

Psychological Mindedness in ELT: Exploring Contributions of Comparative Literature to Pre-Service English Language Teachers' Psychological Mindedness

Esin KUMLU¹

Dokuz Eylül University

Abstract

This qualitative research aimed to explore the significance of the development of psychological mindedness, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic, for pre-service English Language Teachers and the use of comparative literature to facilitate it. The research was conducted in the context of an undergraduate ELT program in Turkey and data was gathered through narrative inquiry at the end of the semester under the title of a selected literature course. Thematic analysis of the collected 39 narrative frames shed light on the development of pre-service teachers' psychological mindedness which emerged in three overarching themes; self-awareness, empathy, and the importance of mental and physical well-being of a teacher which are all the necessary conditions for psychological mindedness. Findings suggest that these pre-service teachers were strongly influenced by the comparative analysis of the literary texts that facilitated the development of psychological mindedness.

Keywords: Psychological Mindedness, Comparative Literature, COVID-19, English Language Teacher Education, Pre-service Teacher Education.

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¹Assoc. Prof., Dr. Faculty of Education, Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir, Turkey, ORCID: 0000-0002-6884-6382

Correspondence: esin.kumlu@deu.edu.tr

Introduction

It would not be misleading to say that the key words of the year 2020 was the term “the Great Reset”, the title of Time Magazine’s November issue. The term was first used in the World Economic Forum (WEF) as a proposal to highlight the rebuilding of the economy after the COVID-19 pandemic. At first sight, the term refers to economic expansions however, with a deeper insight it signifies radical changes in human life both socially and psychologically. Lockdowns all around the world, the necessity of social distancing, fear, anxiety and depression are the few elements of the Great Reset, which illustrates a completely different life for each of us. In relation, education systems around the world have been directly affected by the pandemic as an integral part of social life. Teachers, the main locomotives of the education system, are therefore not only expected to adapt themselves into the radical changes of daily life, but also to help their students become accustomed to the hardships of the pandemic days. That is the reason why promoting teachers’ well-being and emotional awareness, has gained importance (MacIntyre et al., 2016; Gkonou & Mercer, 2017). Hence, the question of “How can teachers integrate themselves into this new order both professionally and psychologically?” has become an important issue.

Consequently, this qualitative study, which used narrative frames to examine participants’ stories about their lived experiences, aims to explore the concept of psychological mindedness, which refers to “seeing/interpreting life through a psychological lens” (www.psychology.com), within the context of pre-service teacher education. This psychological lens could contribute to pre-service teachers’ both mental and physical well-being in the light of global changes in which preserving mental and physical health is much more vital than before. As psychologically-minded people are “interested in, and responsive to, the inner needs, motives, and experiences of others” (Gough, 1957, p.11), pre-service teachers could empathize more with their students during unexpected times like the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the first part, the study first aims to underline what is psychological mindedness and why it is necessary for a teacher in 2020’s. It then displays the methodological aspects of the study, analyzes how the comparative analysis of the selected novels could impact the psychological mindedness of pre-service English teachers at a university in the West of Turkey and depicts findings in relation to teacher education programs.

What is Psychological Mindedness? Why Do We Need a Psychologically Minded Teacher?

Although psychological mindedness is a poorly demarcated subject it has begun to be widely-used within psychology and other fields (Krupp et al. 2020; Uzun et al., 2020; Kadra-Scalzo et al., 2021; Kassim et al., 2021). According to Applebaum, 1973, Psychological mindedness (PM) is “a person’s ability to see relationships among thoughts, feelings and actions, with the goal of learning

