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Young Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Self-efficacy and the Implementation of the Pedagogical Referendum Program

Gulden Yespolova[1*], *Huseyin Uzunboylu*[2], *Radchenko Natalya Nikolaevna*[1], *Sakhariyeva Svetlana Gennadievna*[1], *Zavalko Nadezhda Aleksandrovna*[1]

[1]Sarsen Amanzholov East Kazakhstan University, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan
e-mail: gulden.11@mail.ru, radchenkon76@inbox.ru, sakhariyeva@mail.ru, zavalko_na@mail.ru
[2]University of Kyrenia, North Cyprus, Turkey; Abai Kazak National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan.
e-mail: huseyin.uzunboylu@kyrenia.edu.tr

Abstract: The professional self-efficacy of young teachers plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of education and student outcomes. However, limited research has explored how self-efficacy perceptions are influenced by pedagogical reform initiatives. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to assess young teachers' professional self-efficacy perceptions and evaluate their perspectives on the implementation of the pedagogical reform program. Employing mixed-methods research design, data were collected from a sample of 418 teachers. Quantitative data were gathered using the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, while qualitative insights were obtained through semi-structured interviews developed by the researchers. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software, and qualitative data were examined through descriptive analysis. Findings indicate that young teachers exhibit a high level of professional self-efficacy, with no significant differences observed across gender or teaching discipline. Additionally, while many participants reported a moderate understanding of the pedagogical reform program, they expressed positive attitudes toward professional growth under the mentorship of experienced educators. These results suggest that structured mentorship and targeted professional development initiatives within the pedagogical reform framework can further enhance teachers' self-efficacy and instructional competencies.

Keywords: *young teachers, teacher competence, pedagogical reform, self-efficacy, perception.*

Introduction

The quality of teachers has an important role in the success of education systems. Especially in the first years of the profession, the professional adaptation of teachers and the development of their competencies are one of the main factors affecting both individual and institutional success (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). Young or new teachers often face many challenges such as classroom management, effective teaching strategies, student evaluation methods, and professional identity formation (Schlebusch, Bhebhe, and Schlebusch, 2024). These challenges show that their professional competency development processes are dynamic and multidimensional.

One of the main factors affecting the professional competence of young teachers is the perception of self-efficacy (Goldag, 2020). Self-efficacy refers to the belief that individuals can perform a certain task (Schunk and DiBenedetto, 2020). Teachers with high self-efficacy can cope with the challenges they face more effectively and develop their pedagogical skills more quickly. In addition, external factors such as mentoring and peer support have a great positive effect on professional development processes.

The self-efficacy of teachers is greatly influenced by their gender, which has an impact on a variety of experience areas and has consequences for professional development and educational practices. Teaching effectiveness is impacted by gender differences in self-efficacy, which is defined as beliefs in one's ability to carry out necessary actions to attain particular levels of performance (Marshall (1996)).

*Corresponding author: gulden.11@mail.ru

According to research, male educators can show more confidence in their ability to present information and use disciplinary measures, whereas female educators frequently show better self-efficacy in parenting and inclusive teaching practices (Wahyudiati et al., 2020).

Research on creative self-efficacy indicates that gender disparities affect teachers' perceptions of their abilities to foster students' creativity, with significant variances in average and variability (He and Wong, 2021). Because of these differences, instructors and women may choose distinct pedagogical approaches that are tailored to their self-efficiency beliefs; this might result in varied instruction strategies. Whitcomb et al. (2020), for instance, discovered that female engineering students at universities displayed distinct self-efficacy profiles in contrast to their male counterparts, suggesting potential differences in the outcomes of instruction driven by gender.

Furthermore, Henderson et al. (2020) highlight how curriculum innovations might influence scientific education by highlighting the necessity for physics teachers to identify these gender-based self-efficiency assumptions. In the end, it is critical to comprehend these subtleties to create thorough professional development programs that accommodate the varying degrees of self-efficacy among genders and support fair learning settings for all students (Wahyudiati et al., 2020).

