classroom management skills, and adapt to real-world school dynamics (Alamri, 2018; Korucu-Kış, 2021; Fischetti et al., 2021). During this

period, pre-service teachers are expected to take on professional responsibilities, such as lesson planning (Marino & Crocco, 2019), instructional delivery (Maulina & Rusli, 2019), and student assessment (Prastikawati et al., 2022), often with limited teaching experience and evolving self-confidence. In EFL settings, these responsibilities are further complicated by linguistic challenges, as student comprehension, communication strategies, and cultural considerations require constant adjustment (Köksal, 2019; Kabilan et al., 2020). The practicum environment also introduces external demands, including performance evaluations from supervisors and alignment with institutional standards, which can intensify the pressures felt by novice educators (Mtika, 2011; Frontier & Mielke, 2016; Burns & Badiali, 2015). While the practicum is designed to foster professional growth, it also exposes pre-service teachers to conditions that can trigger psychological strain, particularly burnout.

According to Maslach and Leiter (2016), burnout is characterised by emotional exhaustion and a sense of detachment, often caused by ongoing stress without proper recovery or support. For pre-service teachers, especially during the teaching practicum, burnout can stem from heavy workloads, limited teaching experience, unclear role expectations, and inadequate support. These factors lead to decreased engagement, diminished confidence in instructional skills, and waning enthusiasm for teaching (Fiorilli et al., 2020; Xing, 2022). Pre-service teachers must balance instructional duties, adapt to unpredictable classroom situations, and handle a steep learning curve under constant supervision. Since the practicum plays a central role in developing professional competence, the impact of burnout on teaching performance warrants careful attention. Teaching performance is a key indicator of pre-service teachers' readiness and ability to transform pedagogical knowledge into classroom practice (Hourani, 2012; Caughlan & Jiang, 2014; Manasia et al., 2019). However, crucial instructional aspects may suffer when burnout occurs, as emotional exhaustion and psychological detachment impair the ability to stay focused, responsive, and actively engaged with students.

This study employs the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory as an interpretive framework to further understand the relationship between burnout and teaching performance. The COR Theory provides a conceptual basis for understanding the connection between stress, resource management, and performance in demanding settings such as teacher education (Hobfoll, 1989). At its core, this theory suggests that individuals are motivated to protect and accumulate resources—ranging from emotional and cognitive capacities to external supports—and that stress occurs when these resources are threatened, depleted, or insufficient to meet situational demands. In teacher preparation, especially during practicum, pre-service teachers depend heavily on key resources such as pedagogical preparedness, emotional resilience, mentoring, and institutional support to manage instructional duties and professional expectations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Friedman, 2000). COR Theory highlights that the loss or absence of such resources can hinder performance and well-being, while access to supportive mechanisms can buffer against negative outcomes (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Applying this framework in the study allows for a more in-depth exploration of how resource-related factors may influence variations in teaching performance among pre-service EFL teachers experiencing different levels of burnout.

Recent literature has increasingly highlighted the complex interplay between teacher burnout, practicum performance, and the contextual challenges pre-service EFL teachers face. [Mancini et al. \(2022\)](#) found that personal traits, such as emotional intelligence and anxiety, and contextual factors, including job instability, significantly predict burnout symptoms like emotional exhaustion and low personal accomplishment among primary school teachers. Similarly, [Kulavuz-Onal and Tatar \(2017\)](#) revealed that EFL instructors' sense of personal accomplishment is closely tied to their participation in professional learning activities, with state university instructors reporting lower engagement and higher burnout than private institutions. In the practicum context, [Manasia et al. \(2019\)](#) emphasised that pre-service teachers' teaching readiness depends on multiple dimensions, including professional knowledge, instructional planning, classroom management, and emotional self-regulation. However, many still struggle with managing disruptive behaviours and customising instruction. [Mahmoudi and Özkan \(2016\)](#) further identified that practicum-related stress among EFL pre-service teachers stems primarily from interactions with supervisors, classroom challenges, and school dynamics, with coping strategies such as using digital tools offering some relief. Echoing these findings, [Fan and Xie \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that anxiety among pre-service EFL teachers is shaped by personal factors (e.g., language proficiency and self-efficacy) and broader systemic pressures such as employment uncertainty, institutional expectations, and multitasking demands during practicum.

