

A. Kariyev¹ , D. Fominykh² ,
A. Duisenbayeva^{1*} , M. Bakracheva³

¹Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

²Specialized Gymnasium no 199, Almaty, Kazakhstan

³University St. Kliment Ohridski, Sofia, Bulgaria

*e-mail: aikoke1981@gmail.com

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COGNITIVE SCHEMAS OF APPEARANCE, SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-EFFICACY IN UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

In the context of increasing digitalization and growing demands placed on university teachers, psychological factors affecting their professional well-being are gaining a significant role. One such factor is teacher's attitude toward their own appearance, which is formed by cognitive schemas that determine the importance of appearance and the degree of concern about it. The aim of the study was to examine the relationships between cognitive schemas about appearance, self-esteem, and self-efficacy in university teachers.

Forty-eight university teachers from five universities in Almaty participated in the study. The Appearance Schema Inventory (ASI-R), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) were used for assessment. Statistical analysis included descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and subgroup analysis based on years of teaching experience. The results revealed statistically significant positive correlations between all studied variables: appearance schemas and self-esteem ($r = 0.638$; $p < .001$), appearance schemas and self-efficacy ($r = 0.632$; $p < .001$), and self-esteem and self-efficacy ($r = 0.789$; $p < .001$). Additionally, all three indicators tended to increase with increasing teaching experience.

These findings demonstrate the importance of personality and psychological factors in teachers' professional adaptation and highlight the need to implement support programs aimed at developing positive self-perception and strengthening psychological resources.

Keywords: cognitive schemas of appearance, self-esteem, self-efficacy, university teachers, psychodiagnostics, professional well-being.

А.Д. Кариев¹, Д.С. Фоминых²,
А.О. Дуйсенбаева^{1*}, М. Бакрачева³

¹Абай атындағы Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан

²№199 мамандандырылған гимназия, Алматы, Қазақстан

³Әулие Климент Охридский университеті, София, Болгария

*e-mail: aikoke1981@gmail.com

Университет оқытушыларының сыртқы келбетінің, өзін-өзі бағалауының және өзіне деген сенімділігінің когнитивті схемалары арасындағы байланыс

Цифрландырудың артуы және жоғары білім беру оқытушыларына қойылатын талаптардың артуы жағдайында олардың кәсіби әл-ауқатына әсер ететін психологиялық факторлар маңызды рөл атқаруда. Осындай факторлардың бірі – оқытушының өзінің сыртқы келбетіне деген көзқарасы, ол сыртқы келбеттің маңыздылығын және оған қатысты алаңдаушылық дәрежесін анықтайтын когнитивті схемалармен қалыптасады. Зерттеудің мақсаты университет оқытушыларының сыртқы келбет, өзін-өзі бағалау және өзіне деген сенімділік туралы когнитивті схемалар арасындағы байланысты зерттеу болды.

Зерттеуге Алматыдағы бес университеттен қырық сегіз оқытушы қатысты. Бағалау үшін сыртқы келбет схемасының инвентаризациясы (ASI-R), Розенбергтің өзін-өзі бағалау шкаласы (RSES) және Жалпы өзін-өзі бағалау шкаласы (GSES) пайдаланылды. Статистикалық талдау сипаттамалық талдауды, Пирсон корреляциялық талдауын және еңбек өтілі бойынша кіші топтық талдауды қамтыды. Нәтижелер зерттелген барлық айнымалылар арасында статистикалық тұрғыдан маңызды оң корреляцияларды анықтады: сыртқы келбет схемалары мен өзін-өзі бағалау ($r = 0,638$; $p < .001$), сыртқы келбет схемалары мен өзін-өзі бағалау ($r = 0,632$; $p < .001$)

өзін-өзі бағалау мен өзін-өзі бағалау ($r = 0,789$; $p < .001$). Сонымен қатар үш көрсеткіштің де оқыту тәжірибесінің артуымен артуына бейім болды.

