

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 = $p < .001$; \emptyset communalities = $.674$; factor loadings = $.300$ – $.850$; $\alpha = .727$ – $.911$). 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 ($\chi^2 = 3821.210$; $p < .001$; $df = 2298$; $\chi^2/df = 1.663$; 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.

1 Introduction

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Teaching *Gesellschaftslehre* Interdisciplinarily

- 2.1 Definitions and Aims of Interdisciplinary Teaching
- 2.2 Makeup and Aims of *Gesellschaftslehre*
- 2.3 Didactical Viewpoints on Interdisciplinary Teaching
- 2.4 Issues Faced by Teachers when Teaching Interdisciplinarily

3 Self-Efficacy Beliefs as Part of Teachers' Professional Competencies

- 3.1 Specifying Self-Efficacy in Relation to Similar Concepts
- 3.2 Relevance of Self-Efficacy Beliefs
- 3.3 Malleability of Self-Efficacy Beliefs over Time
- 3.4 Factors Influencing Self-Efficacy Beliefs
- 3.5 Measuring Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs

4 Literature Review in the Context of *Gesellschaftslehre*

- 4.1 Self-Efficacy Beliefs of (Prospective) Teachers: Empirical Findings
- 4.2 Content Knowledge of (Prospective) Teachers: Empirical Findings
- 4.3 Modelling Didactical Self-Efficacy Beliefs According to Park and Chen (2012)

PREPARATIONS FOR THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

5 Self-Efficacy Beliefs for Teaching *Gesellschaftslehre*

- 5.1 Aim and Research Questions
- 5.2 General Design

PILOT STUDIES

6 First Draft of the Questionnaire

- 6.1 Didactical Self-Efficacy Beliefs
- 6.2 Subjective Content Knowledge

7 Testing the Questionnaire: Think-Aloud-Study

- 7.1 Design
- 7.2 Implementation
- 7.3 Sample
- 7.4 Findings
- 7.5 Summary and Limitations

8 Testing the Questionnaire: Exploratory Factor Analysis

- 8.1 Design
- 8.2 Implementation
- 8.3 Sample
- 8.4 Findings
- 8.5 Summary and Limitations

9 Testing the Subjective Content Knowledge: Expert Reviews

- 9.1 Design
- 9.2 Implementation
- 9.3 Sample
- 9.4 Findings
- 9.5 Summary and Limitations

MAIN STUDY USING THE *EINFACHSWAG*

10 Main Study: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

- 10.1 Design
- 10.2 Implementation
- 10.3 Sample
- 10.4 Findings
- 10.5 Summary and Limitations
- 10.6 Discussion

11 General Summary and Recommendations for Future Research

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