the meanings and causes of his experience and behavior” (p.36). It can be assumed that the psychologically-minded individual has the capacity to understand the psychological processes and inner motives of the self as well as others that results in better social relations in life (Hall, 1992). Therefore, “extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness and a negative correlation with neuroticism” as well as “problem-focused coping strategies” (Nyklicek, I., Poot, J. C., & Van Opstal, 2010, p.34) are the few positive traits that the psychologically-minded individual carries. In addition, PM as a term has been associated with “psychodynamic thinking” (Appelbaum, 1973; Bagby, Parker & Taylor, 1994) which can be defined as “the awareness of one’s psychological states and processes as well as others” (Hall, 1992). Therefore, it can be regarded as an opportunity to develop positive relations both with the self and with others. Moreover, an awareness of one’s own emotions as well as the emotions and psychological processes of others can be interpreted as a really valuable feature when considering the modern world. It is argued that the development of psychological mindedness helped the individuals not only to prepare themselves mentally but also physically for social life as it promotes physical and mental well-being (Le Boutillier & Barry, 2018). It can be claimed that adaptation into the realities of the new global changes requires a certain amount of awareness, especially for a teacher, both for herself and for her students as it is not easy to control our feelings in such an ambiguous world. However, if a teacher can be aware of the inner needs of oneself and her students’ a better learning environment can be established. It is at this point the crucial question arises: “Why do we need a psychologically-minded teacher?”.

Today’s teachers not only have to deal with various obstacles including online education, preparing a new curriculum for the new system but also the effects of the pandemic; societal factors, the anxiety of parents and the last but by no means the least, stress. When considering the COVID-19 pandemic, the well-being of a teacher has gained greater importance and since 2020, several studies have focused upon teacher burn-out as one of the prominent problems of the instructors (Asbury & Kim 2020; Chang, 2020; Meidani et al., 2020; Ghasemi, 2021; Madigan & Kim, 2021). In addition, various studies focus upon the effects of COVID-19 on education (Ellis, Steadman, & Mao, 2020; Hammond & Hyler, 2020; Hadar et al., 2020) which underline the psychological and professional obstacles that teachers have faced. It becomes patent that psychology has stood at the center of human life and a psychologically-minded teacher will not only have the potential to become aware of the present-day realities and current experiences (Ryan & Brown, 2003) but also will have the power to overcome them.

Although this qualitative study was conducted in 6 weeks, under the title of one course, it can be a useful practice for teacher training programs. On the whole, the course module enabled the pre-service teachers to develop psychological mindedness, that is they became aware of the psychological states and processes of other people as well as becoming aware of their own feelings, thoughts and emotions. The comparative analysis of the literary works encouraged the pre-service teachers to

become aware of how they had felt since last year. As psychological mindedness refers to an understanding of psychological processes, it can be assumed that the pre-service teachers' capacity to examine their own feelings helped the development of self-awareness which refers to a "heightened awareness of ongoing mental processes" (Fenigstein, 1997, p.117) and the narrative frames used for the current study helped the pre-service teachers to "make sense of their lived experience' and to 'understand it, give it coherence, make connections, and unravel its complexity" (Barkhuizen, 2011, p. 393).

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, narrative inquiry is used as a research design as it encourages both a social and a cultural perception of language teaching that defines "human learning as a dynamic social activity" (Johnson, 2006, p. 237). This cognitive experience or sense-making activity results in them becoming more aware of, and thus understanding better, themselves and their practices (Barkhuizen, 2011). The narrative approach is well suited to the present-day teacher education as it allows the researchers to examine pre-service teachers' stories about their profession and their social lives. It also permits the researchers to postulate significant questions about teaching in the future (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 357). As "a way of understanding experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.20) narrative practices encapsulates "intentional, reflective human actions, socially and contextually situated, in which teachers with their students, other colleagues, or researchers, interrogate their teaching practices to construct the meaning and relationship between teacher stories and encouragement of learner autonomy interpretation of some compelling or puzzling aspect of teaching and learning through the production of narratives that lead to understanding, changed practices, and new hypotheses" (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002, p. 21).

Through gathering "small stories" from the participants, narrative inquiry seemed to be a proper methodology for the current study as it provided the mean to the researcher "to understand the inner or subjective world of the person, how he or she thinks about her own experience, situation, problems, life..."(Lieblich, et al., 1998, p.172). In addition, the personal stories gathered through the narrative frames can also be regarded as "a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful"(Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, p.375). As a narrative inquiry was required to provide in-depth information about pre-service teachers' perceptions and experiences in COVID-19 pandemic, it was an ideal fit for this study for it made it easier to learn about the experiences of pre-service teachers and how the course module altered their perceptions about their current psychology and their carrier.

