Developing a Questionnaire to Assess Self-Efficacy in the Teaching Profession

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Article Info	Abstract
	In Japan, school teachers experience mental health issues, leading to absences or leave from their duties. While extended working hours significantly contribute to this problem, diminished self-esteem has emerged as the primary causal factor. Reduced self-esteem is frequently correlated with diminished self-efficacy across multiple facets of teaching. Consequently, fostering self-efficacy in the teaching profession is essential for preventing health-related problems. In this regard, early intervention among students aspiring to become school teachers is crucial for prevention. This study aimed to develop a self-efficacy questionnaire tailored for students pursuing teaching careers, as effective preventive interventions require scales to evaluate self-efficacy. Following the development of an original questionnaire with both content and face validity, a web-based survey was administered to the participants via a Japanese survey company. The analysis included 422 participants (176 males and 246 females). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses confirmed factorial validity, identifying three distinct factors: collaboration with others, student guidance, and classroom and teaching management. Additionally, a higher-order factor denoting global self-efficacy in the profession emerged from the total scores of these three factors. Internal consistency was observed across all subscales and the global scale, with scores demonstrating an undistorted distribution, indicative of a normal distribution. The study concludes with a discussion of its limitations and suggestions for future research. This questionnaire could facilitate the implementation of diverse interventions aimed at promoting teachers' well-being and adaptability.

Introduction

The Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018 (TALIS 2018) presents findings indicating unfavorable working conditions within a cohort of school teachers in Japan compared to other participating nations (OECD, 2019). Notably, these conditions encompassed the longest recorded working hours among Japanese teachers. Furthermore, the survey revealed that the level of self-efficacy among Japanese teachers, pertaining to their aptitude in instructing and mentoring students, was the lowest. Self-efficacy is an individual's judgement of personal competence in executing specific behaviors (Bandura, 1997). This discovery implies that school teachers in Japan, when engaged in endeavors related to teaching and student guidance, are inclined to anticipate potential

shortcomings, consequently leading to heightened stress levels in such pursuits.

In general, a diminished sense of self-efficacy among school teachers can result in elevated stress levels (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). This cause-effect relationship is foreseeable, stemming from their perception of an inability to fulfill their professional objectives and obligations. In Japan, there has been a recent surge in the number of teachers taking leaves of absence owing to mental health concerns. Numerous previous studies have consistently demonstrated a connection between low self-efficacy and teacher burnout (Kim & Burić, 2020; Sokmen & Killic, 2019). Stress and burnout experienced by teachers with low self-efficacy are highly likely to be significant contributing factors to mental health issues that require extended leave of absence from work.

Although TALIS 2018 did not yield specific findings concerning teachers' self-esteem, it is anticipated that teachers' self-esteem is also likely to be low because self-esteem and self-efficacy are positively correlated (Bayani & Baghery, 2020; Bayani et al., 2013). It has been posited that diminished self-esteem exacerbates health-related issues and impairs adaptability across various domains of teaching and student guidance by reducing self-efficacy. Accordingly, it is imperative to assess Japanese teachers' self-efficacy and self-esteem to enhance their mental well-being. In this study, we concentrated on methods for quantifying self-efficacy, which could potentially serve as an immediate catalyst for mental health issues or the necessity for extended leave from work.

Currently, a limited number of questionnaires aimed at assessing self-efficacy in the teaching profession are available. Notable examples include the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarz et al., 1999), Teaching Efficacy Scale (Yu et al., 1995), and Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The scales encompass diverse facets of self-efficacy. The Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale evaluates teachers' job accomplishments, skill development, social interactions with students, and ability to cope with job stress. The Teaching Efficacy Scale assesses teachers' personal teaching efficacy for students with difficulties. Finally, the TSES measures teachers' efficacy in terms of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement.In Japan, Yajima (2010) developed the Scale for Teacher Self-Efficacy, which comprises three distinct subscales: collaboration, educational consultation, and general self-efficacy. It is worth noting that the majority of previously developed teachers' self-efficacy scales encompass self-assessment across a range of similar and dissimilar dimensions. These dimensions appear to have been derived from commonly held general beliefs rather than from empirical evidence or established theories.