While burnout and teaching performance have been widely studied in teacher education, limited attention has been given to the relationship between these two variables among pre-service teachers during their practicum, particularly within the Indonesian context. Most existing research addresses burnout descriptively or explores practicum experiences without establishing an empirical correlation between psychological strain and instructional performance. This gap is especially evident in EFL teacher education programs, where cultural, institutional, and linguistic factors may uniquely shape burnout experiences and teaching effectiveness. The present study examines the correlation between burnout and teaching performance among pre-service EFL teachers at Universitas Islam Nusantara who have completed their PLP 2 teaching practicum. The aim is to determine whether burnout significantly affects teaching performance during practicum and to inform teacher education programs on how better to support pre-service teachers' well-being and professional development.

## METHOD

### Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design, which is commonly used to examine statistical relationships between naturally occurring variables without manipulating or controlling the independent variable ([Creswell & Creswell, 2017](#); [Taherdoost, 2019](#)). This design was selected to determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between burnout and teaching performance among pre-service EFL teachers during their teaching practicum. The correlational approach suits educational research where ethical or practical constraints prevent experimental manipulation, especially in exploring affective and behavioural constructs such as teacher burnout and classroom performance.

## Participants and Sampling Procedure

The participants in this study consisted of 45 pre-service teachers enrolled in the English Education Department at Universitas Islam Nusantara. All participants were drawn from the 2021 cohort, specifically those who had completed the PLP 2 (Teaching Practicum) program. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals with specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). In this context, purposive sampling was deemed appropriate because the study focuses on individuals with recent, structured teaching practicum experience.

The inclusion criteria required participants to complete their practicum and voluntarily consent to participate in the research. The final sample size of 45 exceeded the minimum threshold typically recommended for correlational studies, where at least 30 participants are considered sufficient to detect moderate correlations with acceptable statistical power (Gay et al., 2012). All participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and participated voluntarily under ethical research principles.

## Instruments

To measure the level of burnout among participants, the study utilised the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) developed by Demerouti et al. (2001). This instrument has been widely validated in occupational and educational settings due to its robust psychometric properties and multidimensional structure. The OLBI consists of 16 items that assess two key dimensions of burnout: exhaustion, referring to feelings of physical and emotional fatigue, and disengagement, reflecting a sense of emotional distance and detachment from one's work. Each item was scored using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). The OLBI is preferred in burnout research because it incorporates positively and negatively worded items, reducing response bias and increasing scale validity (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005).

To assess teaching performance, the researcher developed a Pre-service Teacher Performance Assessment Questionnaire (PTPAQ) based on the guidelines outlined in the official PLP 2 guidebook published by the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Universitas Islam Nusantara. This self-report instrument comprised 10 items evaluating key aspects of instructional practice, including lesson planning, classroom management, instructional delivery, assessment practices, and responsiveness to student needs. Responses were rated on a four-point frequency scale ranging from Never (1) to Always (4). The development of the PTPAQ was guided by institutional standards for practicum assessment, ensuring that the items reflected the core competencies expected of pre-service teachers in the Indonesian EFL context.

## Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted in one phase following the completion of the practicum program. All participants completed both instruments in a supervised setting to ensure standardised administration and minimise procedural variance. Prior to data analysis, the validity and reliability of both instruments were tested using SPSS version 25.

To assess construct validity, item-total correlations were computed using the Pearson product-moment correlation method. A critical  $r$ -value of 0.361 was adopted as the benchmark for significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $n = 30$ ), following recommendations by Sugiyono

(2019). All OLBI and PTPAQ items exceeded this threshold, indicating acceptable internal validity. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, with results showing  $\alpha = 0.721$  for the OLBI and  $\alpha = 0.779$  for the PTPAQ, reflecting good internal consistency according to commonly accepted criteria (George & Mallery, 2019).