Contexts and Participants

The present study was conducted in the context of a four-year pre-service English Language Teacher Education Program in Turkey. Within the framework of the course entitled Selections from British Literature, 39 pre-service teachers were assigned to analyze the selected literary texts comparatively from British and American literature. For the current study, “Selections from British Literature” course was chosen as it gave flexibility to the instructor while organizing the syllabus of the course. The participants were chosen from the fourth class as up to that year they had taken various literature courses and they were able to analyze the texts in detail. In addition, as they will be teachers next year, their perceptions, anxieties and expectations about their career provided a richer source for the data. The six-week module prepared was embedded into the course and as a sampling method narrative inquiry was used. For the current study, narrative inquiry promoted a way for organizing knowledge (Bruner, 1986) and it also enabled the participants to express their world-views through the autobiographic account of their perceptions.

The participants who were involved in this research comprised of 39 ELT pre-service teachers (20 females and 19 males). Regarding the characteristics of the pre-service teachers, their ages ranged between 21 and 40 and students came from all backgrounds from different cities in Turkey. The participants were informed about the focus and intention of the research. They confirmed that the narrative frames were understood by them and they all provided verbal and written consent to participate in the study. In order to prevent coercion, they were informed that participation in the study would not affect their grading in the course. To ensure anonymity, the names of the participants in the study are reflected in numbers.

Course content

Historically speaking, the First World War years are very similar to the COVID-19 pandemic period. Anxiety, depression, loss of our beloved ones are the few obstacles that humanity faced during the First World War (Grayzel, 2013; Strachen, 1998). In order to encourage pre-service teachers to become aware of their feelings, actions and emotions, which is the development of psychological mindedness, for the two-hour course conducted on Wednesdays, Virginia Woolf’s novel *To The Lighthouse* (1927) and T.S. Eliot’s poem *The Waste Land* (1922) were chosen for the comparative analysis.

Comparative literature not only analyzes two different works either from the same country or different countries but also analyzes the literary works from a multidisciplinary perspective focusing upon psychology, history and sociology, etc. “Comparative literature is an intellectual and methodological perspective founded precisely on wide temporal and spatial horizons. It considers literature as a system of simultaneous relations...” (Dominguez et al., 2015, p.136). Hence, the

selected works for the present study can act as a mirror of the year 2020 socially and historically as they are the very examples of the modernist literature that successfully reflect the traumas of the war period. Comparative literature fits well into the idea of psychological mindedness as it encourages individuals to empathize with the thoughts, feelings of others that will result in the awareness of the self (Kefeli, 2000, p.7). Comparative literature therefore, promotes the ability to understand both others and the self and helps the development of an awareness that increases both tolerance and empathy.

In the first week, the pre-service teachers were expected to understand the social and psychological environment of the First World War period both in European and American culture. They focused upon the history of these years and how cultural differences affected the way individuals experienced and responded to the war years. In the second week, we analyzed the modernist movement and literary modernism in British and American Culture. In the third week, we concentrated on psychoanalytic criticism in order to analyze the literary works through a psychological lens. In the fourth week, the pre-service teachers were ready to analyze *To the Lighthouse* from British Literature. In the novel, the story of the Ramsey Family is portrayed, which is the very reflection of the traumas of the World War years in Britain. The family members lose their lives one by one and the happy old days are no longer possible. In the fifth week, we studied the war years from the perspective of American culture and we analyzed the poem *The Waste Land*. While *To the Lighthouse* sheds light upon the life of a family, *The Waste Land* depicts the observation of a narrator in the war years. In the sixth-week we were ready to analyze the texts comparatively and in the final week of the course we had a discussion on the pre-service teachers' takeaways and reflections on the psychological aspects of the texts.

Data collection and Analysis

Although, thematic analysis does not have specific borders and is rarely acknowledged, due to its theoretically-flexible approach, it can be assumed that it has been widely-used as a qualitative analytic method both in psychology and in other fields (Boyatris, 1998; Roulston, 2001). In this study thematic analysis was used, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), to analyze, identify and report the themes within the data. For this study thematic analysis was adopted as it gave the researcher a certain kind of flexibility to access a detailed account of data that provided a rich source for the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It illuminated the similarities and differences among the perspectives of different participants that enabled a useful way for finding out key features of a large data set (King, 2004). Therefore, thematic analysis was regarded as a useful method for the current study as it supported a clear and well-organized final report (King, 2004) that helped the production of trustworthy and insightful findings (Braun& Clarke, 2006).