Although several measures exist for evaluating self-efficacy among teachers, to the best of our knowledge, no questionnaire has been specifically designed to assess the self-efficacy of university students pursuing teacher training. Enhancing self-efficacy among active teachers can be challenging as they are often preoccupied with various school-related responsibilities, leading to high levels of daily stress. Therefore, it is expected that bolstering self-efficacy among students aspiring to become teachers will be highly beneficial. If these students maintain elevated self-efficacy through various teaching activities, they may be less susceptible to mental health issues. To fulfill this objective, a questionnaire designed to gauge students' self-efficacy is essential, as it serves as a foundational tool for developing and implementing programs aimed at enhancing self-efficacy. Given these circumstances and requirements, this study aimed to create a questionnaire specifically tailored to assess self-

efficacy in the teaching profession among Japanese students aspiring to become school teachers.

Method

Participants and Ethics

A web-based survey was administered to registered participants affiliated with a Japanese company. Specifically, the survey targeted individuals aspiring to pursue careers as school teachers. Notably, individuals who provided incorrect responses to the control questions, designed to assess the sincerity of their response, or those who did not commit to answering earnestly before participation were excluded from the analysis. A total of 137 records were eliminated, resulting in a final sample of 422 respondents (176 males, 246 females). The study cohort included both undergraduate and graduate students with an average age of 20.93 years ($SD = 1.77$), spanning an age range of 18–29 years. All participants participated anonymously in the survey and provided explicit consent to participate in the study. No personally identifiable information was collected during the data collection to ensure participant confidentiality. Notably, while the participant pool in this study overlapped that of Yamasaki and Uchida (2023), the current investigation was conducted independently, pursuing distinct research objectives after completing the aforementioned survey.

Measures

The original version of the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire in the Teaching Profession (SEQ-TP) was developed to assess the self-efficacy in the teaching profession of students aspiring to pursue careers as school teachers. Initially, two psychologists well-versed in the construct of self-efficacy and familiar with the Japanese school teacher context collaborated in the development process to generate a set of 26 questions that underwent rigorous content and face validation. These questions were meticulously developed, considering the various facets of teachers' responsibilities, including classroom management, student guidance, instructional execution, and collaborative interactions with peers, administrative staff, and parents. Factorial analyses were performed to identify the factors included in the questionnaire. All items are listed in Table 1. The items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "not true at all" to 7 = "very true"). In the instructions, participants were asked to think about themselves, imagining that they were currently working in schools.

In the Internet questionnaire survey, various measures were implemented to assess participants' commitment to providing earnest responses and enhancing the overall quality of the survey data. At the outset of the survey, the participants were asked to take an oath to respond earnestly. Immediately following these instructions, an item designed as an instructional manipulation check was incorporated to ascertain whether the participants had read the survey instructions attentively. This specific item explicitly instructed participants not to select any response option as their answer. Furthermore, within the questionnaire, two directed questions were included and presented on a 7-point Likert scale, necessitating participants to provide the indicated responses. If participants failed to provide agreement or accurate responses to these designated questions, their data were excluded from the analysis as they were considered unreliable for the study.

Table 1. Items in the SEQ-TP

1. I can prevent class disruptions in my homeroom class.

2. I can educate the bullies not to engage in bullying behavior.

3. I can manage my time effectively to be well-prepared for the class.

4. I can collaborate with other teachers and engage in education together.

5. If necessary, I can consult with parents and cooperate with them as well.

6. I can create a classroom where all students can enjoy and participate.

7. I can educate children consulting closely with school administrators (principal, vice-principal, etc.).

8. I can make classes better finding and revising points for improvement. *

9. I can get along with other teachers without any trouble.

10. I am proactive in conducting and participating in research lessons, which helps enhance my teaching abilities.

11. If a student becomes truant, I can identify the cause.

12. I can create a classroom where bullying is not tolerated and does not occur.

13. In class, I can devise speech and materials in a way that sparks children's curiosity and interest.

14. If I encounter any difficulties with children, I can consult with other teachers instead of trying to handle them alone.