After validity and reliability verification, a normality test was performed using the Shapiro-Wilk method to determine the appropriate statistical test for correlation. The test revealed that while the burnout data were normally distributed, the teaching performance variable violated the normality assumption. As a result, the study proceeded with a Spearman's rho correlation test, a non-parametric alternative suitable for ordinal data or datasets that do not meet normal distribution assumptions (Mirabbasi et al., 2020). This test was used to examine the strength and direction of the association between burnout and teaching performance among the pre-service EFL teachers.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The analysis encompasses descriptive statistics, normality testing, and correlation analysis to investigate how burnout relates to pre-service teachers' instructional performance. The findings are discussed in the context of existing literature and theoretical perspectives, especially the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, to enhance understanding of how psychological strain might impact teaching effectiveness.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the research variable

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
Pre-service EFL Teachers' Burnout (X)	45	21	46	33,76	6,187
Pre-service EFL Teachers' Job Performance (Y)	45	20	40	36,29	4,561

Table 1 shows that burnout scores among pre-service EFL teachers ranged from 21 to 46, with a mean of 33.76 (SD = 6.19), indicating moderate burnout levels with noticeable variation. Teaching performance scores ranged from 20 to 40, with a higher mean of 36.29 (SD = 4.56), suggesting generally strong performance across participants. The greater standard deviation in burnout scores implies more variability in emotional strain, while performance remained relatively consistent. These results suggest that, despite differing levels of burnout, most participants maintained a satisfactory level of teaching performance.

**Table 2.** Normality test

Variable	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-service EFL Teachers' Burnout (X)	0,974	45	0,393
Pre-service EFL Teachers' Job Performance (Y)	0,773	45	0,000

The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess the normality of the data. As shown in the table, the burnout variable (X) has a significance value of 0.393, greater than 0.05, indicating that the data are normally distributed. In contrast, the teaching performance variable (Y) shows a significance value of 0.000, less than 0.05, suggesting that the data are not normally distributed. Given this result, a non-parametric test (Spearman's rho) was selected for the correlation analysis.

**Table 3.** Spearman's rho correlation test

Variable			Burnout	Job Performance
Pre-service EFL Teachers' Burnout	Correlation Coefficient		1,000	-0,219
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0,149
	N		45	45
Pre-service EFL Teachers' Job Performance	Correlation Coefficient		-0,219	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,149	
	N		45	45

The results of the Spearman's rho correlation test, as shown in Table 3, indicate a negative correlation between burnout and teaching performance among pre-service EFL teachers, with a correlation coefficient of -0.219. However, this correlation is not statistically significant, as the p-value is 0.149 ( $p > 0.05$ ). This suggests that, although higher levels of burnout are weakly associated with lower teaching performance, the relationship is not strong enough to be considered statistically meaningful within this sample of 45 participants. Therefore, burnout did not significantly impact the teaching performance of the pre-service teachers in this study.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide insight into the relationship between burnout and teaching performance among pre-service EFL teachers during their practicum. The descriptive statistics revealed that participants experienced moderate levels of burnout ( $M = 33.76$ ) alongside relatively high levels of teaching performance ( $M = 36.29$ ). The greater variability in burnout scores ( $SD = 6.19$ ) compared to teaching performance ( $SD = 4.56$ ) indicates that while emotional strain was experienced differently across individuals, their instructional performance remained consistently strong. This pattern reflects the evaluative and high-stakes nature of the practicum, which compels pre-service teachers to uphold teaching standards even under psychological stress (Geng et al., 2015; Qin et al., 2022; Zito et al., 2024). Since the practicum is critical for graduation and certification, pre-service teachers must demonstrate competence in observable areas such as lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional delivery (Kuswandono, 2014; Martins et al., 2014).

Giles et al. (2020) found that pre-service teachers often maintain their performance during burnout by prioritising teaching responsibilities over emotional well-being. Similarly, Küçük (2023) observed that burnout does not manifest uniformly across career stages, and pre-service teachers tend to preserve professional effectiveness despite internal fatigue. The pressure to perform, reinforced by supervision and structured expectations, contributes to performance consistency. This also highlights the role of external supports such as mentoring, feedback, and institutional scaffolding in buffering the effects of emotional strain, aligning with the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, which posits that individuals are motivated to protect and conserve resources under stress (Hobfoll, 1989). In support of this, Tasdemir et al. (2020) emphasise that teaching readiness, particularly in lesson planning and classroom management, enhances resilience and enables prospective teachers to sustain performance under pressure, which is consistent with the findings of this study.