In relation, a narrative frame was given to the participants (see Appendix) at the end of the six-week module. The narratives were sent through the distant online education platform of the university. In their narratives the participants described their previous experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic, their current feelings, their psychological state, their future expectations and their possible action plans both as an individual and as a pre-service teacher. The data was first familiarized, then the initial codes were generated, the themes were searched and reviewed and finally they were defined and named. The participants not only reflected the psychological and social aspects embedded in the reported experiences but also created links between their past, present, and future experiences. The participants all agreed that the themes the researcher identified were accurate.

Findings

The analysis of the narrative frames written by the participants revealed three overarching themes: self-awareness, empathy, the importance of mental and physical well-being, which are all the important dimensions of the concept of psychological mindedness (Fenigstein, 1997; Beitel, Ferrer, & Cecero, 2005; Le Boutillier & Barry, 2018). Below these themes are discussed with excerpts from the pre-service teachers' narrative frames.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is one of the necessary conditions for psychological mindedness (Fenigstein, 1997). As an awareness of oneself, self-awareness can be defined as a condition in which the whole attention is directed towards the self (Fenigstein, Scheier & Buss, 1975). In relation, the majority of the participants in the study described their inner journeys with the selected literary works as a process of self-awareness. Narrative frames highlighted the positive effects of the comparative analysis of the literary works upon the pre-service teachers to become aware of their feelings, emotions and responses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Student 37 expressed this clearly in the following quotation:

After we had analyzed the literary works comparatively, I could become aware of my repressed feelings. I realized that I had been ignoring my feelings and emotions during these hard times. When I read the story of the Ramsey family I became aware of how I have been afraid of losing my beloved ones. On the other hand, the narrator in the Waste Land helped me to face myself. I understood that anxiety, depression and pessimism I have been feeling is a normal state and I should become aware of them in order to get well.

Another participant (Student 8) indicated:

The comparative analysis of the texts enriched my personal growth journey. The first world war days reflected in the literary texts encouraged me to understand why I have been feeling

so anxious, unhappy and depressed. The little son of the Ramsey family helped me to become more aware of what is happening in my mind. Just like the little child, I have been focusing on making collages during the COVID -19 pandemic days, which I regard as a third-world war. After having read the novel, I realized that cutting images from magazines and making collages are the reflections of my war psychology as I cannot go out freely. On the other hand, the narrator in the Waste Land while walking on the streets of London helped me to face my inner feelings. I realized that I felt the same things while I am walking in my city, but rejected my feelings. I begin to think why I have been denying my feelings and acting as if everything was ok. Now I am ready to confront the situation and look inwards to understand my feelings more.

As noted by the participants, the comparative analysis of the literary works helped them to face their inner feelings as the settings of the works referred to the First World War days. The majority of the pre-service teachers associated the war years with the year 2020 and noted that they became aware of their feelings and emotions during the pandemic period, as Student 30 noted:

While the Ramsey family acted as a projection for me to become aware of my feelings as a family member, the narrator in The Waste Land uncovered how I have been feeling in my city full of fog, despair, empty streets and decay. As a pre-service teacher the online education and my duties were so hard that I realized that I had never taken into consideration my own feelings. I thought that I exaggerated my feelings but the characters in the works helped me to recognize that they are normal in a state of war.

Most of the pre-service teachers associated the First World War years with the COVID-19 pandemic. After reading and discussing the stories of the Ramsey family and the narrator in the poem, Student 22 expressed how she was impressed by the impacts of the comparative analysis; “During the comparative analysis I became aware of how I have been feeling since last year. The analysis of the characters’ psychological state helped me turn to my emotions. I began to examine myself more deeply”.

