Teacher Preparation, Motivation, and Self-Efficacy: A Comparative Study of New Teachers in Japan and the United States

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Abstrak

Menggunakan Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018, penelitian ini meneliti persiapan awal guru (ITP) guru baru AS dan Jepang, perasaan kesiapan, motivasi, dan efikasi diri. Analisis terhadap 355 guru sekolah menengah baru di AS dan 433 orang Jepang memberikan beberapa temuan. Pertama, ITP di AS lebih sering memasukkan pengajaran dalam kemampuan campuran dan pengaturan multikultural, keterampilan lintas kurikuler, dan teknologi daripada Jepang, dan guru AS merasa lebih siap daripada guru Jepang dalam setiap kategori persiapan. Kedua, guru Jepang lebih cenderung menyatakan mengajar sebagai pilihan karir pertama mereka, dan dilaporkan mendapat skor yang lebih tinggi secara signifikan pada motivasi untuk menjadi guru nilai utilitas pribadi dan nilai utilitas sosial. Ketiga, tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan dalam self-efficacy antara guru baru AS dan Jepang. Studi ini berkontribusi pada kesenjangan skala besar, literatur komparatif antara persiapan guru awal AS dan Jepang. Implikasi untuk praktek dan arah untuk penelitian masa depan dibahas.

Kata kunci: *Persiapan Guru, Motivasi, Efikasi Diri*

Abstract

Using the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018, this study examines U.S. and Japanese new teachers' initial teacher preparation (ITP), feelings of preparedness, motivations, and self-efficacy. The analysis of 355 U.S. and 433 Japanese new secondary teachers provided several findings. First, ITP in the U.S. more often included teaching in mixed-ability and multicultural settings, cross-curricular skills, and technology than Japan, and U.S. teachers felt more prepared than Japanese teachers in every category of preparation. Second, Japanese teachers were more likely to declare teaching as their first career choice and reportedly scored significantly higher on motivations to become a teacher of *personal utility value*, while U.S. new teachers scored higher on *social utility value*. Third, there were no significant differences in self-efficacy between U.S. and Japanese new teachers. This study contributes to the gap of large-scale, comparative literature between the U.S. and Japanese initial teacher preparation. Implications for practice and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Teacher Preparation, Motivation, Self-Efficacy

1. INTRODUCTION

Out of several critical international educational policy issues described by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], initial teacher preparation (ITP) commands a crucial role for ensuring teacher success before ever arriving in a classroom in the form of ITP content (content), feelings of preparedness, teacher motivation, and self-efficacy (Ainley & Carstens, 2018). Despite its importance, research has not always taken advantage of the opportunities offered by examining content and feelings of preparedness through a comparative framework across countries. Teacher preparation has been linked to new teachers' feelings of preparedness, their motivations to become a teacher, and self-efficacy (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). ITP programs in the U.S. vary greatly between states in terms of duration and requirements. However, because the standards for what is considered a "highly qualified" teacher are interpreted by each state differently, the exact program duration and requirements vary greatly between states. The length of time

required for student teaching and practicum is not universal, but it has been historically longer in the U.S. than for Japanese ITP programs (Morey et al., 1997).

In comparison, Japanese educational reforms have frequently involved governmental mandates and influences over the organization, content, and goals of ITP programs in higher education institutions, and the ensuing attempts by institutions to incorporate the appropriate reforms (Suzuki, 2014). Control and autonomy over the structure and content of courses have changed several times often in response to political demands and were not always indicative of the actual needs of teachers in schools (Suzuki, 2014). More recently, concern over the widening gap between academics and practical experiences and questions regarding course standards versus university autonomy continue to play an important role in the discussion of future reforms (Isozaki, 2018; Suzuki, 2014). In Japan, teacher candidates are required to take three weeks of teaching practicum and one week of nursing care training, which is similar to other East Asian countries such as China and Korea (Iwata, 2015) but shorter than North American countries like Canada (Howe, 2008). ITP reforms have continued to place a greater emphasis on practical, professional-styled courses as opposed to theory and content knowledge; however, the theory remains a part of ITP programs (Forlin et al., 2015; Isozaki, 2018; Iwata, 2015). Large-scale comparative studies between Japan and the U.S. in general have not been conducted for some time (Morey et al., 1997; San, 1999). Studies have investigated Japan's approach to ITP from both US (Ferguson, 1985; Hawley & Hawley, 1997) and Japanese perspectives (Kobayashi, 1993); in addition, some research has examined the role of professional development for Japanese and US teachers (Collinson & Ono, 2001). However, there is a need for research that reflects the most recent educational reforms in Japan (Iwata, 2015; Suzaki, 2014) and the more recent changing dynamics of teacher education in the U.S (Zeichner, 2017).