15. I can create a classroom where children who need support can also integrate and blend in together.

16. I can identify children who are experiencing abuse without delay.

17. I can create a classroom that empathizes with struggling peers.

18. I can effectively protect bullying victims.

19. I can conduct classes taking into consideration the varying levels of understanding among individual children.

20. I can engage in casual conversations and take breaks with other teachers.

21. I can handle non-attending students effectively.

22. I can create a classroom where everyone cooperates.

23. I can consult with other teachers or seek their assistance for things I don't understand or struggle with.

24. In order to achieve inclusive education where children in need of support also participate, various modifications can be made in classes.

25. If necessary, I can consult with school administrators (such as the principal or vice principal) and, after consulting, coordinate with the police or hospitals.

26. I can create a classroom that values each individual.

* deleted item

Procedure and Data Analyses

The survey research firm began utilizing their aggregated participant pool. Following the acquisition of the requisite dataset (exceeding 400 participants), the survey was concluded. The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25 and Amos version 25. While analyzing the data, we first confirmed that the items showed neither ceiling (or floor) effects nor high correlations with each other. Following this preliminary

assessment, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted, succeeded by an examination of internal consistency and score distribution.

Results

Examination of Ceiling and Floor Effects and Extremely High Correlations

Initially, by examining the distribution of each item on a scale from 1 to 7, we confirmed the absence of ceiling and floor effects. Subsequently, an assessment was performed to determine the presence of excessively high correlations among the items, revealing that no item exhibited correlations surpassing .70 with others. Consequently, no items were excluded from the analyses based on these findings.

Exploratory Factor Analyses and Examination of Internal Consistency

Exploratory factor analyses were conducted on the 26 SEQ-TP items using the maximum-likelihood method. Examination of eigenvalue shifts confirmed the presence of three factors within this scale. The initial six eigenvalues were 12.153, 1.724, 1.094, .822, .792, and .758, indicating that the first three factors surpassed the value of 1.0. The factor loadings, communalities, and contribution rates are detailed in Table 2, revealing that Factors 1, 2, and 3 encompassed eight, eight, and nine items, respectively, exhibiting high factor loadings (> .400). Conversely, these items demonstrated low loadings for other factors. For this scale, only Item 8 did not show any factor loadings over .400, including relatively and similarly high loadings for Factors 1 and 3. Consequently, Item 8 was excluded from the analysis because of its inability to align with any of the identified factors.

Table 2. Factor Loadings, Communalities, and Contribution Ratio of the Factor

Item No.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
4	.949	.087	-.256	.481
14	.657	-.102	.145	.584
23	.646	-.174	.311	.402
5	.589	.102	.088	.687
7	.495	.102	.183	.528
20	.491	-.095	.279	.527
9	.473	.228	-.037	.511
10	.449	.076	.182	.474
2	.069	.819	-.140	.372
1	-.021	.783	-.112	.423
12	.031	.675	.096	.472
11	-.017	.623	.099	.590
16	-.064	.605	.208	.497
3	.223	.553	-.103	.498
21	-.179	.494	.353	.513
6	.200	.418	.191	.529

Item No.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
19	.015	-.022	.727	.686
26	.101	-.014	.701	.560
25	.132	-.129	.684	.521
17	.036	.228	.619	.433
18	-.120	.313	.577	.452
24	.249	-.002	.529	.587
13	.220	.064	.478	.622
15	.102	.234	.446	.532
22	.151	.261	.433	.485
8	.344	.054	.353	.590
	Cumulative contribution ratio			57.58 %

Table 3 illustrates the factor loadings, communalities, and contribution rates following the removal of Item 8. While the order of the factors changed, the fundamental structure comprising eight, eight, and nine items with substantial loadings remained unchanged. Upon reviewing item content, the factors were denoted as "collaboration with others," "student guidance," and "classroom and teaching management" for Factors 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

