



## ANALYZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY PERCEPTIONS AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT LEVELS<sup>i</sup>

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### Abstract:

The aim of this study is to determine teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels; to examine the relationship between their self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels and to determine whether their self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels change according to various variables. This study was conducted with 349 teachers working at the districts of Van province. As data collection tools, "*Teachers' Self-efficacy Scale*" consisting of 32 items and developed by Senemoğlu (2006), and "*Teachers' Professional Commitment Scale*" consisting of 20 items and developed by Kozikoğlu (2016) were used in this study. In data analysis; descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used. As a result of the study, teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels were found as high. It was found that teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment don't change significantly according to gender and branch. Furthermore; a positive, moderate level and significant relationship was found between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment. This shows that as teachers' self-efficacy perceptions increase, so does their professional commitment.

**Keywords:** self-efficacy, professional commitment, teachers, relationship

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## Introduction

Rapid changes and developments taking place in today's age of information and technology make redefinition of every concept, case and happening involved in individual and universal life. The role of schools and teachers in creating desired order of society makes their presence meaningful and gets teacher the most important element in the concept of school. Changes and innovations occurring in the information world lead to differentiation in teacher competences that they should have (Mustan, 2002). Therefore, teachers are required to have certain qualifications that the age requires. In addition, teachers' beliefs and perceptions about having these qualifications have an important place. This refers to the importance of "*self-efficacy*" concept.

## Self-efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy is based on Social Cognitive Theory developed by Bandura (Pajares & Schunck, 2002) and is one of the basic concepts of social cognitive theory that Bandura considers to be effective on behavior (Senemoğlu, 2013, p. 234). In this theory, the individual is perceived as a product of their social environment and social system and is considered the creator of this system. The most important feature that gives the human being this power is individual's beliefs about his/her competencies and these beliefs are discussed in the concept of self-efficacy (Senemoğlu, Demirel, Yağcı, & Üstündağ, 2009).

People contribute to the psychological situation through personal mechanisms. The most effective of these mechanisms is one's self-efficacy beliefs. Perceived self-efficacy is individual's beliefs concerning his/her organizing and managing capacity of the activities that are necessary to overcome possible situations (Bandura, 1997, p.2). In the most general sense, the level of an individual's thinking that there is sufficient capacity to carry out a task is expressed as his/her self-efficacy. This belief is shaped as a result of detailed analysis and evaluation of their capacity made by individuals. If the individual thinks that, his/her capacity is enough for the event or situation, the individual takes action. Individual's belief in his/her capacity is his/her self-efficacy and it is an important motivating source (Senemoğlu et al, 2009). Self-efficacy beliefs influence individual's the way of thinking, feeling, motivating himself/herself and how to react (Bandura, 1997, p.2).

Individuals' beliefs about their self-efficacy can be improved by four major sources of influence. The most effective way of creating a strong sense of self-efficacy is individual's own experiences gained by themselves. While success supports self-

efficacy, failure undermines it. The second effective way to strengthen the self-efficacy beliefs are social life models acquired indirectly. In this case, similarity of the individual to the person modeled is important. The stronger the similarity, the more powerful self-efficacy beliefs become whether to be able to accomplish or not. Verbal persuasion is another source of influence that strengthens the self-efficacy. Verbally persuading and supporting an individual concerning achieving a job strengthens the self-efficacy. The final source of influence is psychological and emotional state. While positive mood supports self-efficacy, desperate mood undermines it (Bandura, 1997).

The self-efficacy concerning the teachers is their beliefs that they have the necessary skills and abilities to help students learn. The feeling of having sufficient knowledge and skills to achieve the desired success has a significant impact on teachers' self-efficacy perceptions (Bogler & Somech, 2004). The level of teachers' beliefs concerning self-efficacy and effectiveness has an important role in determining their actions in the classroom (Michel, 2013). Self-efficacy beliefs are associated with teachers' effectiveness in teaching-learning process and students' achievements, attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs as a consequence. Therefore, teacher's self-efficacy beliefs should be at high level in order to manage the teaching-learning process effectively (Senemoğlu et al, 2009).