Teacher motivation refers to the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence individuals to become a teacher and remain in the career (Watt & Richardson, 2008). Preservice teachers who value working with children and enhancing social equity often plan to teach longer than those who emphasize personal utility value, such as salary and job security (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Candidates who value scholarship, a form of personal utility value, may be attracted to teaching and obliged to stay in teaching for a certain period (Liou et al., 2010). Building on previous research (Watt et al., 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007), the TALIS 2018 made revisions to and expanded on the topic of teacher motivation; the topic, for the most part, has joined with career choice and job satisfaction (Ainley & Carstens, 2018). The TALIS 2018 models its assessment of motivation and uses three primary value domains for career choice: personal utility value (security and time for family), social utility value (shaping the future of children and making social contributions), and perceptions of value and policy influence (image of teaching in society and/or media). As part of the TALIS 2018, the survey items of teacher motivations allow for comparisons among OECD countries. Teacher motivations change over the course of a teacher's career, which relate to ITP, self-efficacy, and other teacher characteristics (Ponnock et al., 2018; Watt & Richardson, 2007). Thus, in this comparative study, we examined teacher motivations to become a teacher together with ITP content, feeling of preparedness, and self-efficacy.

TSE refers to the teacher's belief in their capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). TSE is a growing area of international research interest for developing effective teachers and has a number of beneficial links: higher job satisfaction, greater retention, better student performance and self-efficacy, and higher pedagogical quality among others (Ainley & Carstens, 2018). Limitations of the TSE measurement involve the method of measuring self-efficacy (Shawer, 2013), the lack of focus on culturally responsive self-efficacy items (Siwatu et al., 2016), and the nature and definition of TSE itself (Wyatt,

2014). Consequently, strengthening TSE has become an important component of both teacher education and educational reform in the past decades (Battista, 1994; Goddard, 2002; Goddard et al., 2000). The international comparative studies showed that teachers' self-efficacy in the Western countries is frequently higher than teachers in East or Southeast Asian countries such as Hong Kong (Ho & Hau, 2004), Singapore (Klassen et al., 2009), and the Republic of Korea (Vieluf et al., 2013). One reason that may account for the differences is that Confucian-based collectivism in the East affects teachers' self-evaluations, thereby underestimating their own positive traits and abilities and further self-efficacy (Vieluf et al., 2013). However, U.S. teachers may have different levels of self-efficacy than teachers in other countries in Asia such as Japan.

Three dimensions of TSE have been well-established in the literature of TES: classroom management, instruction, and student engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Given the importance of multiculturalism and diversity for both countries' educational systems (Milner, 2016; Shimahara, 1995; Zeichner, 2017), the TALIS 2018 included a question stem for self-efficacy of teaching in the multicultural or multilingual classroom setting under a subscale of "self-related efficacy in multicultural classrooms." This addition provides a more diverse perspective on TSE's relationship with diversity in the classroom and culturally responsive teaching as a whole (Ainley & Carstens, 2018), and allows us to investigate teacher self-efficacy in multicultural classrooms from both U.S. and Japanese new teachers' perspectives.

Studies have investigated Japan's approach to ITP from both U.S. (Ferguson, 1985; Hawley & Hawley, 1997) and Japanese perspectives (Kobayashi, 1993); in addition, research has examined the role of professional development for Japanese and U.S. teachers (Collinson & Ono, 2001). However, current, comparative studies of ITP in both countries are lacking (Morey et al., 1997; San, 1999); this gap is especially noticeable with large samples that are more representative of their respective populations. In this study, we pursue this comparison by exploring new teachers' perspectives about the content covered in their teacher education or formal training programs, feelings of preparedness, motivations to become a teacher, and self-efficacy, with the ultimate purpose of creating a 'launching pad' of sorts for future research to continue to explore the possibilities of a U.S.–Japan comparative framework based on the most recent international data.

2. METHODS

The data of this study was drawn from the TALIS 2018 administration. Both U.S. and Japanese lower secondary teachers participated in the TALIS 2018. The TALIS core survey aims at the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 2, which is lower secondary education. Regarding the school system, the U.S. adopts a "6 + 3 + 4" system of school education, including six-year elementary, three-year lower secondary/middle school, and four-year high school education. Japan adopts a "6 + 3 + 3" system of school education (Suzuki, 2014), including six-year compulsory primary, three-year junior secondary, and three-year senior education. Therefore, the TALIS ISCED level 2 teacher populations are those who taught at junior secondary schools in Japan and middle schools in the U.S., which is equivalent to U.S. grades of 7th, 8th, and 9th.