The increasing influence of technology in educational environments is also transforming the professional competence development processes of young teachers (Volkov and Chikarova, 2021). Digital platforms and learning management systems offer teachers opportunities to develop and implement new teaching techniques (Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017)). For example, McKnight et al. (2020) emphasized that digital tools strengthen teachers' pedagogical adaptation skills, which increases the quality of teaching.

Innovative approaches and support programs are of great importance in the development of professional qualifications. Innovative platforms such as INTHRN facilitate the professional adaptation processes of young teachers by offering special solutions to their needs through digital mentoring applications (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). In addition, structured professional development programs improve teachers' skills in classroom practices and increase their commitment to the education system (OECD, 2021).

The pedagogical referendum, which was carried out as a condition for the professional adaptation of young teachers based on the innovative platform created by INTERN, aims to support the adaptation processes of teachers who are new to the profession. It is extremely important to develop models that aim to accelerate the professional development of young teachers under the guidance of an experienced mentor and to facilitate their integration into the educational environment (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). In this context, the initiative aims to facilitate both individual and professional development through an innovative platform known as INTHRN.

The challenges faced by newly graduated teachers during their transition into professional practice represent a significant issue impacting the overall quality of education. When teachers are not provided with appropriate guidance and support during their professional adaptation, burnout and loss of motivation can occur (Ingersoll, 2012). The pedagogical referendum model offers an effective strategy to solve these problems. According to research, mentoring programs play an important role in increasing the professional competence and self-confidence of young teachers (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009).

This project will enable young teachers to adapt to professional life more easily by implementing the pedagogical referendum model. The INTHRN platform aims to increase teachers' professional skills and motivation, thus improving the quality of education. Innovative approaches will enable future teachers to be more equipped and more effective (OECD, 2021).

The development levels of young teachers' professional competencies have created a wide area of research in terms of teacher education and professional development processes. Studies conducted in this context have covered topics such as professional adaptation, self-efficacy, the role of technology, and the impact of mentoring programs. Some studies conducted in the field are as follows: Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) examined the characteristics of effective teacher professional development programs and concluded that young teachers rapidly develop their pedagogical skills with practical learning experiences. Kraft and Papay's (2020) study, which addresses the relationship between supportive environments in teachers' workplaces and their professional development, revealed that a positive working environment in the early years of the profession increases teachers' performance. Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020), based on self-efficacy theory, emphasized that social and emotional learning plays an important role in

the process of developing teachers' professional competencies. McKnight et al (2020) examined the effects of digital tools on improving teachers' pedagogical practices and concluded that digital technologies facilitate classroom management and assessment processes. Geeraerts, Tynjälä, and Heikkinen (2020) addressed the contribution of intergenerational learning to the professional development of teachers and stated that young teachers adapt quickly by learning from their experienced colleagues.

Klassen and Chiu (2010), based on motivational theories, showed that teachers develop their professional competence more quickly when their self-efficacy perception is high. OECD's (2021) global report examined the effects of the lifelong learning approach on teachers and stated that professional development programs increase the competence levels of teachers. Makhsutova, 2024 study, which examined the effect of emotional intelligence on teacher self-efficacy, concluded that colleague support and job satisfaction strengthen teacher competencies. Schlebusch, Bhebhe and Schlebusch, 2024 study on technology integration revealed that teachers can respond to student needs more effectively in professional development processes supported by digital tools. In a study based on the learning approach, Reitano and Green (2013) showed that teachers effectively used learning processes from their experiences and thus improved their professional competence.

Makhsutova concluded in her study (Kraft and Papay, 2020) that by focusing on the factors shaping the self-efficacy of English Foreign language (EFL) teachers, it is necessary to contribute to the theoretical understanding and practical improvement of teacher training programs in Kazakhstan. In their study, Yuce et al. (2024) found that Turkish and Kazakh EFL teachers had similar perspectives on the effects of culture on online learning self-efficacy, but differed on the feelings, challenges, factors, and strategies related to this topic.

Within the scope of the information listed so far, there is a need and a research gap to evaluate the program to train young teachers, such as INTHRN, together with the self-efficacy of the teachers, both for the implementation of the program and to reveal the self-efficacy of young teacher.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research was to determine the professional self-efficacy perceptions of young teachers and to evaluate their views in the context of the implementation of the pedagogical referendum program.