Бұл нәтижелер мұғалімдердің кәсіби бейімделуіндегі жеке тұлға мен психологиялық факторлардың маңыздылығын және өзін-өзі оң қабылдауды дамыту мен психологиялық ресурстарды нығайтуға бағытталған қолдау бағдарламаларын енгізу қажеттілігін көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: сыртқы келбеттің, өзін-өзі бағалаудың, өзін-өзі бағалаудың, университет мұғалімдерінің, психодиагностиканың, кәсіби әл-ауқаттың когнитивті схемалары.

А.Д. Кариев¹, Д.С. Фоминых²,
А.О. Дуйсенбаева^{1*}, М. Бакрачева³

¹Казахский национальный педагогический университет имени Абая, Алматы, Казахстан

²Специализированная гимназия № 199, Алматы, Казахстан

³Университет имени Св. Климента Орхидского, София, Болгария

*e-mail: aikoke1981@gmail.com

Взаимосвязь когнитивных схем внешности, самооценки и самоэффективности у преподавателей высших учебных заведений

В условиях растущей цифровизации и повышения требований к преподавателям высших учебных заведений значительную роль приобретают психологические факторы, влияющие на профессиональное благополучие специалистов. Одним из таких факторов является отношение преподавателя к собственной внешности, формируемое в виде когнитивных схем, определяющих важность внешнего облика и степень озабоченности им. Целью исследования стало изучение взаимосвязей между когнитивными схемами внешности, самооценкой и самоэффективностью у преподавателей вузов.

В исследовании приняли участие 48 преподавателей из пяти университетов г. Алматы. Для диагностики использовались опросник когнитивных схем внешности ASI-R, шкала самооценки Розенберга (RSES) и шкала общей самоэффективности (GSES). Статистическая обработка включала описательный анализ, корреляционный анализ Пирсона и подгрупповый анализ по стажу работы.

Результаты показали статистически значимые положительные корреляции между всеми исследуемыми переменными: схемами внешности и самооценкой ($r = 0.638$; $p < .001$), схемами внешности и самоэффективностью ($r = 0.632$; $p < .001$), самооценкой и самоэффективностью ($r = 0.789$; $p < .001$). Дополнительно установлено, что все три показателя имеют тенденцию к увеличению с ростом педагогического стажа.

Полученные данные демонстрируют важность личностно-психологических факторов в профессиональной адаптации преподавателей и подчеркивают необходимость внедрения программ поддержки, направленных на развитие позитивного самовосприятия и укрепление психологических ресурсов.

Ключевые слова: когнитивные схемы внешности, самооценка, самоэффективность, преподаватели вузов, психодиагностика, профессиональное благополучие.

Introduction

In the contemporary educational environment, the role of university teachers has expanded significantly. The traditional function of knowledge transmission is now complemented by important aspects such as leadership, mentoring, emotional support, and participation in public and digital forms of education. These changes have increased demands not only on teachers' professional competencies but also on their personal characteristics, including self-perception, psychological resilience, and the ability to adapt to the growing public visibility of the profession.

One of the significant psychological components of professional activity is teacher's attitude toward

their own appearance. Contemporary research emphasizes that the perception of physical appearance is associated not only with body image but also with a system of cognitive schemas that include beliefs about the importance of appearance, responses to social attention, the degree to which appearance is integrated into self-esteem, and the level of concern about it (Cash, 2004).

At the present stage, this component has gained particular relevance for university teachers. Faculty members are frequently in the public eye, delivering lectures, interacting with students and colleagues, and participating in online events and conferences, which increases the impact of appearance-related perceptions on their professional well-being. Physical appearance becomes an integral part of social

interaction, influencing confidence, professional authority, and emotional state.

Self-esteem, as a stable attitude toward oneself, is a key component of psychological well-being among educational professionals. It determines how teachers perceive their professional achievements, capabilities, and personal significance. A high level of self-esteem contributes to internal stability, confidence in professional interactions, reduced anxiety, and more constructive responses to feedback (Rosenberg, 1979; Judge & Bono, 2001).

Closely related to self-esteem is self-efficacy, which can be defined as the belief in one's ability to effectively cope with challenges and perform successfully in professional situations (Bandura, 1997). For university teachers, self-efficacy reflects confidence in their ability to manage the learning process, overcome difficulties, influence students, and achieve instructional goals.