The majority of the participants indicated that the analysis of the works through a psychological lens promoted a kind of self-awareness among them. As Student 12 mentioned; “The literary works helped me to focus on my emotional states and my desires. I decided to read psychology and history books more. I recognized how my inner feelings are important as the stories of the characters helped me to face my inner thoughts that I have been trying to escape.” In addition, Student 27 underlined; “While I was reading the Waste Land, the narrator forced me to question why I have been feeling depressed or unhappy during 2020. I learned that the narrator in the poem experienced the same traumas in the twentieth century.”

Empathy (Awareness of others)

“We are living in the age of “global culture”” (Güven, 2019, p.66) and the participants considered empathy as an essential component of the new global changes and teaching respectively. The comparative analysis of the selected works not only promoted the pre-service teachers perception of the importance of empathy in social life, but also its significance for teachers, as student 15 highlighted:

I empathized with the Ramsey Family and thought about my own family and life in general. I deeply felt the trauma of the family and associated them with my family during the pandemic I lost family members, too. I faced my traumas while empathizing with them. I deeply understood the narrator in the poem, as he is the very voice of my inner feelings. What impressed me most is my enlightenment about the importance of empathy for a teacher. I should be aware of the feelings of my students and understand them so as to develop a strong relationship with them.

The majority of the participants associated the war years with the 2020 pandemic year as most of them identified 2020 as a different form of war, as Student 37 explained; “I felt as if I were a psychologist listening to the traumas of the war. Next year as a teacher I should be empathic too, otherwise I do not think that I could be a good teacher”. Most of the pre-service teachers mainly associated themselves and their students in the following year with the little child of the Ramsey Family, as exemplified by one of the pre-service teachers (Student 15):

James’s story impressed me a lot. He cuts images from magazines to make a new life as he loses his family. I identify myself with him. I have been under so much pressure during the pandemic that to escape my feelings I keep reading magazines. On the other hand, the narrator of the poem really affected me. While he was walking down the streets I deeply felt his sorrow. The empty streets and the dull city reminded me of my feelings. I need to say that next year the psychology of children will probably be very bad. As a teacher I should empathize with them. The child James and the narrator forced me to see why a teacher should be an empathic person.

The Importance of Mental and Physical Well-Being

In relation to psychological mindedness, the pre-service teachers mentioned the importance of mental and physical well-being of a teacher. The participants’ awareness of their feelings, emotions and thoughts evidently made a contribution to their awareness of the importance of mental and physical well-being especially for a teacher. For instance, on reading the stories of the Ramsey Family and the narrator of the Waste Land, Student 21 indicated:

To be honest, the pandemic year is a time of illness and anxiety. Reading the stories of the characters in both texts forced me to accept my current situation. I have been very intolerant and angry. The traumas of the literary characters helped me to confess that my current psychology is natural, however, should be altered. First, I should improve my mental and physical well-being as a teacher. If not, how can I tolerate my students? or how can I understand them?

In a similar fashion, Student 12 mentioned: “I realized that I should improve my mental and physical well-being because next year I should be ready for my students. Also, I decided to start doing exercise to improve my physical health too”. It can be asserted that the majority of the pre-service teachers became aware of the importance of mental and physical well-being both as an individual and mainly as a teacher, as Student 12 described:

Since last year I have been very depressed and stressed. The stories of the characters from different cultures made me confront my feelings. I decided to awaken because I don't have the luxury of starting my professional life in such a depressive mood. I cannot imagine having such a depressed teacher. I promised myself to improve my mental well-being immediately. I do not want to have regrets like Mr. Ramsey.

The data indicated that the majority of the participants associated their current moods with their professional lives, as Student 10 noted; “ I saw that the aftermath of war is not easy, but I decided to do something for myself. If these feelings are normal I can change them. Both physically and mentally I should improve my current situation”. It might not be misleading to say that the stories of the characters in the texts assisted the pre-service teachers to face up to their current situations and encouraged them to create solutions. For instance, Student 19 noted: “The stories really helped me to alter my perceptions about my situation. I will be a teacher next year; I will not have the luxury to stay at home like this. I decided to lose weight and try to face my problems immediately.”