In this direction, the following research questions and hypotheses were created,

Research Question 1. What level of knowledge do the young teachers participating in the research have about the pedagogical referendum program?

Research Question 2. What are the perspectives of the educators involved in the research on the enhancement of professional development for novice teachers under the mentorship of an experienced educator?

Research Question 3. What are the views of the teachers participating in the research regarding the development of their professional competencies in the context of the implementation of the pedagogical referendum program?

H_1: The professional qualifications of young teachers are at a moderate level.

H_2: The professional qualifications of young teachers differ according to the gender variable.

H_3: The professional competencies of young teachers differ according to their fields of expertise.

Materials and Methods

Research Method

This study was structured as mixed-method research. Mixed method research is characterized by the integration of perspectives from researchers adhering to a singular research paradigm, those employing a situational research paradigm, and those embracing a pragmatic research paradigm within a mixed methodology. This approach yields more comprehensive data by integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Rossman and Wilson, 1985). This study assessed the professional competencies of novice educators using a quantitative approach. The perspectives of novice educators regarding the advancement of their professional competences within the framework of the pedagogical referendum program were assessed using qualitative methodology. The results were collectively assessed and conveyed to the audience.

Participants

The study group consisted of 418 teachers. The teachers were actively working in various schools in Kazakhstan in the 2024-2025 academic year. All teachers participating in the study were in the first year of their profession. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of teachers.

Table 1. *Demographic distribution of teachers*

	f	%
Gender		
Female	233	55.7
Male	185	44.3
Total		
Branch		
Class Teacher	91	21.8
Math Teacher	85	20.3
English Teacher	82	19.6
Geography Teacher	81	19.4
Science Teacher	79	18.9
Total	418	100

In Table 1, 55.7% of the young teachers participating in the research are female and 44.3% are male. 21.8% of the teachers are classroom teachers, 20.3% are mathematics teachers, 19.6% are English teachers, 19.4% are geography teachers and 18.9% are science teachers.

Instruments for Data Acquisition

The research data were collected utilizing two separate data collection devices. The initial instrument is the "Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale" created by Hooper, Caughlan and Mullen (2013). The measure comprises three sub-dimensions: "student participation," "teaching strategies," and "classroom management," along with 24 items. The scale's linguistic modification was executed. The second data collecting instrument is the semi-structured interview format. The researchers devised the semi-structured interview format.

Study on Language Equivalence of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

The translation process of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, intended for adaptation to Kazakh, was initially executed during the linguistic equivalence study. At this juncture, two proficient linguists, well-versed in both languages, translated the original version of the scale into Kazakh. Efforts were made to guarantee that the translation had the same meaning as the original text. The Kazakh version was developed based on translations considered suitable by language specialists. After two weeks, the scale, translated into Kazakh, was reverted to its original language by language experts. Consequently, the discrepancies between the reverse-translated version and the original version were examined. The scale, translated into Kazakh for the final time after two weeks, was compared with the preceding translation. The definitive Kazakh version of the scale was developed in accordance with the consensus of the two linguistic specialists. The translations were evaluated considering professional comments, resulting in the creation of a provisional Kazakh form.

The pilot application phase commenced following the translation phase. A sample group for the pilot implementation of the scale was established. The sample group comprised 271 young educators. There were 144 female teachers and 127 male teachers. The educators involved in this segment of the research were excluded from the primary sample group of the study. A sample size of 271 students satisfied the threshold of five times the amount of items necessary for factor analysis research (Child, 2006). The trial application was implemented in classrooms where the educators provided instruction.

Subsequent to the pilot application, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the acquired data set. The SPSS 25.0 statistical software was utilized at this step. The initial phase involved assessing if the scale utilized in the linguistic equivalence study exhibited a normal distribution. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was favored for assessing normality. The analysis of the data set indicated a normal distribution (p=.059>.050).