Despite considerable scholarly interest in teachers' professional well-being, the interrelationship between cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among university teachers remains insufficiently explored.

The relevance of this study is determined by the fact that university teachers represent one of the most publicly visible professional groups, for whom self-perception and psychological resources have a direct impact on the quality of professional performance, emotional well-being, and stress resilience. The present study examines how cognitive appearance schemas are related to teachers' self-esteem and self-efficacy. Understanding these relationships will contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying professional well-being and may help identify risk groups and inform directions for psychological support among higher education professionals.

The aim of the study is to examine the relationships between cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among university teachers.

Research objectives:

1. To analyze the levels of cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among university teachers.
2. To identify the relationships between cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.
3. To examine differences in these indicators depending on years of professional experience.
4. To determine potential psychological factors that contribute to enhancing the professional well-being of university teachers.

Research hypotheses:

H₁. There is a positive relationship between cognitive appearance schemas and the level of self-esteem among university teachers.

H₂. Cognitive appearance schemas are positively associated with the level of self-efficacy among university teachers.

H₃. Self-esteem is positively correlated with self-efficacy.

H₄. The levels of cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy may differ depending on years of teaching experience.

Literature review

To begin with, it is important to consider cognitive appearance schemas within the broader framework of self-perception. The concept of cognitive appearance schemas was developed by researcher T. Cash (2004) within the cognitive-behavioral model of body image. Appearance schemas represent stable cognitive structures consisting of beliefs that determine the importance attributed to physical appearance and the extent to which appearance influences the formation of self-esteem. These schemas reflect how individuals interpret information related to their own appearance, respond to social situations, and evaluate their body and physical characteristics.

According to this model, appearance schemas include two key components. The first is appearance-related concern, which reflects the intensity of preoccupation with one's physical appearance, sensitivity to external evaluation, and the tendency to interpret social situations through the lens of appearance. The second component is appearance investment in self-esteem, which indicates the extent to which physical appearance constitutes a significant part of one's self-worth, influencing confidence and emotional well-being.

Research indicates that cognitive appearance schemas tend to be more strongly expressed among individuals in public professions, including university teachers (Pruzinsky & Cash, 2002). Public speaking, teaching in large classrooms, and the need to present oneself in professional settings increase the importance of the appearance-related component of self-perception.

In addition, self-esteem plays a crucial role as a regulator of professional behavior. It is defined as a global emotional and cognitive evaluation of oneself (Rosenberg, 1979) and encompasses beliefs about one's personal value, ability to influence the

surrounding environment, and capacity to cope with life challenges. For university teachers, self-esteem is particularly important, as it influences professional well-being, the perception of teaching-related challenges, and the quality of interaction with students (Judge & Bono, 2001).

The key functions of self-esteem in teachers' professional activity include several important factors:

- regulation of emotional states,
- maintenance of stability in stressful situations,
- enhancement of confidence in pedagogical communication,
- development of constructive responses to feedback,
- strengthening of professional identity.

Research indicates that low self-esteem among teachers is often associated with increased anxiety, emotional burnout, and reduced quality of pedagogical interaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). In contrast, high self-esteem serves as a protective factor contributing to professional well-being.

In the context of teachers' psychological resources, particular attention should be given to self-efficacy. This concept, introduced by A. Bandura (Bandura, 1997), refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific actions required to achieve desired outcomes. Among university teachers, self-efficacy manifests as confidence in their ability to organize the instructional process, manage classroom situations, motivate students, and successfully address pedagogical challenges.

High levels of self-efficacy are associated with:

- greater resilience to stress,
- more effective emotional self-regulation,
- more successful performance of teaching-related tasks,
- reduced risk of emotional burnout (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

The scientific literature indicates that self-efficacy is closely related to self-esteem; however, it represents a distinct construct that reflects individuals' perceptions of their capabilities in specific domains of functioning rather than their overall sense of self-worth (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002).

Finally, when examining the relationship between cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, it becomes evident that, despite extensive research on each of these constructs individually, studies investigating the interrelationship among all three variables simultaneously remain relatively limited. Nevertheless, existing research provides insight into the potential mechanisms un-

derlying their interaction.