Discussion and Implications

A new life has begun for billions of people since 2020. Teacher education, as an integral part of human life is also affected by the pandemic (Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Ellis, Alonzo, & Nguyen, 2020; Cutri & Mena, 2020; Flores & Swennen, 2020) and teachers worldwide have been facing numerous changes (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Apparently, the virus has changed the way we live, learn, study and work. Last but not the least, the virus has changed how we feel. It is not difficult to surmise that the general well-being of teachers has become much more important than before. In relation, developing psychological mindedness of pre-service teachers can be a powerful tool to promote self-aware, empathic, and physically and psychologically healthy teachers.

Psychological mindedness has been the subject of various studies and theorists have devoted considerable attention to it (Applebaum, 1973; Hall, 1992; Bagby, Parker & Taylor 1994; Nyklíček & Denollet, 2009; Rai et al., 2015, Şahin & Yeniçeri, 2015). PM not only promotes the self-awareness of an individual but also promotes the development of the ability to understand and analyze the feelings of others (Farber, 1985). Psychological mindedness is seen as a trait that facilitates both a healthy personality structure and a person's adaptation to new environments (Roxas & Glenwick, 2014) such as the one we have been experiencing since 2020. In this study, Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* and T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* from modernist literature were analyzed comparatively. The findings of the study indicated that the comparative analysis of the literary works encouraged the participants to develop psychological mindedness which assisted them to develop a sense of self-awareness, empathy and a realization of the importance of well-being, especially for a teacher as an integral part of PM.

The data from the participant students' narrative frames revealed that they developed psychological mindedness in three ways. First, they developed a sense of self-awareness, which is an integral part of psychological mindedness (Applebaum, 1973) as PM involves awareness of emotions of oneself and others (Beitel, Ferrer & Cecero, 2005, p.739; Guy & Brown, 1992). Furthermore, the majority of the participants mentioned that the comparative analysis of the stories revealed their repressed feelings and emotions and encouraged them to face them. As literature is a way to learn about life, it evidently supports both personal growth and the maturation process of the readers (Aerila & Merisuo-Storm, 2017). The pre-service teachers noted that after having read the stories comparatively they became aware of how they were feeling. This indicated that they questioned how they felt during the COVID-19 pandemic and became aware of the social and psychological forces that affected them. That kind of a self-awareness is related to the development of their psychological mindedness that involves an awareness of psychological processes which can be identified as "the disposition to reflect upon the meaning and motivation of behavior, thoughts, and feelings of oneself and others" (Farber, 1985, p.170). The analysis of the literary works encouraged the participants to understand the psychological processes in themselves and others. While preservice teachers practice self-awareness, they also develop empathy (McAllister & Irvine, 2002).

It can be assumed that "becoming a teacher is an emotionally charged journey" (Anttila et al., 2016, p.466) and the comparative analysis of the literary texts enabled the majority of the participants to define empathy as an essential component for a teacher especially during the pandemic. "Empathy in the broadest sense refers to the reactions of one individual to the observed experiences of another" (Davis, 1983, p.113) and identified by the participants as a very crucial competence for today's teachers. As "empathy provides access to the data of interest to a psychologically-minded person, i.e., the thoughts and feelings of others" (Beitel, Ferrer & Cecero, 2005, p.742), it is regarded as very important by the participants. While they generally identified the story of the Ramsey Family with

their families, they associated themselves directly with the narrator in the *Waste Land*. Most of the participants reported that their ability to empathize with other people had been developed via reading the stories of Woolf and Eliot. The majority of the participants associated empathy as a healthy personality construct that is essential especially for a teacher. The participants underlined that an emphatic teacher can seek to understand the beliefs and personal values of their students. (Warren, 2018). They mentioned that understanding others and especially their students is a crucial element for them. As mentioned by Conte & Ratto (1997), PM is a powerful tool in life that helps individuals to develop the ability to establish peaceful and healthy relationships. Scientific literature indicates that psychologically-minded people have more higher self-awareness. As underlined by Conte Buckley, Ficard, & Karasu (1995), high psychological mindedness is significantly associated with ego strength and mastery competence (p.251). That is the reason why the participants defined being empathic as one of the prominent issues of teacher education nowadays. Moreover, the student teachers also talked of empathizing with their students next year and mentioned empathy as an essential component of the classroom. Developing students' social-emotional competencies can help them to cope with stress and other problems. Therefore, the training of teachers in competencies is a vital element to improve the quality of education (Arrebola et al., 2017). The development of self-awareness of the participants promoted the importance of an empathy-focused teacher as most of the participants indicated that understanding others will lead to better student-teacher relationships. In addition to self-awareness and empathy another concept that the participants underlined is the importance of well-being of a teacher. PM is positively related to mental well-being therefore health of an individual as a high degree of PM promotes a general well-being of an individual (Beitel & Cecero, 2003; Beitel, Ferrer & Cecero, 2005). Their self-awareness not only promoted an awareness of the importance of the empathic teacher but also the importance of the well-being of a teacher, which are all related to PM.