Data were drawn from lower secondary teachers with a maximum of three years of teaching experience. These teachers were commonly defined as new teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Teachers with a maximum of three years of teaching experience were selected for this study to reflect the changing dynamic of teacher education in the U.S. (Zeichner, 2017) during this time and the most recent educational reform in Japan (Iwata, 2015). A total of 2,560 U.S. teachers from 165 lower secondary schools and 3,555 Japanese

teachers from 196 lower secondary schools at the time of data collection participated in the TALIS 2018 administration; of these teacher participants, 355 U.S. and 433 Japanese new teachers were included in this study. Of these lower secondary new teachers, the majority of them (US: 232, 65%; Japan: 358, 83%) received a bachelor's degree or higher.

For the indexes used for this study, motivations to become a teacher and TSE, the TALIS 2018 dataset included a pre-calculated index as a composite score for each of the three subscales of motivations to become a teacher and the four subscales of TSE with an international center-point of 10 and an internationally set standard deviation of two. These indexes were used for data analysis. To address the research questions, both parametric and non-parametric statistical analyses were performed with consideration of two types of dependent variables. The International Database (IDB) Analyzer is a stand-alone analytical tool originally developed by the IEA for analysing large-scale international datasets and supports analytical procedures, such as the estimation of means, standard deviations, standard errors, and percentages, correlations, and linear regressions. It also correctly takes the sampling and study design into account in computing statistics and their standard errors. Therefore, the IDB Analyzer is an appropriate tool for the stratified multi-stage probability sampling design used in the TALIS.

In conjunction with SPSS, the IDB Analyzer generates SPSS syntax that allows us to consider the sampling design and weights into the computation of statistics and standard errors (Strizek et al., 2014), and was utilised to calculate estimates of means, standard errors, and standard deviations regarding the feelings of preparedness, motivations to become a teacher, and TSE. This analytic approach is equivalent to multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). For all the statistical tests, the alpha value for the statistical significance was set at 0.05. To address the first and third research questions of this study, we performed chi-square tests using SPSS 26 to compare the proportional differences in the content included in the ITP and career choice between U.S. and Japanese new teachers since both ITP content and career choice questions involved a "yes" or "no" response option.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

ITP content

Table 1 showed the compared Frequency and Percentage of the ITP content in formal education or training. The results revealed that similarly, a large proportion of new teachers (about 90.1%) in both countries reported their ITP training included "content of some or all subject(s) I teach", $\chi^2(1) = 0.13, p > 0.05$, phi = 0.04. However, a significantly larger proportion of U.S. teachers than Japanese teachers reported that their ITP covered the elements of "teaching in a mixed ability setting" (77.2% vs. 66.6%, $\chi^2(1) = 10.59, p < 0.01$, phi = 0.12), "teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting" (72.3% vs. 31.8%, $\chi^2(1) = 125.13, p < 0.01$, phi = 0.40), "teaching cross-curricular skills" (80.8% vs. 62.8%, $\chi^2(1) = 30.05, p < 0.01$, phi = 0.20), and "use of ICT for teaching" (72.0% vs. 64.5%, $\chi^2(1) = 5.00, p < 0.05$, phi = 0.08) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of elements included in formal education or training

	Japan		US		χ^2	p
	Yes	**Total**	**Yes**	**Total**		
Content of some or all subject(s) I teach	381/90%	423	317/90%	351	0.01	ns[a]
Pedagogy of some or all subject(s) I teach	365/87%	422	294/84%	351	1.14	ns

	Japan		US		χ^2	p
	Yes	**Total**	**Yes**	**Total**		
General pedagogy	364/86%	422	314/90%	350	2.14	ns
Classroom practice in some or all subject(s) I teach	357/85%	422	280/80%	350	2.80	ns
Teaching in a mixed ability setting	281/67%	422	271/77%	351	10.59	**< 0.01**
Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting	134/32%	421	253/72%	350	125.13	**< 0.01**
Teaching cross-curricular skills	265/63%	422	282/81%	349	30.05	**< 0.01**
Use of ICT for teaching	272/65%	422	252/72%	350	4.99	**< 0.05**
Student behaviour and classroom management	331/78%	422	279/80%	350	0.19	ns
Monitoring students' development and learning	331/78%	422	267/77%	349	0.41	ns

Note: a: ns = not significant

Feelings of preparedness

Table 2 reported the comparison of feeling of preparedness in teaching. Interestingly, U.S. teachers felt significantly more well-prepared for each element listed in teaching than Japanese teachers, *ps* < 0.01 (see Table 2). As suggested in Table 2, U.S. teachers reported significantly higher scores than their Japanese colleagues on each element.