1. Appearance schemas and self-esteem.

Individuals for whom physical appearance constitutes a significant component of self-perception are more likely to incorporate appearance-related factors into the structure of their self-esteem. Research indicates that heightened appearance-related concern predicts greater fluctuations in self-esteem and increased dependence on external evaluations (Cash & Smolak, 2011).

2. Appearance schemas and self-efficacy.

More positive perceptions of one's appearance contribute to greater confidence during public speaking, reduce anxiety, and facilitate active engagement in professional tasks. In contrast, negative appearance schemas may reduce confidence in social and professional contexts (Menzel & Levine, 2011).

3. Self-esteem and self-efficacy.

High self-esteem contributes to strengthening individuals' belief in their own capabilities. Stable positive correlations between these constructs have been consistently reported (Judge & Bono, 2001), which can be explained by shared underlying mechanisms related to positive self-evaluation and confidence in one's ability to succeed.

Thus, theoretical evidence suggests that among university teachers, cognitive appearance schemas may be closely associated with both self-esteem and self-efficacy. However, comprehensive empirical studies examining these relationships within a Kazakhstani sample remain lacking, which highlights the relevance and scientific significance of the present study.

Materials and methods

The study involved 48 teachers from five higher education institutions in Almaty. The participants varied in terms of gender, academic position, years of teaching experience, and disciplinary background. The inclusion criteria were current employment at a university, at least one year of teaching experience, and voluntary participation in the study. Exclusion criteria included incomplete questionnaires, as well as graduate students and university staff without teaching responsibilities.

The psychodiagnostic instruments were selected to examine the relationships between cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among university teachers.

The Appearance Schemas Inventory-Revised (ASI-R) (Cash, 2004) was used to assess cognitive

appearance schemas. This instrument measures two key dimensions: Self-Evaluative Salience, which reflects concern about physical appearance and its emotional significance, and Motivational Salience, which indicates the extent to which appearance is integrated into the structure of self-esteem. The ASI-R is a validated instrument and has been widely used in research on self-perception, public visibility, and professional populations.

In addition, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was employed to assess global self-esteem. This scale measures individuals' overall self-evaluation, reflecting general self-satisfaction and confidence in one's personal value.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) was used to assess perceived self-efficacy. This instrument measures individuals' subjective confidence in their ability to cope effectively with a broad range of life and professional challenges.

Research procedure. The study was conducted online using the Google Forms platform. Participants were provided with information regarding the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants completed the questionnaires in a sequential order, including a socio-demographic questionnaire, followed by ASI-R, RSES, and GSES. On average, completion of the questionnaire took approximately 12-15 minutes.

Statistical processing methods. The following statistical methods were employed in this study: descriptive statistics (mean [M] and standard deviation [SD] for scale variables; frequency [n] and percentage [%] for categorical variables), Pearson correlation analysis, and subgroup comparisons based on years of teaching experience. The use of Pearson's correlation coefficient was appropriate given the scale-level measurement and the normal distribution of the primary variables. To characterize the sample and assess its representativeness, an analysis of participants' socio-demographic characteristics was conducted. The data presented in Table 1 illustrate the distribution of respondents by gender, age, academic position, years of teaching experience, and involvement in online teaching. These factors represent important contextual variables for interpreting the study findings.

The majority of the study participants were female (75%), male respondents accounted for 25% of the sample. The participants' age ranged from 22 to 50 years and above. Nearly half of the sample consisted of lecturers (45.8%). Professors represented the smallest group (12.5%). The most represented

category in terms of teaching experience was participants with 11-20 years of experience (35.4%), while the smallest proportion included teachers with less than 5 years of experience (16.7%). A substantial proportion of respondents reported involvement in online teaching (89.6%), reflecting the characteristics of the contemporary educational environment.