Table 3. Factor Loadings, Communalities, and Contribution Ratio of the Factor after Deleting Item No. 8

Item No.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
2	.819	.065	-.137	.481
1	.779	-.021	-.107	.583
12	.667	.032	.104	.403
11	.626	-.020	.098	.686
16	.601	-.065	.213	.526
3	.558	.219	-.104	.528
21	.490	-.180	.358	.501
6	.418	.198	.194	.371
4	.095	.938	-.249	.414
14	-.108	.660	.154	.473
23	-.181	.653	.318	.589
5	.111	.581	.088	.496
20	-.101	.494	.287	.506
7	.118	.482	.176	.512
9	.232	.465	-.034	.529
10	.092	.438	.174	.684
19	-.024	.018	.727	.564
26	-.003	.104	.687	.522

Item No.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
25	-.127	.135	.681	.440
17	.230	.038	.615	.454
18	.305	-.117	.584	.587
24	-.005	.252	.531	.633
13	.067	.220	.475	.535
15	.236	.102	.444	.485
22	.260	.154	.432	.582
	Cumulative contribution ratio			57.97 %

Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was employed to evaluate the goodness of fit of the three-factor scale structure. Additionally, a higher-order factor representing "self-efficacy in the teaching profession" was established, as depicted in Figure 1. In this higher-order factor analysis, the fit indices indicated a good model fit (.910, .878, .948, and .055 for GFI, AGFI, CFI, and RMSEA, respectively). All path coefficients from the latent variable to each observed variable were statistically significant and positive, ranging from .63 to .85. These findings suggest that the scale comprises a higher-order factor model, enabling the calculation of scores for the three individual factors, as well as a composite score reflecting overall self-efficacy in the teaching profession.
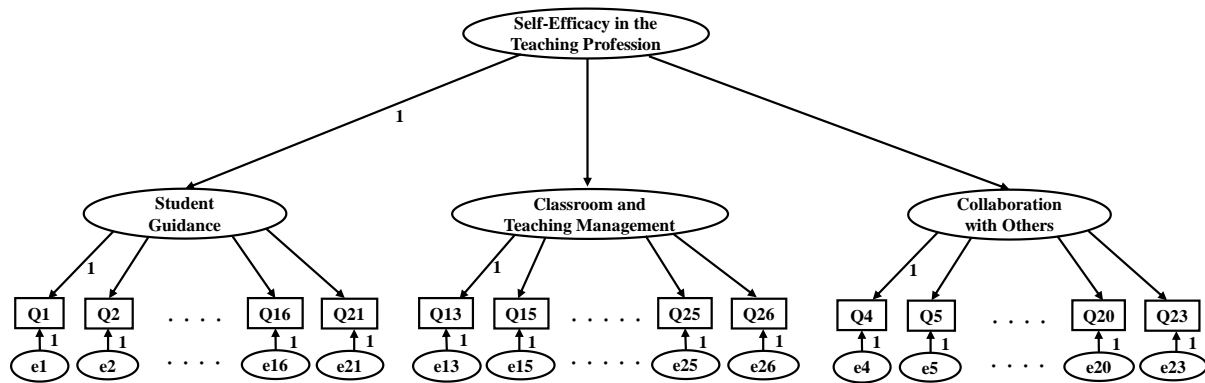

Figure 1. Higher-Order Factorial Diagram of the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire in the Teaching Profession