Table 2. Means, standard errors, and standard deviations of feeling of preparedness in teaching

	Japan			US			
	M	*SE*	*SD*	*M*	*SE*	*SD*	*p*
Content of some or all subject(s) I teach	2.46	0.03	0.69	**3.11**	0.15	0.80	< 0.01
Pedagogy of some or all subject(s) I teach	2.39	0.03	0.67	**2.80**	0.16	0.83	< 0.01
General pedagogy	2.31	0.03	0.64	**2.85**	0.11	0.77	< 0.01
Classroom practice in some or all subject(s) I teach	2.49	0.04	0.80	**2.88**	0.06	0.78	< 0.01
Teaching in a mixed ability setting	2.04	0.04	0.70	**2.55**	0.07	0.84	< 0.01
Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting	1.61	0.05	0.75	**2.29**	0.13	1.00	< 0.01
Teaching cross-curricular skills	1.93	0.04	0.71	**2.68**	0.08	0.80	< 0.01
Use of ICT for teaching	2.16	0.04	0.88	**2.43**	0.15	0.88	< 0.01
Student behaviour and classroom management	2.09	0.04	0.71	**2.54**	0.06	0.85	< 0.01
Monitoring students' development and learning	2.16	0.04	0.72	**2.68**	0.05	0.86	< 0.01

Note: *M* = Mean, *SE* = Standard Error, *SD* = Standard Deviation. Higher scores are bold.

Motivations to become a teacher and career choice

Table 3 showed the compared results of the motivations to become a teacher and career choice in three aspects: social utility value, personal utility value, and perceptions of value and policy influence. Both U.S. and Japanese new teachers reported higher means on *social utility*

value of motivations to become a teacher (M = 12.49, SD = 1.27 vs. M = 12.06, SD = 2.19). U.S. new teachers reported significantly higher scores than Japanese teachers on *social utility value*, p < 0.01 (see Table 3). Japanese new teachers scored higher *than U.S. teachers* on the subscale of *personal utility value* (10.57, SD = 1.95 vs. M = 11.03, SD = 1.75), the difference was statistically significant, p < 0.01. Although U.S. new teachers scored lower than Japanese teachers on the subscale of *perceptions of value and policy influence* (M = 8.76, SD = 2.14 vs. M = 9.17, SD = 2.18), the difference was not significant between these two groups, p > 0.05.

Table 3. *Means, standard errors, and standard deviations of motivations to become a teacher*

	Japan			US			
	M	*SE*	*SD*	*M*	*SE*	*SD*	*p*
Social utility value	12.06	0.12	2.19	**12.49**	0.12	1.27	< 0.01
Personal utility value	**11.03**	0.07	1.75	10.57	0.14	1.95	< 0.01
Perceptions of value and policy influence	**9.17**	0.11	2.18	8.76	0.15	2.14	ns[a]

Note: M = Mean, SE = Standard Error, SD = Standard Deviation, a: ns = not significant.

In terms of career choice, a total of 171 out of 355 (48.2%) new teachers in the U.S. sample and 349 out of 433 (80.6%) new teachers in Japanese sample reported teaching as the first career choice. The chi-square statistic $\chi^2(1)$ = 91.42, p < 0.01, phi = 0.34, suggests a significantly larger proportion of Japanese new teachers chose teaching as their first career choice.

Teacher self-efficacy

Regarding TSE, interestingly, the results indicated there were no statistically significant mean differences in the four domains of TSE between U.S. and Japanese new teachers, ps > 0.05 (see Table 4). Table 4 showed the mean scores on the four TSE subscales for U.S. and Japanese new teachers: self-efficacy in instruction (M = 12.06, SD = 1.94 vs. M = 12.14, SD = 2.18), self-efficacy in classroom management (M = 11.61, SD = 2.51 vs. M = 11.60, SD = 2.26), self-efficacy in student engagement (M = 11.36, SD = 2.16 vs. M = 11.42, SD = 1.67), and self-related efficacy in multicultural classrooms (M = 10.91, SD = 2.27 vs. M = 10.69, SD = 1.87).

