Summary and Abbreviated Outline of the Dissertation

Grieger, M. (2022). ***Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Prospective and In-Service Teachers for Teaching Gesellschaftslehre: Measurement – Characteristics – Prediction*****. Empirische Forschung in den gesellschaftswissenschaftlichen Fachdidaktiken. Wiesbaden: Springer.**

Self-efficacy beliefs are defined as the conviction of being able to overcome new or challenging situations based on one's own capabilities. They are an integral part of teachers' professional competencies. Interdisciplinary subjects present teachers with said difficult didactical challenges. The curriculum at German comprehensive schools in Lower Saxony, Hessen, North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate comprises the interdisciplinary subject *Gesellschaftslehre* (comparable to *Social Studies* in the U.S.) up to sixth form (Grade 10 in the U.S.) instead of the individual subjects Civic Education, History and Geography. Commonly, teachers are required to teach the subject mostly out-of-field. Whether they actually feel confident doing so, has thus far not been ascertained.

It was the aim of this PhD project to develop the first instrument to measure didactical self-efficacy beliefs of prospective *Gesellschaftslehre* teachers. At the outset, the questionnaire was tested by experienced student teachers (n = 6) using the think-aloud method. This was followed by a pilot study in 2017 involving (un)dergraduate student teachers and student teachers having passed the first state examination (n = 112). By means of exploratory factor analysis, the underlying model of pedagogical content knowledge was reproduced satisfactorily by the data (KMO = .737; Bartlett = $p < .001$; Ø communalities = .674; factor loadings = .300–.850; α = .727–.911). Ten of twelve anticipated factors were extracted. In addition, a subject-specific factor emerged for Civic Education, History and Geography, respectively.

Overall, the didactical self-efficacy beliefs of prospective teachers are distinctly positive – at their highest among student teachers having passed the first state examination and at their lowest among undergraduate students holding no bachelor's degree. Male prospective teachers believe their subjective content knowledge, female prospective teachers parts of their didactical self-efficacy to be superior. Experienced in-service *Gesellschaftslehre* teachers (n = 18) were then asked to evaluate relevant curricular contents in order to validate the scales of subjective content knowledge for the main study.

The main study took place at Lower Saxonian universities in 2018, utilising both *paper-and-pencil* (n = 331) as well as online questionnaires (n = 116). Through confirmatory factor

analysis, the factor structure of the measurement instrument and its additional three subject-specific factors was confirmed ($x^2 = 3821.210$; $p < .001$; $df = 2298$; $x^2/df = 1.663$; RMSEA = .039; C.I. 90 % = .037–.042; CFI = .949; TLI = .947; WRMR = 1.317). Substantial factor correlations ($r = .287–.781$), good internal consistency ($\alpha = .752–.923$) and convincing convergent validity ($r = .613$) underscore the model fit. Scalar or higher invariance is present for almost all scales, where mean comparisons between different groups – men/women, PAPI/online, Political Science/History/Geography, Bachelor/Master/teacher – were calculated.

The pilot study's central finding could be replicated: Self-efficacy beliefs remain above average. Knowing students' "Needs" requires the highest, knowing how to handle "Technical Learning Difficulties" the lowest levels of self-efficacy. Differences in gender continue existing in favour of men with regard to subjective content knowledge. Apart from gender, its estimation is primarily predicted by the corresponding subject and by being an in-service teacher. Furthermore, mean comparisons show that participants studying/having studied Geography perform significantly worse. Subject-specific self-efficacy beliefs that are more closely associated with one of the three disciplines are predicted by their corresponding subjective content knowledge and subject.

In conclusion, prospective and in-service teachers are convinced that they are able to overcome didactically challenging situations in *Gesellschaftslehre* based on their own capabilities. By providing both the 13-factor instrument measuring didactical self-efficacy beliefs and the supplemental three-factor instrument measuring subjective content knowledge, a school subject long neglected by teacher education and training has been addressed. Interdisciplinary teacher education has only recently begun to catch up with the long-lived, established interdisciplinarity in contemporary teaching. Implications for further research and teacher education will be derived from this study's results.

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