In short, self-efficacy is called as "perceived self-efficacy" technically. In other words, it is an individual's beliefs about oneself concerning the level to be successful in coping with the difficulties he/she faces (Senemoğlu, 2013, p. 234). Teachers' self-efficacy levels are important in this process. In addition, there was found a strong correlation between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and their passion towards profession, showing resistance to the difficulties, behaviors, and professional commitment levels (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

### **Professional Commitment of Teachers**

Teaching is not just a profession to make a living, but also a social service. In this sense, a teacher must be committed to his/her profession. Professional commitment is the feeling of one's dedication to the profession (Shukla, 2014).

Professional commitment is considered to be an important factor on how individuals in the profession perform. In other words, it is known that an individual's effort and energy showing for the profession is associated with the professional commitment. In this sense, professional commitment is directly related to the efforts, dedication, and time spent in the profession. In addition, professional commitment of the teachers is seen as an important variable on student achievement (Turhan, Demirli,

& Nazik, 2012). Professionally committed teachers put so much effort not only for the success of students, but also for their own professional development (Shukla, 2014).

It is known that committed teachers have various features. For example; valuing of the profession and spending extra time with the students (Butucha, 2013), feeling psychological commitment to the profession (Coladarci, 1992), giving importance to student development and their personal development (Shukla, 2014), seeing the profession as an important part of life (Bogler & Somech, 2004), fulfilling their professional responsibilities and following current developments (Fox, 1964) are listed among the features owned by committed teachers.

Commitment emerges as a requirement for achieving the objectives that should be carried out in educational institutions. Considering the individual differences in students, students at risk, the need of qualified education that the labor force demands from educational institutions and schools, overcoming all of them does not seem possible without high level committed teachers (Abd Razak, Darmawan, & Keeves, 2009). In this case, it is seen that high level committed teachers are needed for the training of skilled manpower required by age.

### **The Aim and Importance of the Study**

The aim of this study is to determine teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels; to examine the relationship between their self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels and to determine whether their self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels change according to gender and branch. Concerning this general purpose, the following questions were answered in this research:

1. *What is the level of teachers' self-efficacy perceptions?*
2. *What is the level of teachers' professional commitment?*
3. *Do teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels show a significant difference according to;*
  - a. *gender*
  - b. *branch*
4. *Is there a significant correlation between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels?*

Teachers' professional commitment is closely associated with self-efficacy (Coladarci, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Teachers' self-efficacy perceptions affect their performance, commitment and their situation whether might remain in the profession or not (Darling-Hammond, 2003). For example, teachers

having a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to plan appropriate activities, help students who are experiencing difficulties, make efforts to find appropriate teaching materials. Consequently, the teacher will perform better in the profession and commitment will increase. In addition, teachers having a high sense of self-efficacy may cope with the challenges that face easier, and they will put more effort in the profession and take more responsibility for success or failure. Teachers with low level of self-efficacy often attribute success or failure to other factors (Ware & Kitsantas, 2010). In this case, it is considered to be a significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and their professional commitment.

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

This research is in correlational descriptive model. In correlational descriptive models, it is aimed to determine the presence and degree of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2013, p.81). Therefore, this model is considered to correspond to the purpose of this research.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of the study constitutes teachers working at primary, secondary and high schools in İpekyolu, Tuşba and Edremit districts of Van province, in the academic year 2015-2016. As it is impossible to reach the entire universe in terms of time and facilities, it was preferred to take sample from the study population using the stratified sampling method. In stratified sampling method, the population is divided into layers and the number of individuals is determined based on the ratio of each layer in the entire population (Kaptan, 1998, p.122).

In this research, the schools in the study population were listed according to the school districts based on experts' opinions and was divided into three sub-groups such as low, moderate and upper according to socio-economic development level. From each sub-group (layer), the number of schools was determined based on the ratio of each layer in the entire population and this study was conducted with 349 teachers working in these schools.