Table 4. *Means, standard errors, and standard deviations of TSE*

	Japan			US			
	M	*SE*	*SD*	*M*	*SE*	*SD*	*p*
Self-efficacy in instruction	12.14	0.12	2.18	12.06	0.10	1.94	ns[a]
Self-efficacy in classroom management	11.60	0.13	2.26	11.61	0.17	2.51	ns
Self-efficacy in student engagement	11.42	0.09	1.67	11.36	0.22	2.16	ns
Self-efficacy in multicultural classrooms	10.69	0.20	1.87	10.91	0.27	2.27	ns

Note: M = Mean, SE = Standard Error, SD = Standard Deviation, a: ns = not significant.

Discussion

In this study, new teachers in the U.S. and Japan were compared in terms of their ITP content, feeling of preparedness, motivations to become a teacher, and TSE. These different questions, together, create a profile of the ITP experiences of these teachers, and these profiles

can be examined using comparative analysis to further contextualize the ITP approaches of both countries and their recent educational reforms (Ainley & Carstens, 2018; Isozaki, 2018; Zeichner, 2017).

ITP content and teacher preparedness

In terms of ITP content, the lack of content focusing on mixed-ability settings, multicultural or multilingual settings, cross-curricular skills in Japan ($ps < 0.01$) to some extent is expected; the U.S. is a widely diverse country with many different linguistic and cultural practices, and as such a difference in mixed-ability and multilingual or multicultural settings should not be surprising. That being said, Japan is rapidly diversifying, and the low numbers of these content areas are troubling considering how long it has been known that providing accommodating educational experiences for diverse Japanese students is necessary (Shimahara, 1995). There is some debate about the ability of ITP to do this; this is a particular concern for culturally responsive teaching (Siwatu et al., 2016); further research should explore the ways that these content areas (mixed-ability pedagogy, multicultural or multilingual pedagogy, cross-curricular skills, and information communication technology) can be addressed in Japanese ITP.

The finding that U.S. new teachers reported higher scores of feelings of preparedness than Japanese new teachers should be interpreted with some caution considering the culture's influence on their self-perceived preparedness. Americans have traditionally demonstrated higher confidence levels when compared to other countries, particularly Japan (Morey et al., 1997). However, while the bias of American confidence is likely to present in the data, differences between U.S. and Japanese new teachers' sense of preparedness may not exclusively be the result of said bias. Research on Japanese ITP approaches and programs reveals that their quality has historically been lacking; this is primarily as a result of a greater emphasis on theoretical over practical knowledge and ability (Howe, 2008; Isozaki, 2018; Suzuki, 2014). As such, even with teacher education reforms in the past few years, there may not yet be a significant improvement on the feelings of preparedness that new Japanese teachers have regarding their ITP experience.

The implications of these findings suggest that there is still a need for continuous improvement and development of ITP program quality and offerings in Japan. However, teacher educators and ITP program coordinators should more carefully consider the influence of American confidence on U.S. new teachers' ability to accurately self-assess their own progress and performance, as this can lead to potentially inaccurate data. Japan may hold a potential key for U.S. new teachers in this regard, as there is a trend in prior research that observes Japanese teachers' self-reflective ability as being a particular strength (Izumi-Taylor et al., 2010).

Teacher motivation, career choice, and ITP

The findings of motivations revealed that both teachers reportedly scored higher on social utility value as an important motivation to become a teacher. Japan's new teachers perceived a significantly higher score on personal utility value of teaching than U.S. new teachers. The high rating of influencing students as a motivational factor is consistent with international trends (Ainley & Carstens, 2018) and prior research (Lin et al., 2021; Ponnock et al., 2018; Watt & Richardson, 2007). This may likely be related to the fact that Japan is rated as the highest country out of all other TALIS countries for motivation and teacher choice. However, all of these rating categories are known to decrease in the early years of teaching given that teachers are exposed to the realities of teaching that were not otherwise simulated as effectively in their ITP making it more difficult to see the benefits of the profession to make impact on students (particularly with 'white savior' issues in the U.S.), and to feel like society

as a whole is responsive to teachers (Ponnock et al., 2018).