Table 1 – Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants (N = 48)

| Variable | Category | n | % |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----|-------|
| Gender | Female | 36 | 75% |
| | Male | 12 | 25% |
| Year | 22-30 years old | 9 | 18.8% |
| | 31-40 years old | 12 | 25% |
| | 41-50 years old | 15 | 31.3% |
| | Over 50 years | 12 | 25% |
| Position | Lecturer | 22 | 45.8% |
| | Senior Lecturer | 11 | 22.9% |
| | Associate Professor | 9 | 18.8% |
| | Professor | 6 | 12.5% |
| Teaching experience | < 5 years | 8 | 16.7% |
| | 5-10 years | 13 | 27.1% |
| | 11-20 years | 17 | 35.4% |
| | > 20 years | 10 | 20.8% |
| Participation in online teaching | Yes | 43 | 89.6% |
| | No | 5 | 10.4% |

Results and discussion

For all quantitative variables obtained using the three instruments (ASI-R, RSES, and GSES), means and standard deviations were calculated. At the initial stage of the analysis, descriptive statistics were computed to assess the overall levels of cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy in the sample. This approach made it possible to determine the average levels of the measured indicators and the variability of the data prior to conducting correlation analysis. The results are presented in Table 2.

The mean score for cognitive appearance schemas was $M = 60.7$ ($SD = 16.64$), indicating a relatively high level of appearance-related significance within the structure of teachers' self-perception. The mean self-esteem score was $M = 19.0$ ($SD = 6.3$),

corresponding to a moderate level according to the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, suggesting generally normative self-evaluation among participants. The mean score for general self-efficacy was $M = 30.5$ ($SD = 6.89$), reflecting a moderate level of perceived confidence in one's professional capabilities.

Table 2 – Mean values of cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy ($N = 48$)

| Scale | M | SD |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|
| ASI-R (Appearance schemas) | 60,70 | 16,64 |
| RSES (Self-esteem) | 19,0 | 6,3 |

Correlation Analysis. To test hypotheses H_1 - H_3 , Pearson correlation analysis was conducted, yielding the following results:

- a significant positive relationship between cognitive appearance schemas and self-esteem ($r = 0.638$; $p < 0.001$),
- a significant positive relationship between cognitive appearance schemas and self-efficacy ($r = 0.632$; $p < 0.001$),
- a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy ($r = 0.789$; $p < 0.001$).

To systematize the obtained correlation coefficients and provide a clear representation of the strength of the relationships between the studied variables, a correlation matrix was constructed. Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.

Table 3 – Correlations among the main variables

| Indicators | ASI-R | RSES | GSES |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| ASI-R | – | 0.638*** | 0.632*** |
| RSES | 0.638*** | – | 0.789*** |
| GSES | 0.632*** | 0.789*** | – |

*** $p < .001$

Specifically, a moderate positive correlation was found between cognitive appearance schemas and self-esteem ($r = .638$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher appearance-related salience within the self-concept is associated with higher levels of self-esteem. A positive correlation was also observed between cognitive appearance schemas and self-efficacy ($r =$

$.632$, $p < .001$), suggesting that greater attention to appearance may be associated with increased confidence in one's professional capabilities. In addition, a strong positive correlation was identified between self-esteem and self-efficacy ($r = .789$, $p < .001$), reflecting the interrelated nature of these personal psychological resources.

The results of the analysis examining differences based on years of teaching experience are presented in Table 4. To further test hypothesis H_4 , additional analyses were conducted to examine differences in cognitive appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy across groups with varying levels of teaching experience. Comparison of mean values allows for the identification of potential trends in these psychological characteristics as professional experience increases.

Table 4 – Mean values of the study variables by years of teaching experience

| Teaching experience | ASI-R (M) | RSES (M) | GSES (M) |
|---------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| < 5 years | 49.67 | 16.4 | 27 |
| 5-10 years | 57.38 | 18.69 | 30.77 |
| 11-20 years | 62.71 | 21.29 | 30.59 |
| > 20 years | 72 | 25 | 38.4 |

Among teachers with less than five years of teaching experience, the mean self-esteem score was 16.4, whereas in the group with more than 20 years of experience, it reached 25, reflecting a tendency for self-esteem to increase with professional development. A similar pattern was observed for self-efficacy, with mean scores of 27.0 and 38.4, respectively.