Most of the pre-service teachers underlined that the comparative analysis of the tales promoted an awareness of the importance of mental and physical well-being of a teacher and they identified the stories as mirrors that reflected their current degree of their well-being. Becoming aware of their negative emotions evidently lead them to question the possible ways to develop positive ones, especially since 2020 and “this diminished and often debilitating loss of hope and well-being is a reason for making well-being a key aspect of teacher education programs” (McCallum & Price, 2010, p.22) as the majority of the participants underlined fatigue, depression, anxiety as the main features of their daily lives. In relation, PM contributed an awareness of the feelings of others which lead to the development of empathy - one of the components of PM, and that kind of a quality “may be considered a trait which has at its core the disposition to reflect upon the meaning and motivation of behavior, thoughts, and feelings of oneself and others” (Farber, 1985, p.170). The comparative analysis of the selected works encouraged the participants to associate the First World War years in the selected works with the COVID-19 pandemic and understand how individuals from other cultures

experienced similar events. Self-awareness, empathy, and the importance of teacher's well-being are the components of PM that calls for taking action to enhance both physical and mental well-being. As PM has been associated with reduced personal distress (Beitel, Ferrer, & Cecero, 2005), awareness of the importance of well-being for a teacher is another finding of the study.

This study aims to use comparative literature to investigate how pre-service teachers' comparative analysis of the selected literary works in a university classroom influenced their development of self-awareness, empathy and the importance of well-being as key components of psychological mindedness. In particular during the COVID-19 pandemic, such mediation affords pre-service teachers to become aware of their own feelings and emotions and those of others in addition to becoming aware of the importance of well-being for a teacher. As the findings of the study reveal, developing pre-service teachers' socio-emotional competencies enhances their ability to cope with the negative impacts of social life. The study suggests several implications for teacher educators who define psychological mindedness (PM) as an essential component of pre-service teacher education programs. A course module which provides the comparative analysis of literary works from different cultures can contribute to the development of psychologically-minded pre-service teachers by preparing them to face major global changes such as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar modules can be integrated into pre-service education programs so that teachers can be both mentally and physically prepared for the classroom and social life.

Limitations

English Language Teaching Programs include courses that develop social, emotional, psychological and intercultural competencies of pre-service teachers. With its qualitative design, the aim of the current study was not to make hasty generalizations about pre-service teachers or comparative literature or not to seek absolute truths about psychological mindedness. The current study aims to shed light upon different perspectives on comparative literature and psychological mindedness that can help the researchers to gain insight into how these two concepts promote general well-being of pre-service teachers especially during the COVID-19 pandemic or for the other forthcoming disasters. Therefore, the study aims to postulate an exemplary model for the literature courses in English Language Teacher Training Programs. The available data could be interpreted or analyzed differently by other researchers. However, in order to increase the validity and credibility of the findings, several measures were taken.

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Appendix (Narrative Frame Prompts)

Your story / Part I

Since 2020 as an individual my psychology.....

This is because.....

Your story / Part II

The social and historical analysis of the Age of Modernism helped me to realize the psychological aspects of 2020 in certain ways such as;.....

Your story/ Part 3

As an individual, the Comparative analysis of the To The Lighthouse and The Waste Land encouraged me to become aware of....

Your story/ Part 4

As a pre-service teacher, the Comparative analysis of the To The Lighthouse and The Waste Land encouraged me to become aware of.....

Your story/ Part 5

I think it could be better if teacher education encapsulates..... This is the end of my story

Your story/ Part 6

If you wish, please tell me another story about your experiences in Selections from British Literature

Course in relation with your personal developments in history and psychology....