Preliminary Study on the Development of the Autism Self-Efficacy Scale for Teachers (ASSET)

Birdwhistell, J. L., Ruble, L. A., Toland, M. D., & Usher, E. L.
University of Kentucky
Department of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology

Research Hypothesis
1. The Autism Self Efficacy Scale for Teachers (ASSET) will demonstrate adequate internal consistency.
2. Teacher self-efficacy will not be associated with general stress and burnout.
3. The ASSET will be negatively associated with the frequency and severity of students’ behaviors.
4. The ASSET will be negatively associated with depression and anxiety.

Method
Participants:
- 44 special education teachers who currently had at least one student with autism between the ages of 3 and 8 years.
- 100% of the teachers were female (n = 44), and had a mean class size of 12.4 students (SD = 5.3).
- The mean number of years teaching was 11.3 (SD = 8.2) and 3.4 years (SD = 1.62) for teaching students with autism.
- Half of the teachers came from schools located in small towns (less than 75,000 residents), while the remaining teachers were from schools situated in large cities (a city with more than 75,000 residents).

Procedures:
- Participants were recruited through a multi-step process as part of a larger randomized controlled study in two mid-southern states examining COMPASS consultation and coaching with teachers of students with autism and child outcomes (Ruble, Dalrymple, & McGrew, 2012).
- Once enrolled, participants were randomly assigned to either the control group (15) or one of the two experimental conditions, a face-to-face (14) or web-based (15) coaching condition.

Results
Psychometric Properties:
- The Autism Self-Efficacy Scale for Teachers (ASSET). This 30-item self-report measure gains insight into the perceptions of special education teachers regarding their own beliefs about their ability to conduct various assessment, intervention, and classroom-based practices particular to the needs of students with ASD. Items are rated by the teacher as the degree of confidence in their ability to perform such tasks with regard to a particular student with ASD in their classroom ranging from 0 (cannot do at all) to 100 (highly certain can do). Sample reliability was .96 (95% bootstrap CI [.93, .98]).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Factor Pattern Loadings for Items on the ASSET

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<th>Item</th>
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Discussion
- Future research could use IRT to see if shorter forms of the ASSET could provide comparable information for the entire continuum of self-efficacy and validity evidence. IRT was not used in our analyses due to the lack of association between the ASSET and MBI scores.
- Future studies could examine ways to enhance self-efficacy and examine its role in the application of evidence-based practices in autism.

References

Impact:
- The ASSET is a valid and reliable measure of self-efficacy for teaching children with autism.
- The ASSET can be used to assess teacher perceptions regarding the impact of interactions with their student with autism on teacher distress and burnout.
- The ASSET can be used to assess teacher perceptions regarding the impact of interactions with their student with autism on teacher stress and burnout.

Acknowledgments:
This research was supported by grant number R13MH089760 from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) awarded to the second author.

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