Despite these observable patterns, Spearman's rho correlation analysis revealed a weak and non-significant negative relationship between burnout and teaching performance ( $r = -$



0.219,  $p > 0.05$ ). This suggests that burnout, although present, did not significantly impair pre-service teachers' instructional performance during the practicum. This finding contrasts with research on in-service teachers, where burnout is consistently associated with reduced teaching effectiveness and diminished professional engagement (e.g., Mancini et al., 2022; Holmström et al., 2023). In the case of pre-service teachers, performance is often influenced by external accountability, especially to mentors, supervisors, and institutional standards embedded within the practicum structure (Allen & Wright, 2013; Arshavskaya, 2016). Pre-service teachers operate under scrutiny and high evaluation pressure as novice educators, which fosters a strong commitment to maintaining teaching quality regardless of emotional exhaustion (Kabilan, 2013; Mutlu, 2014; Zhao & Zhang, 2017). Rather than disengaging, they remain focused on meeting practicum expectations to ensure successful programme completion and professional recognition. This behaviour reflects a performance-driven mindset, characteristic of early professional development stages, where short-term success precedes emotional self-care (Eva, 2022).

Additionally, temporary resource gains such as peer support, institutional structure, and intrinsic motivation helped mitigate the effects of burnout, enabling pre-service teachers to sustain observable teaching behaviours. Ivanec (2020) asserts that high motivation and access to external support systems allow prospective teachers to continue working effectively despite stress. This is consistent with findings from Fernet et al. (2012), who emphasised the role of intrinsic motivation in reducing emotional exhaustion and maintaining engagement. Similarly, De Neve et al. (2014) found that mentoring and institutional support enhance self-efficacy and professional learning, buffering the negative impact of stress during practicum. Richards (2012) also highlighted that collegial relationships and supportive school environments protect against burnout, particularly among EFL teachers.

In this study, the presence of mentors and a structured school field environment were protective factors against the impact of burnout. However, the non-significant correlation also suggests that emotional strain exerts its influence in more nuanced, long-term ways that are not immediately reflected in short-term performance assessments. This helps explain why burnout did not significantly impair their job performance during the practicum. In contrast, previous studies on in-service teachers have demonstrated that prolonged exposure to high job demands leads to a decline in performance (Jomoad et al., 2021; Xing, 2022). Unlike their in-service counterparts, pre-service teachers are still developing professional identities and instructional competencies, which positions them to remain highly motivated and focused on performance outcomes despite internal stressors.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the study employed a relatively small sample size ( $n = 45$ ) from a single cohort at Universitas Islam Nusantara. While sufficient for correlational analysis, the limited sample restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader populations of pre-service EFL teachers across different institutions or regions in Indonesia. Second, self-report instruments for both burnout and teaching performance introduce the potential for response bias, such as social desirability or overestimating one's abilities. This may have influenced the accuracy of the performance scores, particularly given the evaluative nature of the practicum. Third, the cross-sectional design only captures data at a single time, preventing the identification of causal relationships or long-term effects of burnout on

teaching performance. Finally, the study did not account for additional variables that could mediate or moderate the relationship between burnout and performance, such as self-efficacy, coping strategies, or mentor support. Future research should consider larger, multi-site samples and adopt mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to gain deeper insights into the dynamics of burnout and instructional effectiveness in pre-service teacher education.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between burnout and teaching performance among pre-service EFL teachers during their practicum at Universitas Islam Nusantara. The descriptive analysis showed that participants experienced moderate burnout and relatively high teaching performance. This pattern suggests that although emotional strain was present, it did not significantly hinder their ability to perform core instructional tasks. The Spearman's correlation analysis revealed a weak and non-significant negative relationship between burnout and teaching performance, indicating no strong statistical link between the two variables in this context. These findings imply that pre-service teachers can continue to perform instructional duties effectively despite burnout symptoms, possibly due to the structured nature of the practicum, performance expectations, and support mechanisms like mentoring and peer collaboration. Drawing on the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, this suggests that access to temporary or situational resources may help reduce the negative effects of stress on performance during high-pressure periods such as the teaching practicum.

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