All components of the scale were utilized for exploratory factor analysis. The initial objective was

to ascertain the adequacy of the sample size. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test yielded a result of 0.79, exceeding 0.70, indicating that exploratory factor analysis is applicable to the data. Subsequently, Bartlett's Sphericity test was conducted. Bartlett's Sphericity test ($\chi 2 = 548.665$, $p < .001$) indicated that exploratory factor analysis was applicable to the data. At this juncture, the eigenvalue was ascertained to be 1, and the factor structure of the scale was analyzed. In the main component analysis, it was seen that all items in the original three-factor structure of the scale corresponded to the factors in the translated version, and no items were eliminated from the scale. The factors accounted for 75.9% of the variation rate. The scree plot was analyzed, revealing a maximum loading value of 0.859 and a minimum loading value of 0.544.

Subsequent to this research, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the scale. The SPSS Amos 25.0 statistical software was utilized at this stage. The goodness of fit indexes were assessed for confirmatory factor analysis. The model fit was assessed using the metrics of $\chi 2$/df (Chi-Square/Degree of Freedom), NNFI (Non-Normed Fit Index), and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). The analysis yields the following values: $\chi 2$ /df= 2.144 (p=.000), NNFI=.92, and RMSEA=.055. Hooper, Caughlan and Mullen (2013) proposed a $\chi 2$ /df value of less than 5, a NNFI value beyond .80, and an RMSEA value below .080. In light of this perspective, it was concluded that the scale maintained its original structure within Kazakh culture and was relevant. Table 2 presents the item factor loadings and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, finalized using confirmatory component analysis.

Table 2. *Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale item factor loadings*

Article	Expression on Scale	Item Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Student Participation Sub-Dimension			
1	How successful are you in reaching difficult students?	,750	
2	How much can you get students to think critically?	,846	
3	How can you motivate students who show little interest in lessons?	,795	
4	How much can you do to convince students that they can succeed in school?	,859	
5	How can you make students value learning?	,839	,788
6	How can you help students develop their creativity?	,766	
7	How can you help an unsuccessful student understand the lesson better?	,820	
8	How much support can you provide to families to help their children succeed in school?	,781	
Teaching Strategies Sub-Dimension			
9	How well can you answer students' difficult questions?	,640	
10	How well can you evaluate whether students have grasped what you have taught?	,633	
11	To what extent can you prepare questions that will enable you to evaluate your students well?	,644	
12	How can you ensure that lessons are appropriate to each student's level?	,729	
13	To what extent can you use different assessment methods?	,705	
14	How many alternative explanations or examples can you provide when students are confused?	,625	,849
15	How well can you implement different teaching methods in the classroom?	,691	
16	How can you provide a suitable learning environment for highly talented students?	,680	
Classroom Management Sub-Dimension			
17	How successful are you in controlling behaviors that negatively impact the lesson in the classroom?	,572	
18	How clearly can you state your expectations for student behavior?	,561	
19	How well can you ensure that classroom activities run smoothly?	,544	
20	How well can you ensure that students follow classroom rules?	,568	
21	How can you calm down students who are disrupting the lesson or making noise?	,577	
22	How well can you create a classroom management system that suits different groups of students?	,604	,835
23	How well can you prevent a few problem students from disrupting the course?	,611	
24	How well can you deal with students who disregard you?	,590	
	Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale Cronbach's Alpha	822	,

Table 2 presents the item-total correlations and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, which was modified for data collection in the research. In the reliability examination of the 3-factor structure of the scale, Cronbach's Alpha values were determined to be .788 for the student engagement sub-dimension of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, .849 for the teaching techniques sub-dimension, and .835 for the classroom management sub-dimension. The Cronbach's Alpha score for the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale was determined to be .822 overall. The scale employs a 5-point Likert format. In this grading system, the score intervals are regarded as uniform. The range of 1.00 to 1.80 is classified as Very Little; the range of 1.81 to 2.60 is classified as Little; the range of 2.61 to 3.40 is classified as Somewhat; the range of 3.41 to 4.20 is classified as Somewhat Much; and the range of 4.21 to 5.00 is classified as Much.