Score Distribution

A normal distribution of scores was required when conducting parametric statistics. Examination of score distributions (see Figure 2) revealed the kurtosis and skewness values as follows: -.198 and .845 for student guidance, -.339 and .467 for classroom and teaching management, -.427 and .922 for collaboration with others, and -.195 and .629 for self-efficacy in the teaching profession, respectively. The application of Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests to assess the normal distribution yielded results of .051 ($p < .01$), .040 ($p > .10$), .072 ($p < .01$), and .040 ($p > .10$) for student guidance, classroom and teaching management, collaboration with others, and overall self-efficacy in the teaching profession, respectively. Although the distributions of student guidance and

collaboration with others were not normally distributed in terms of statistics, owing to the large sample size, it is suggested that the distributions were not substantially different from normal, given that their kurtosis and skewness scores were close to zero.
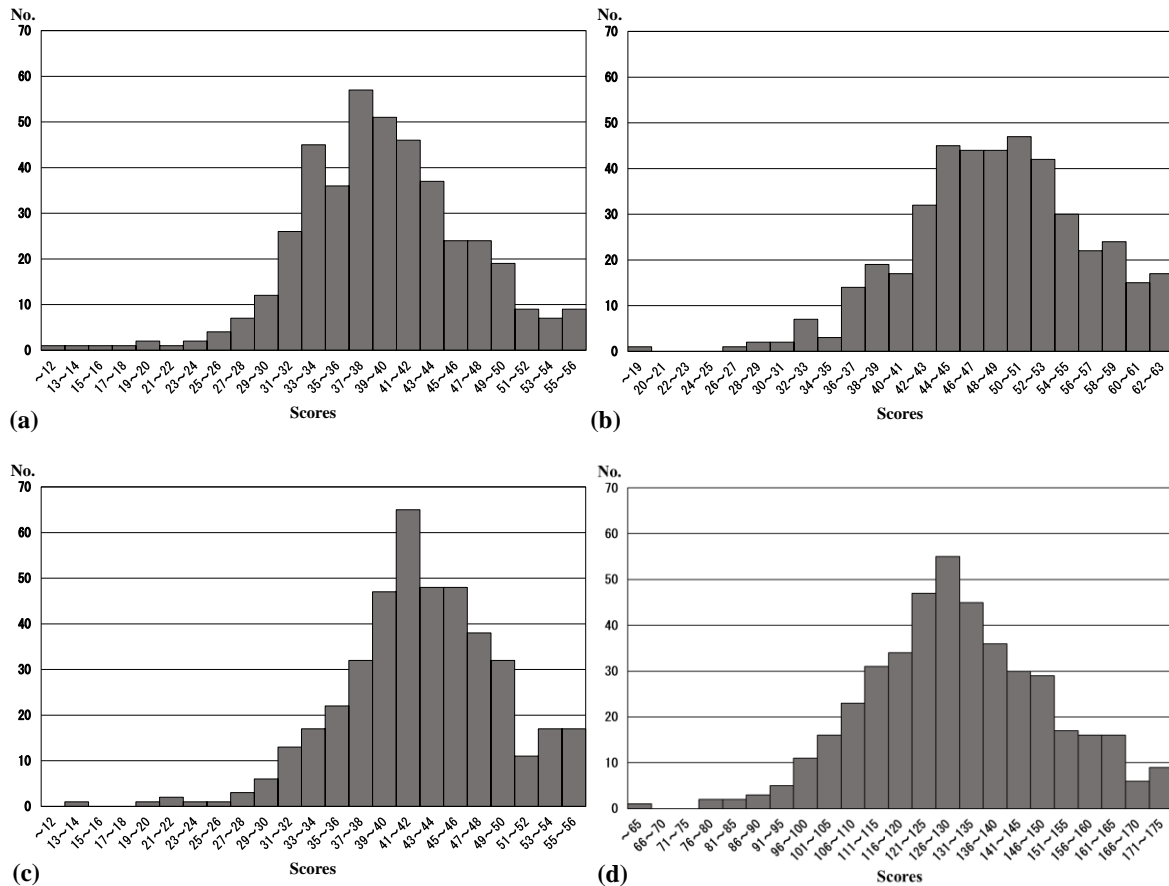
Figure 2. Score Distributions of Each of the Three Subscales and Global Scale: (a) Student Guidance, (b) Classroom and Teaching Management, (c) Collaboration with Others, and (d) Self-Efficacy in the Teaching Profession