At the same time, cognitive appearance schemas demonstrated an increasing trend with greater teaching experience. Specifically, the mean score was 49.67 among teachers with less than five years of experience and 72.0 among those with more than 20 years of experience. This pattern may indicate a gradual shift toward greater integration of appearance-related perceptions within the broader structure of professional self-perception, potentially reflecting increased self-awareness and professional identity development.

To visually illustrate the identified relationship, a scatterplot was constructed showing the correlation between cognitive appearance schemas and

self-esteem. This graphical representation allows for the assessment of the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables.

The scatterplot clearly demonstrates an upward trend line, graphically confirming the positive relationship between the variables. Most data points are concentrated within the range of moderate values. The identified positive correlation ($r = 0.638$) indicates that teachers who attribute greater importance to their physical appearance and integrate appearance into their self-evaluative framework tend

to demonstrate higher levels of global self-esteem. This finding is consistent with Cash's (2004) research, which suggests that positive appearance schemas contribute to stronger self-esteem and greater emotional stability.

Similarly, a visualization of the relationship between cognitive appearance schemas and teachers' self-efficacy was constructed. This graphical representation allows for further examination of the distribution of the variables and confirms the linear nature of the relationship.

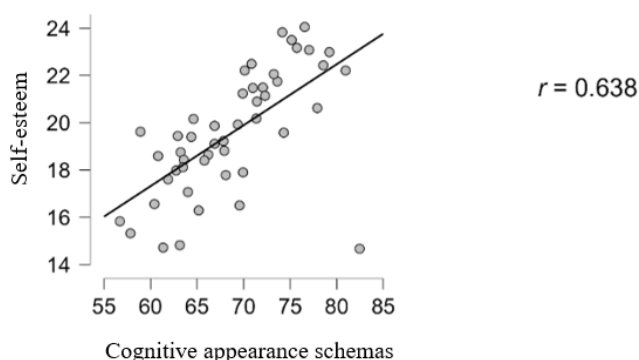


Figure 1 – Correlation between cognitive appearance schemas and teachers' self-esteem

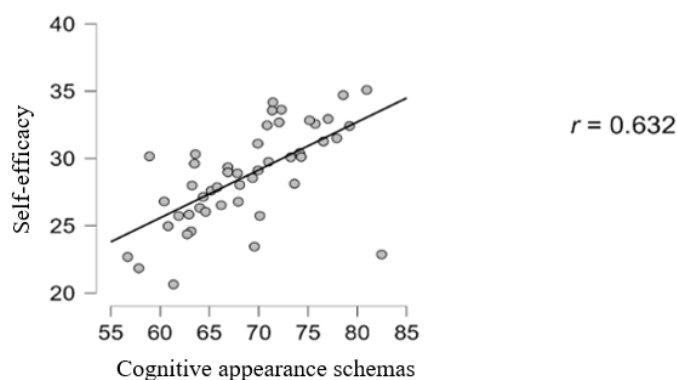


Figure 2 – Correlation between cognitive appearance schemas and teachers' self-efficacy

The distribution of data points reflects a stable positive relationship, with a moderate dispersion of values, further supporting the statistical significance of the observed correlation. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.632$) confirms that more positive appearance-related cognitive schemas are associated with higher levels of confidence in professional teaching abilities. Among university teachers, this may

manifest as reduced anxiety during public speaking, greater openness in professional communication, and increased confidence in classroom interactions.

To further assess the strength of the relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy, an additional scatterplot was constructed, providing a graphical representation that supports the results of the correlation analysis.

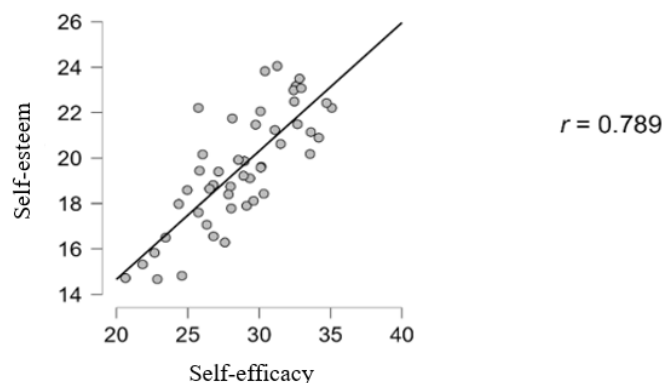


Figure 3 – Correlation between self-esteem and teachers’ self-efficacy

The trend line demonstrates a pronounced upward direction, corresponding to the positive correlation between self-esteem and self-efficacy. The strongest correlation ($r = 0.789$) indicates that a positive general evaluation of oneself is closely associated with confidence in professional capabilities. This finding is consistent with the conclusions of Bandura (1997) and Judge & Bono (2001).