Semi-Structured Interview Framework for the Pedagogical Referendum Program for Young Educators

The semi-structured interview instrument developed to gather qualitative data for the study has three questions. Two language specialists reviewed these open-ended questions, and their assessments on grammatical structure were considered. Following the requisite amendments, the open-ended questions were presented to four educators for the assessment of their clarity. The educators deemed the questions lucid and comprehensible. The four teacher candidates involved in this evaluation segment of the study were omitted from the sample group. The semi-structured interview questions were posed in person to 40 teachers randomly chosen from the study's sample group. The researchers created structured interview questions to align with the research questions.

Procedure for Data Acquisition

The study's quantitative data were gathered by administering the scale to teachers in person, within the school setting, and collectively. The qualitative data for the study were obtained via face-to-face interviews with 40 teachers randomly chosen from the sample group. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered concurrently. The compilation of research data required around seven weeks. The duration for administering the Teaching Profession Attitude Scale is established at 20-25 minutes, whereas the Teacher Semi-Structured Interview Form requires 10-15 minutes for completion.

Adherence to Ethical Standards

A study ethics consent form was developed for all experts and educators who participated in the scale adaption, semi-structured interview form preparation, and data collection phases of the research. The consent form indicated that the research's objective was to ensure personal data confidentiality and prohibit its usage in any other studies. The participants who received the consent form signed the voluntary participation document, affirming their voluntary involvement in the research. Moreover, data collection procedures were conducted with the awareness and consent of the institutions involved at every stage of the research. During the writing phase of the research, ethical standards were adhered to.

Analysis of Data Collection

The study's quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS 25.0 statistical software. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which assesses the normality assumption of parametric statistical methods, was utilized in the data analysis procedure. Consequently, it was determined to implement parametric tests on the data set. The normal distribution of the dataset was ascertained. Alongside standard deviation and weighted average computations, an independent samples T-test was utilized for bivariate data analysis, while one-way ANOVA was employed for the examination of multiple variables. The study's significance threshold was established at 0.05. The descriptive analysis technique was employed in the examination of qualitative data. Marshall (1996) asserted that the objective of descriptive analysis is to systematically organize and evaluate data acquired through observation or interviews for presentation to the reader. The perspectives of educators on the advancement of their professional competences within the framework of the pedagogical referendum program were converted into findings using descriptive analysis.

Results

In this part of the research, the professional attitudes of young teachers were determined and their views on the development levels of their professional competencies in the context of the implementation of the pedagogical referendum program were evaluated.

Findings Regarding the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

Table 3 presents the sub-dimensions of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale for the participating teachers, along with the weighted means and standard deviations for the overall scale.

Table 3. *Weighted means and standard deviations of the scale*

Scales	M	SD
Student Participation Sub-Dimension	4.08	0.690
Teaching Strategies Sub-Dimension	4.11	0.677
Classroom Management Sub-Dimension	4.01	0.658
Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale	4.05	0.675

Table 3 outlines the various sub-dimensions of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, along with the weighted means and standard deviations for the overall scale. The calculations for the weighted means and standard deviations were conducted for the Student Participation Sub-Dimension (M = 4.08, SD = 0.690), Instructional Strategies Sub-Dimension (M = 4.11, SD = 0.677), Classroom Management Sub-Dimension (M = 4.01, SD = 0.658), and the overall Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (M = 4.05, SD = 0.675). The results indicate that teachers exhibit a notably high level of self-efficacy in both the sub-dimensions of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale and the overall scale.

Table 4 presents the T-test results of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale scores of the teachers participating in the study according to the gender variable.

Table 4. *T-test results according to gender variable*

Gender	N	M	SD	F	p
Female	233	4.12	0.677	4,116	,260
Male	185	3.96	0.651		

Table 4 presents the scores from the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale for the educators involved in the study, along with the outcomes of the independent variables t-test based on the gender variable. The analysis revealed no notable difference in the self-efficacy of teachers based on gender (F=4.116, p>0.5). The levels of self-efficacy among female and male teachers in relation to their professions were observed to be comparable.

Table 5 presents the results of the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale scores among the teachers involved in the study, categorized by the branch variable.