Discussion

In this study, we developed a self-efficacy scale for university students aspiring to become school teachers. This scale comprised three subscales: student guidance, classroom and teaching management, and collaboration with others. Furthermore, a higher-order factor, termed "self-efficacy in the teaching profession," was identified, representing the collective scores of the three subscales. Each subscale was assessed using a 7-point Likert scale. Scores ranged from 8 to 56 for student guidance and collaboration with others and from 9 to 63 for classroom and teaching management. The overall self-efficacy scale in the teaching profession ranged from 25 to 175. The structure of the scale was established through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, thereby affirming its factorial validity.

Subscales assessing self-efficacy in the teaching profession have not yet been definitively established. Proficiency

in student guidance, classroom management, and teaching organization is pivotal for educators. Self-efficacy within these domains is imperative for facilitating effective instruction and guidance for students. Collaborative engagement with various stakeholders, including school management, fellow educators, and guardians, is critical for teachers. In the absence of effective collaboration with these entities, the overall effectiveness of teachers' efforts within educational institutions is compromised. The scale was confirmed to have content and factorial validity, internal consistency, and minimally distorted scoring distributions. Nevertheless, the construct validity remained unverified in this study, necessitating further investigation in future research endeavors. As stated in the Introduction, an increasing number of Japanese school teachers are succumbing to mental illness, necessitating sick leave and resignations from their positions. While various factors contribute to this phenomenon, a prominent one is low self-efficacy in the teaching profession. Poor working conditions and environments may lead to low self-efficacy. Nonetheless, given the inherent difficulty in swiftly altering these conditions and environments within Japanese schools, a more viable approach involves bolstering self-efficacy through teachers' proactive engagement in effective teaching practices.

To prevent mental or health problems among teachers in schools, certain attempts must be made by university students aspiring to become teachers. This scale can be used to evaluate self-efficacy in the teaching profession. After clarifying the level of students' self-efficacy, interventions can be implemented effectively. Thereafter, the effectiveness of the intervention is assessed using this scale. If the effectiveness is low, the intervention will be modified for further implementation. Thus, the scale is utilized to implement and improve intervention programs that evaluate self-efficacy at the necessary stages. Moreover, although this scale is applicable to students, it is also applicable to active teachers by changing their instruction. Therefore, using this scale, we can assess self-efficacy in the teaching profession from future to active teachers.

Finally, future research directions should be emphasized, especially in light of recent findings on self-esteem, which, as discussed in the Introduction, is closely linked to self-efficacy. Recent studies have identified two distinct types of self-esteem (Deci & Ryan, 1995; Kernis, 2003): adaptive, healthy self-esteem, which leads to positive outcomes, and non-adaptive, unhealthy self-esteem, which leads to negative outcomes. Given the association between self-efficacy and self-esteem, it is important to explore whether a similar distinction can be applied to self-efficacy. Specifically, Deci and Ryan (1995) distinguish between "true self-esteem" and "contingent self-esteem." True self-esteem is characterized by intrinsic satisfaction and remains relatively stable, whereas contingent self-esteem fluctuates based on external achievements or standards (Moller et al., 2006). A similar distinction could potentially be made within the concept of self-efficacy.

Another critical area for future research on self-esteem is the unresolved causal relationship between global and domain-specific self-esteem (e.g., Dapp et al., 2023; Rentzsch & Schröbe-Abe, 2022). Despite extensive investigation over time, a definitive conclusion has yet to be reached. Understanding this causal relationship is crucial for improving interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem, as it informs the design and implementation of strategies that integrate both global and domain-specific aspects. Although self-efficacy is typically domain-specific, there may be varying levels of specificity within the same domain. In other words, even within a single domain, it may be necessary to consider both global and more narrowly defined aspects of self-efficacy.