Table 5 – Average values of ASI-R, RSES and GSES depending on teaching experience

| Teaching experience | ASI-R (M) | RSES (M) | GSES (M) |
|---------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1-5 years | 18.5 | 26.8 | 66.2 |
| 6-10 years | 19.3 | 27.5 | 67.1 |
| 11-20 years | 20.7 | 29.1 | 70.4 |
| More than 20 years | 21.6 | 30.3 | 72.0 |

The data show that the indicators of all three variables increase with increasing teaching experience: teachers with little experience demonstrate lower levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy; the highest rates are observed in the group with experience > 20 years.

This is consistent with a variety of studies showing that professional experience contributes to a sense of competence, stability, and confidence in public situations.

The results of the study show that cognitive patterns of appearance are closely related to both self-esteem and self-effectiveness of teachers. These data are consistent with modern research that emphasizes that the perception of one’s own appear-

ance is an important part of the self-perception of professionals, especially in public professions.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the relationships between appearance cognitive schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among university teachers. Based on the analysis of data obtained from a sample of 48 university instructors, statistically significant positive relationships were identified between all examined variables.

The observed correlations allow the following scientific conclusions to be drawn:

1. Appearance cognitive schemas are positively associated with teachers’ self-esteem.

Teachers for whom physical appearance represents a significant component of self-perception tend to demonstrate higher levels of global self-esteem. Appearance schemas function as a psychological regulator of emotional self-attitude, influencing confidence and overall self-acceptance.

2. Appearance schemas are positively associated with self-efficacy.

Positive appearance schemas, reflecting confidence and acceptance of one’s physical self, are correlated with stronger beliefs in one’s ability to act effectively in professional contexts. This finding is particularly relevant for university teachers as members of a public professional group.

3. Self-esteem is strongly associated with self-efficacy.

The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.789$) confirms that global self-worth and confidence in one’s professional capabilities form a mutually reinforcing system of personal psychological resources.

4. All three variables demonstrate a tendency to increase with greater teaching experience. More experienced teachers exhibit more stable and positive self-perception, greater confidence in their professional abilities, and higher acceptance of their own appearance.

Thus, hypotheses H1-H3 received empirical support, while hypothesis H4 was partially confirmed at the level of observed trends. The findings suggest that appearance cognitive schemas may be considered a significant component of teachers' self-perception structure, influencing the development of personal psychological resources essential for professional functioning.

Overall, the results highlight the importance of cognitive and personal factors in teachers' professional well-being. Attitudes toward one's own appearance appear to be not a superficial characteristic but a deeply psychological component influencing self-evaluative and regulatory mechanisms in pedagogical activity.

Practical recommendations. Based on the findings, several directions can be identified to enhance teachers' psychological well-being:

1. Psychological training aimed at developing positive self-perception, with a focus on the formation of adaptive appearance schemas, acceptance of one's own image, and reduction of excessive appearance-related self-focus.

2. Self-esteem enhancement programs, including training designed to strengthen stable self-worth, address irrational negative beliefs, and develop positive self-support strategies.

3. Self-efficacy enhancement training, including the development of confident classroom behavior, training in self-regulation techniques during public speaking, and strengthening teachers' sense of control over professional situations.

4. Psychoeducational initiatives in universities, such as lectures and training sessions on the role of cognitive schemas, self-perception, professional stress, and emotional resilience.

5. Individual counseling for teachers, particularly during the adaptation stage (0–5 years of experience), when levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy

tend to be lowest.