Table 5. *One-way analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results according to branch variable*

Class	N	***M***	**SD**	**F**	**p**
Class Teacher	91	4.07	0.861		
Math Teacher	85	4.12	0.880		
English Teacher	82	3.99	0.810	4,672	0.280
Geography Teacher	81	4.05	0.843		
Science Teacher	79	4.01	0.829		

Table 5 presents the findings from the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) concerning the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale scores among the educators involved in the study, categorized by the branch variable. No notable distinction was observed in the self-efficacy of the educators in relation to the branch variable (F=4.672, p>0.5). Research indicated that educators across various disciplines, including class-

room instruction, mathematics, English, geography, and science, exhibited comparable levels of self-efficacy in their respective professions.

Findings Regarding the Semi-Structured Interview Form Regarding the Young Teachers' Pedagogical Referendum Program

Table 6 categorizes the knowledge levels of young teachers participating in the research regarding the pedagogical referendum program.

Table 6. *What level of knowledge do you have about the pedagogical referendum program?*

Category	F	%
Very High	2	5
High	7	17.5
Middle	26	65
Low	4	10
Very Low	1	2.5
Total	40	100

Table 6 shows the knowledge levels of the young teachers participating in the research regarding the pedagogical referendum program under 5 categories. 5% of the young teachers responded as very high, 17.5% as high, 65% as medium, 10% as low and 2.5% as very low.

Table 7 presents the perspectives of the young educators involved in the study concerning the enhancement of their professional growth through the mentorship of a seasoned professional.

Table 7. *What are your views on accelerating their professional development under the guidance of an experienced mentor?*

Category	F	%
I support it very much	6	15
I support	30	75
I partially support it	3	7.5
I don't support	1	2.5
I Don't Support It at All	-	-
Total	40	100

Table 7 presents an evaluation of the perspectives of the young teachers involved in the research regarding the enhancement of their development with the support of an experienced mentor, categorized into five distinct areas. 15% of the young teachers answered "I support it very much", 75% "I support it", 7.5% "I partially support it" and 2.5% "I do not support it". There is no teacher among the young teachers who participated in the research who answered "I do not support it at all".

Table 8 categorizes the views of the young teachers participating in the research on the development of their professional competencies in the context of the implementation of the pedagogical referendum program.

Table 8. *What are your views on the development of professional competencies in the context of the implementation of the pedagogical referendum program?*

Category	F	%
I find it very developmental	8	20
I find developers	28	70
I find it partly developmental	3	7.5
I don't find any developers	1	2.5
I don't find any developers	-	-
Total	40	100

Table 8 categorizes the perspectives of young teachers involved in the research regarding the enhancement of their professional competencies within the framework of the pedagogical referendum

program into five distinct categories. In the research, 20% of young teachers indicated that they find it very developing, 70% reported it as developing, 7.5% considered it partially developing, and 2.5% did not find it developing. None of the young teachers who participated in the research indicated that they do not find it developing at all.

Table 8 categorizes the perspectives of young teachers involved in the study regarding the enhancement of their professional competencies within the framework of the pedagogical referendum program into five distinct categories. In the research, 20% of young teachers indicated that they find it very developing, 70% reported it as developing, 7.5% considered it partially developing, and 2.5% did not find it developing. None of the young teachers who participated in the research indicated that they do not perceive any developmental benefits.

Discussion

The professional competence levels of the teachers involved in the study were assessed based on their responses to the sub-dimensions of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale and the overall scale. In this context, weighted means and standard deviations were computed for the Student Participation Sub-Dimension, Instructional Strategies Sub-Dimension, Classroom Management Sub-Dimension, and the overall Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale. The results indicate that teachers exhibit a high level of self-efficacy in both the sub-dimensions and the overall Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale. The study by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) corroborated this finding. The study indicated that teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy significantly influence their professional performance and student success. Berdousis (2024) found that individuals with extensive technological backgrounds demonstrated higher self-efficacy. Ongoing engagement in professional development significantly enhanced confidence, underscoring its importance in digital pedagogy.