In recent years, Japanese schools have encountered many problems with teachers and students. Because of these problems, they suffer from mental problems or illnesses that make them apart from school. One of the most pressing recent issues in Japanese schools is school refusal. The number of students refusing to attend school has been steadily increasing in recent years (MEXT, 2023). School refusal, where students are either unable or unwilling to attend school, places significant stress on teachers, whose primary responsibilities involve directly teaching and guiding students in the school environment. This stress can negatively impact teachers' self-esteem and self-efficacy, leading to a decline in their motivation to teach and support students. The rise in school refusal may indicate that the current Japanese school system is not adequately adapted to meet the demands of modern society (Yamasaki, 2022). Schools should be enjoyable for both students and teachers. If teachers experience stress, students will also experience it, and vice versa. We emphasize that schools are places in which students academically study for their future. Thus, schools include stressful environments. What current society requires of students is not the same as in the past. It requires them to think creatively and esteem individuality. If teachers resume high self-efficacy and self-esteem, they will again think about how their students should be taught.

Conclusion

The current study developed a questionnaire to measure self-efficacy in the teaching profession: the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire in the Teaching Profession (SEQ-TP). The questionnaire was administered to university students seeking to become school teachers. It was standardized as follows: (1) the items showed neither ceiling nor floor effects and did not have extremely high correlations with each other; (2) this scale consisted of three subscales and an overall scale, which were confirmed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses; (3) all scales included high internal consistency shown using alpha coefficients; and (4) the distributions of the scores were not considerably different from the normal distribution. The subscales were "collaboration with others" (eight items, scores ranging from 8 to 56), "student guidance" (eight items, scores ranging from 8 to 56), "classroom and teaching management" (nine items, scores ranging from 9 to 63), and "overall self-efficacy in the teaching profession" (twenty-five items, scores ranging from 25 to 175). The scale can be applied to active school teachers by changing the instructions. Since many teachers have recently been leaving school because of poor mental health, this scale will help examine their mental health and develop intervention or prevention programs to enhance their health and adaptation in terms of professional self-efficacy.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix. The structure of the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire in the Teaching Profession (SEQ-TP)

*The items are rated on a 7-poing Likert scale (1 = "not true at all" to 7 = "very true").

Student Guidance (comprising eight items, with scores ranging from 8 to 56)

1. I can prevent class disruptions in my homeroom class.

2. I can educate the bullies not to engage in bullying behavior.

3. I can manage my time effectively to be well-prepared for the class.

6. I can create a classroom where all students can enjoy and participate.

11. If a student becomes truant, I can identify the cause.

12. I can create a classroom where bullying is not tolerated and does not occur.

16. I can identify children who are experiencing abuse without delay.

21. I can handle non-attending students effectively.

Classroom and Teaching Management (comprising nine items, with scores ranging from 9 to 63)

13. In class, I can devise speech and materials in a way that sparks children's curiosity and interest.

15. I can create a classroom where children who need support can also integrate and blend in together.

17. I can create a classroom that empathizes with struggling peers.

18. I can effectively protect bullying victims.

19. I can conduct classes taking into consideration the varying levels of understanding among individual children.

22. I can create a classroom where everyone cooperates.

24. In order to achieve inclusive education where children in need of support also participate, various modifications can be made in classes.

25. If necessary, I can consult with school administrators (such as the principal or vice principal) and, after consulting, coordinate with the police or hospitals.

26. I can create a classroom that values each individual.

Collaboration with Others (comprising eight items, with scores ranging from 8 to 56)

4. I can collaborate with other teachers and engage in education together.

5. If necessary, I can consult with parents and cooperate with them as well.

7. I can educate children consulting closely with school administrators (principal, vice-principal, etc.).

9. I can get along with other teachers without any trouble.

10. I am proactive in conducting and participating in research lessons, which helps enhance my teaching abilities.

14. If I encounter any difficulties with children, I can consult with other teachers instead of trying to handle them alone.

20. I can engage in casual conversations and take breaks with other teachers.

23. I can consult with other teachers or seek their assistance for things I don't understand or struggle with.

The total score, which ranges from 25 to 175, is indicative of "Self-Efficacy in the Teaching Profession."