Study limitations. The small sample size ($N = 48$) limits the generalizability of the findings. The non-random sampling method may introduce sampling bias. The exclusive use of self-report measures may affect the subjectivity of responses. The absence of statistical testing for differences based on teaching experience means that the results should be interpreted as indicative trends rather than definitive conclusions. Additionally, the cross-sectional design does not allow for causal inferences. These limitations should be addressed in future research.

Future research directions include recommendations aimed at expanding the scope of investigation and obtaining more robust and generalizable results. These include increasing the sample size and involving university teachers from different regions of Kazakhstan; incorporating additional psychological variables such as emotional resilience, professional burnout, and perfectionism; comparing teachers engaged in face-to-face and online instruction; and applying experimental designs as well as structural equation modeling (SEM).

The quantitative analysis demonstrated that cognitive appearance schemas explain a significant portion of the variance in self-esteem and self-efficacy, as reflected in the identified moderate correlation coefficients. This finding highlights their psychological significance within the structure of teachers' professional self-perception.

Overall, the results of the study confirm the key role of personal cognitive factors in shaping the professional well-being of university teachers. Understanding the relationships between appearance schemas, self-esteem, and self-efficacy provides deeper insight into the mechanisms of professional resilience and helps identify directions for psychological support. A comprehensive examination of these characteristics contributes significantly to the development of scientific knowledge on the determinants of professional well-being and highlights the need for systematic efforts to strengthen teachers' psychological resources in contemporary educational environments.

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Author Contributions

Kariyev Adlet: Investigation, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Writing – review & editing.

Fominykh Darya: Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Visualization, Writing.

Duysenbayeva Ainur: Formal Analysis, Investigation, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing.

Bakracheva Margarita: Methodology.

Information about authors:

Kariyev Adlet – Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Postdoctoral Researcher, Associate Professor of the Department of Primary Education, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: adlet.kariyev@gmail.com).

Fominykh Darya – Educational psychologist, Specialized Gymnasium no 199 (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: dasha230203@gmail.com).

Duysenbayeva Ainur (corresponding author) – Senior Lecturer, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: aikoke1981@gmail.com).

Bakracheva Margarita – Doctor of Sciences in Psychology, Department of Social Pedagogy and Social Work, Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts, University St. Kliment Ohridski (Sofia, Bulgaria, e-mail: mbakrachev@uni-sofia.bg).

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

Қариев Адлет Дюсембаевич – педагогика ғылымдарының кандидаты, постдокторант, бастауыш білім беру кафедрасының қауымдастырылған профессоры, Абай атындағы Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университеті (Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: adlet.kariyev@gmail.com).

Фоминых Дарья Сергеевна – педагог-психолог, №199 мамандандырылған гимназия (Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: dasha230203@gmail.com).

Дүйсенбаева Айнұр Отарбекқызы (корреспондент-автор) – аға оқытушы, Абай атындағы Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университеті (Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: aikoke1981@gmail.com).

Бакрачева Маргарита – психология ғылымдарының докторы, әлеуметтік педагогика және әлеуметтік жұмыс кафедрасы, Педагогикалық зерттеулер және өнер факультеті, Әулие Климент Охридский университеті (София, Болгария, e-mail: mbakrachev@uni-sofia.bg).

Сведения об авторах:

Қариев Адлет Дюсембаевич – кандидат педагогических наук, постдокторант, ассоциированный профессор кафедры начального образования, Казахский национальный педагогический университет имени Абая (Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: adlet.kariyev@gmail.com);

Фоминых Дарья Сергеевна – педагог-психолог, специализированная гимназия № 199 (Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: dasha230203@gmail.com);

Дүйсенбаева Айнұр Отарбековна (автор-корреспондент) – старший преподаватель, Казахский национальный педагогический университет имени Абая (Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: aikoke1981@gmail.com);

Бакрачева Маргарита – доктор психологических наук, кафедра социальной педагогики и социальной работы, факультет педагогических исследований и искусств, Университет Св. Климента Охридского (София, Болгария, e-mail: mbakrachev@uni-sofia.bg).

*Келіп түсті: 06 шілде 2025 жыл
Қабылданды: 04 наурыз 2026 жыл*