

The Image of the Student in Teacher Perceptions: a Study on Systemic Biases in Educational Practice

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Abstract

This study explores the teacher's conception of the student as a critical factor shaping the learning environment. Adopting a qualitative digital research design, this research applies thematic analysis to publicly available, anonymous discussions from online professional communities of educators. The analysis reveals that the teacher, not the student, constitutes the central and dominant cognitive block in professional discourse. Student-related themes become relevant primarily in relation to their impact on the teacher. The findings point to a pervasive meta-narrative where educators frame students through three distinct, yet interconnected, deficit-based archetypes: the "entitled," the "abandoned," and the "traumatized" student. The "entitled" student is characterized as disrespectful and unmotivated, a product of a system, parents, and media that have diminished teacher authority. The "abandoned" student is seen as neglected by overworked parents and an impersonal educational system, left unsupervised in the digital world and unprepared for their future. Finally, the "traumatized" student is depicted as suffering from mental health issues and aggression stemming from unstable families and harmful online content. Crucially, the causal factors for these student deficiencies are consistently externalized onto parents, systemic policies, and broad societal decay. The striking absence of the "successful student" in these narratives reinforces this problem-focused worldview. The study concludes that these online communities function as echo chambers, solidifying a teacher-centric meta-narrative that positions the educator as a protagonist struggling against insurmountable external forces. This necessitates a fundamental shift in professional development, moving beyond practical skills to deconstructing these deeply embedded belief systems and fostering a more student-centered, asset-based pedagogy.

Keywords: Student Archetypes, Teacher Perception, Thematic Analysis, Meta-Narrative, Social Media Research, Deficit Thinking