Influence of self-efficacy on the mental health of teachers involved in special needs education

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1. Problems and Purpose

According to a Survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2013), the number of teachers who took sick leave due to an illness doubled from 0.27% to 0.57% in the decade between 2001 and 2011. Among teachers, 60 % were shown to have a mental illness. Common causes of these illnesses include being overworked, difficulties in students' guidance and counseling, lack of teaching skills, as well as relationships with students, parents and coworkers (Tagami, Yamamoto, Tanaka 2004; Akaoka, Taniguchi 2009; Ando, Nagashima 2013). In April 2007, the workload of teachers increased because of changes in the Japanese education system, which could be one reason for the increase in mental health problems of teachers (Mori, Tanaka 2012a). Teachers' mental health problems are a matter of serious concern. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology suggested "steps to cope with the mental health issue" which included writing about the background to the problem, reducing the allotment of school management duties and consulting psychiatrists. However, no research has been conducted on the self-efficacy of special needs school teachers. It is important to understand effective stress management techniques, and therefore, this study was designed to identify the self-efficacy of special needs school teachers' and its effects on mental health problems.

2. Method

A questionnaire survey was conducted with unlicensed teachers in charge of students with special needs on 22 of July, and on 8 and 13 of August 2013. Of 260 teachers, 223 were available for the survey. The first page of the questionnaire inquired respondents' sex, age, and career. The questionnaire also included the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES; Sakano, Tojo 1986), Coping Scale (Imada, Uemura 2001), Sense of Coherence (SOC; Yamazaki 1999) and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ28: Nakagawa, Taibo 1985).

3. Results and Considerations

A multiple a linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the effects of self-efficacy coping, and the sense of coherence on GHQ scores. Table 1 and Figure 1 show the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, conducted by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). It can be seen that the regression R^2 was 0.449, indicative of the appropriateness of the basic model. Moreover, the absolute value of β was high, which is indicative of its influence on GHQ. SOC had the highest β value, which was followed by GSES (β=0.159). These results indicate that SOC is an effective method for coping with stress and that self-efficacy is beneficial for improving mental health.

[Table 1] Results of Multiple Linear Regression（standardizing coefficientβ）

	Standardizing coefficient（β）	t value	significance probability
GSES	0.159	2.78	0.01**
Coping	0.036	0.70	*n.s.*
SOC	0.586	10.38	0.00***

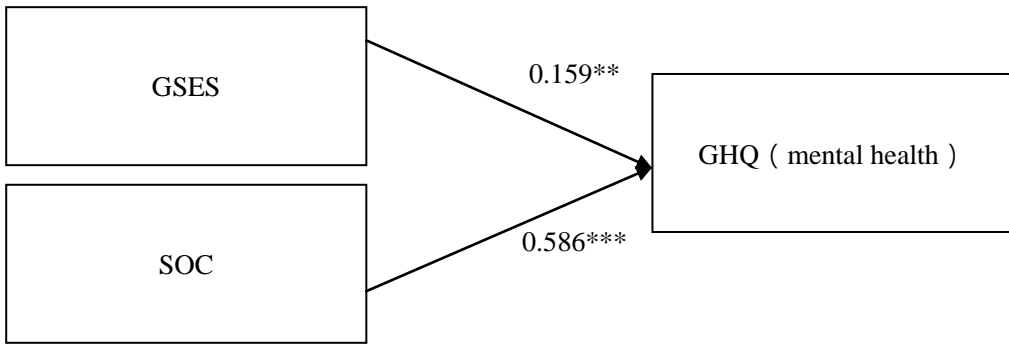Dependent variable: GHQ

** $p<.01$ *** $p<.001$

Figure 1. Path diagram indicating the results of the multiple linear regression