The higher ratings for social and personal utility and their first choice to become a teacher in Japan compared to the U.S. have several potential explanations. The results may be indicative of a "Japanese ethno-pedagogy" where relationships with students are a major priority for Japanese teachers in terms of their motivation and TSE (Morey et al., 1997). In terms of culture, there is also the potential influence of Japanese teaching culture, which is generally more developed in Japan than the U.S. (San, 1999). Additionally, another potential factor is that Japanese new teachers are generally more supported in their early careers, as there are established mandatory systems of induction in schools; however, the much shorter student teaching experiences in Japanese ITP programs contradict this notion to some degree (Howe, 2008). While none of these are necessarily conclusive, it is clear that a closer examination is needed in this area to better understand the factors of teacher motivations and career choice; additionally, the previous research provides potential avenues for further study. Educational policymakers should initiate policies and reforms that specifically target the desirability and status of teaching as a profession, such as better salaries and greater social status, as these changes are considered "strong motivators" (Ponnock et al., 2018).

Teacher self-efficacy (TSE) and ITP

The results regarding new teachers' sense of TSE for both Japan and the U.S. proved to be one of the most surprising findings of the study – the results were not significantly different in any of the four main domains of TSE – classroom management, student engagement, instruction, or in multicultural classrooms. In fact, it is quite the opposite – they are nearly identical in all four domains. The results contradict previous research in comparisons of TSE between teachers in the East and the West (Ho & Hau, 2004; Klassen et al., 2009; Vieluf et al., 2013). This finding challenges the assumptions that Confucian-based collectivism in the East affects and under evaluates teachers' self-efficacy (Vieluf et al., 2013) and that the U.S. teachers have higher levels of self-efficacy. Due to the teacher education reforms in both countries under the influence of globalisation, new teachers may face more similar challenges than before and the challenges similarly influence their self-efficacy; thus, the differences of TSE may be levelled off; in this situation, there is no negative association between Japanese TSE and collectivism nor positive association between U.S. TSE and individualism. We came to a conclusion that although cross-psychological theories claim the opposite association between teacher self-efficacy and individualism vs. collectivism (Heine & Hamamura, 2007; Kurman, 2003; Uskul et al., 2010), teachers may have different outcomes and do not necessarily follow the cultures in each country. In future cross-national research, it is imperative to evaluate East Asian countries together to identify the TSE differences among these countries (Shi, 2014). Also, several East Asian countries can be compared to see whether teachers possess different TSE among the similar cultures or compare them with other certain groups such as English-speaking countries and further investigate whether globalization has diminished the differences of teachers in different countries.

Additionally, in the present study, we included one construct of self-related efficacy in multicultural classrooms, which might help yield the results. In particular, the lowest TSE mean for both countries is found in self-related efficacy in multicultural classrooms, which supports the notion posed previously that ITP may currently not be effective at instilling self-efficacy beliefs regarding culturally responsive practices (Siwatu et al., 2016), as the ITP content and feelings of preparedness between U.S. and Japanese new teachers were significantly different for the multiculturalism/multilingual category regardless. Given the limitations described for recording TSE through self-report data (Shawer, 2013), more research is needed to confirm the existence of a relationship between ITP and TSE in the context of multiculturalism, and additionally to explore the greater context surrounding the mystery of U.S. and Japanese new

teachers' similarity in self-efficacy in spite of the observed differences in this study, and the observed differences in perspective from other studies (Rose et al., 2008).

Given the importance of diversity and multiculturalism in regards to education reform for both the U.S and Japan (Milner, 2016; Shimahara, 1995; Zeichner, 2017), our study revealed both the great differences in content and feelings of preparedness between U.S. and Japanese new teachers, as well as the similarities in TSE. This perspective confirms previous literature (Collinson & Ono, 2001; Ferguson, 1985) and provides a justification for the continued importance of exploring teacher education and teachers in the context of a comparative framework. Biases can be better explored and more specific questions can be developed to inspire and give direction to further study and, ultimately, benefit the process of teacher education through an international context. Several limitations to this study should be considered. First, the study is self-reported data; this is not necessarily problematic when exploring perceptions and feelings, but conclusions about ITP programs as a whole or their effectiveness cannot be fully made with this data alone. Second, the article would benefit from a greater selection of literature that is more representative of the wide variety of research that is available in Japanese language journals. We feel that the merits of the findings speak enough for themselves that other researchers can build upon our findings for future comparative research between Japan and the U.S.

4. CONCLUSION

ITP in the U.S. more often included teaching in mixed-ability and multicultural settings, cross-curricular skills, and technology in Japan, and U.S. teachers felt more prepared than Japanese teachers in each category of preparation listed in the TALIS teacher questionnaire. Japanese teachers were more likely to declare teaching as their first career choice and reportedly scored significantly higher on motivations to become a teacher of personal utility value. There were no significant differences in self-efficacy between U.S. and Japanese new teachers.

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