The self-efficacy of the young teachers participating in the study was evaluated according to the gender variable. The findings revealed that the self-efficacy of female teachers and male teachers was at similar levels. A study conducted by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) emphasized that gender did not have a significant effect on teacher self-efficacy and that occupational stress and student behaviors affected this perception more. Similarly, Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) stated that self-efficacy levels did not show a gender difference, but that supportive factors in the work environment were more decisive.

The self-efficacy of the young instructors involved in the study was assessed based on the branch variable. The results indicate that educators in classroom instruction, mathematics, English, geography, and science exhibit comparable levels of self-efficacy in their respective fields. Friedman and Kass (2002) stated that the differences in self-efficacy depending on the branch depend on individual factors rather than the pedagogical approaches of the teachers. Bandura (2012) stated that the perception of self-efficacy is related to the general motivation level and support systems of individuals, regardless of the branch.

The majority of young educators involved in the study reported possessing a moderate understanding of the pedagogical referendum program. Young teachers' views on the acceleration of their professional development under the guidance of an experienced mentor were also found to be positive. Hobson et al. (2009) emphasized that effective mentoring programs accelerate the professional development of teachers. In addition, Lindgren (2005) stated that new teachers increase their self-efficacy levels thanks to mentoring. Similarly, Butabayeva et al. (2025) aimed to validate the teaching competence scale for inclusive practices as an evidence-based approach that would allow for further decisions in their research. Validation processes confirmed the reliability of use in Kazakhstan. Considering these findings, they discussed the implications for sustaining and improving inclusive practices in Kazakhstan. They specifically highlighted the improved impact of teacher experience and increased training on perceived teacher engagement; the perceived practices of behaviour management used; and how these were achieved through the introduction of new 'relaxed' inclusive schools and their focus on education.

The majority of young teachers who participated in the study stated that their professional competence could be improved in the context of the implementation of the pedagogical referendum program. Kennedy (2016) emphasized that pedagogical development programs are effective in improving teachers' classroom management and student achievement. Darling-Hammond (2010) stated that pedagogical programs strengthen teachers' self-efficacy perceptions.

When the findings obtained from the research were compared with the results of the research conducted in the field, it was observed that the research findings were consistent in international literature.

Conclusion

The definitions of the teacher's role in the implementation of the learning process and guiding students to develop their skills vary from period to period. In many countries around the world, with the integration of developing technologies into education, teacher training programs have focused on training teachers who will meet the needs of the 21st century. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the professional competencies of young teachers and to evaluate their views on the development levels of their professional competencies in the context of the implementation of the pedagogical referendum program. The study concluded that the professional self-efficacy of the young instructors included was significantly high. The professional self-efficacy of the young teachers participating in the study was evaluated according to the gender variable and their branches. The findings revealed that the gender and branch variables did not create a significant difference in the self-efficacy of the young teachers. The majority of the young educators involved in the study indicated that they possessed a moderate understanding of the pedagogical referendum program. The views of the young teachers regarding the acceleration of their professional development under the guidance of an experienced mentor were also found to be positive. The majority of the young teachers participating in the study stated that their professional competencies could be developed in the context of the implementation of the pedagogical referendum program.

Recommendations

Despite the research findings indicating a high level of professional competence among instructors, it is essential to maintain the continuity of professional development programs. Mentoring programs should be established where experienced teachers guide young teachers and this process should be made systematic. Mentoring can strengthen young teachers' perceptions of competence. The promotion of pedagogical referendum programs should be increased. The research indicated that the level of knowledge of young teachers regarding pedagogical referendum programs is at a moderate level. Therefore, young teachers should be given more information about the scope and implementation processes of these programs. These suggestions will contribute to the further development of young teachers' professional competence and to the improvement of the quality of educational environments.

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Transparency

The author asserts that the text is candid, accurate, and transparent, indicating that no essential elements of the investigation have been excluded and that any deviations from the original study design have been elucidated. This study adhered to all writing ethics.

Competing Interests

The author states that there are no conflicts of interest associated with the publication of this paper.

Author Contributions

Project administration, G.Y.; Conceptualization, H.U.; methodology, H.U.; formal analysis and Coding, G.Y. and R.N.N.; writing—original draft preparation, S.S.G. and Z.N.A.; writing—review and editing, H.U. and G.Y. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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