The distribution of the teachers in the sample according to demographic variables is presented in Table 1:

**Table 1:** The distribution of the teachers in the sample according to demographic variables

Demographic variable	Category	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	208	59.6
	Male	141	40.4
Branch	Mathematics	53	15.2
	Religion	63	18.1
	English	53	15.2
	Science fields	40	11.5
	Social sciences	65	18.6
	Special ability fields	38	10.9
	Vocational courses	37	10.6

According to data in Table 1; 208 teachers are female, 141 teachers are male. And, the participants are teachers in various branches.

### Data Collection Tools

In this research, as data collection tools, two scales were used that are "*Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale*" and "*Teachers' Professional Commitment Scale*".

**Teachers' Self-efficacy Scale:** "*Teachers' Self-efficacy Scale*" consisting of 32 items and developed by Senemoğlu (2006) was used in order to determine teachers' self-efficacy perceptions. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of one-dimensional scale was calculated as 0.96. In this study, the scale's Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was also found as 0.95. This shows that the scale is a valid and reliable measurement tool.

**Teachers' Professional Commitment Scale:** "*Teachers' Professional Commitment Scale*" consisting of 20 items and developed by Kozikoğlu (2016) was used in order to determine teachers' professional commitment levels. The scale consists of three sub-dimensions that are professional adherence, commitment to students and devotion. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the total scale was calculated as 0.90; and was calculated as 0.92, 0.86 and 0.70 for the sub-dimensions respectively. In this study, the scale's Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was also found as 0.91. This shows that the scale is a valid and reliable measurement tool.

### Data analysis

Research data collected in this study were analyzed by using SPSS 18.0 statistic program. Mean and standard deviation values were used in order to determine teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels. These values were interpreted as "1-1.79" very low, "1.80-2.59" low, "2.60-3.39" medium, "3.40-4.19" high, "4.20-5.00" very high. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used in order to determine the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and

professional commitment levels. The t-test was used in order to determine whether teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels varied significantly according to gender; ANOVA was used to determine whether teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels varied significantly according to branch. In analysis of data, significance level is accepted as .05.

## Results

### Results Concerning First and Second Sub-Problem

The mean and standard deviation values calculated based on teachers' answers concerning first and second sub-problems that are "What is the level of teachers' self-efficacy perceptions?" and "What is the level of teachers' professional commitment?" are presented in Table 2:

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics Concerning Teachers' Self-efficacy and Professional Commitment

Scale	$\bar{X}$	Ss
Self-efficacy	3.82	0.56
Professional commitment (Total)	4.19	0.49
Professional adherence	4.17	0.74
Commitment to students	4.28	0.47
Devotion	4.05	0.59

According to findings in Table 2, it is seen that teachers' self-efficacy perceptions are at high level ( $\bar{X}$  =3.82). Moreover, teachers' professional commitment was found at high level in both total scale ( $\bar{X}$  =4.19) and sub-dimensions of the scale.

### Results Concerning Third Sub-Problem

The third sub-problem of the scale was determined as "Do teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels show a significant difference according to gender and branch?" The t-test results concerning whether teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels varied significantly according to gender were presented in Table 3:

**Table 3:** The T-Test Results of Teachers' Self-Efficacy Perceptions and Professional Commitment Levels According to Gender

Variable	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Self-efficacy	Female	208	3.79	0.56	347	-1.393	.164
	Male	141	3.88	0.57			
Commitment	Female	208	4.20	0.34	347	0.493	.622
	Male	141	4.18	0.39			

p < .05

According to Table 3 findings, teachers' self-efficacy ( $t(347) = -1.393, p > .05$ ) and professional commitment level ( $t(347) = 0.493, p > .05$ ) do not show a significant difference by gender. In other words, teachers' self-efficacy and professional commitment levels do not change significantly depending on gender. These findings show that gender is not an effective variable on teachers' self-efficacy and professional commitment. In addition, ANOVA results concerning whether teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels varied significantly according to branch were presented in Table 4:

**Table 4:** ANOVA Results of Teachers' Self-Efficacy Perceptions and Professional Commitment Levels According to Branch

Descriptive Statistics		ANOVA Results								
Dependent variable	Branch	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of variation	Mean square	sd	Sum of squares	F	p
Self-efficacy	Mathematics	53	3.77	.61	Between groups	1.343	6	.224	0.705	.646
	Religion	63	3.75	.56						
	English	53	3.83	.53	Within groups	108.623	342	.318		
	Science fields	40	3.77	.50						
	Social sciences	65	3.87	.52	Total					
	Special ability fields	38	3.91	.68						
	Vocational courses	37	3.92	.55						
Commitment	Mathematics	53	4.16	.52	Between groups	2.726	6	.454	1.954	.072
	Religion	63	4.24	.42						
	English	53	4.23	.46	Within groups	79.529	342	.233		
	Science fields	40	4.11	.46						
	Social sciences	65	4.14	.55	Total					
	Special ability fields	38	4.09	.48						
	Vocational courses	37	4.40	.45						

p < .05



According to Table 4 findings, teachers' self-efficacy ( $F(6, 342) = 0.705, p > .05$ ) and professional commitment level ( $F(6, 342) = 1.954, p > .05$ ) do not show a significant difference according to branch. In other words, self-efficacy and professional commitment of the teachers do not change significantly according to branch.

### Results Concerning Fourth Sub-Problem

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients obtained from the scores of "Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale (SES)" and "Teachers' Professional Commitment Scale (PCS)" concerning the fourth sub-problem "Is there a significant correlation between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment levels?" are presented in Table 5:

**Table 5:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients Concerning SES and PCS Scores

Dimensions	Commitment (total)	Professional adherence	Commitment to students	Devotion
Self-efficacy	.386**	.236**	.417**	.314**

$p < .01^{**}$

As seen in Table 4, a positive, moderate level and significant relationship was found between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment ( $r = .386, p < .01$ ), and its sub-dimensions that are commitment to students ( $r = .417, p < .01$ ) and devotion ( $r = .314, p < .01$ ); and a positive, low level and significant relationship was found between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and sub-dimension of professional adherence ( $r = .236, p < .01$ ).

### Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

In this research, teachers' self-efficacy perceptions were found as high. This finding supports the findings of similar studies in the literature (Benzer, 2011; Eker, 2014; Ekici, 2006; Gömleksiz & Serhatlıoğlu, 2013; Karacaoğlu, 2008; Korkut, 2009; Özder, 2011; Tunç-Yüksel, 2010; Yılmaz, 2004). Teachers' self-efficacy perceptions have an important place in teachers' fulfilling their profession successfully (Kurt, 2012). It was found a positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and student achievement in some studies conducted on abroad (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, 2001). In addition, teachers' self-efficacy is known to be an important predictor of teacher behaviors (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In this case, having a high level of self-efficacy for teacher can be assessed as positive in terms of both qualified teacher behaviors and ensuring student success.

Teachers' professional commitment levels were found as high. This finding supports the findings of many similar studies in the literature (Artun, 2008; Babaoğlu & Ertürk, 2013; Butucha, 2013; Celep, Bülbül, & Tunç, 2000; Celep et al, 2004; Çelik, 2011; Ekinci, 2012; Ewing & Smith, 2003; Kozikoğlu, 2016; Kızıl, 2014; Michel, 2013; Narman, 2012; Zöğ, 2007). In this case, it can be said that teachers are committed to the profession at a sufficient level. It is known that teachers with high level professional commitment allow time and put much effort for the quality of profession and student achievement (Glickman et al, 2005; Cited: Barbara & Grady, 2007). In this case, it can be said that teachers put effort in order to practice their profession in a more effective way and be more helpful for the students. It is possible to say that teachers' being excited and passionate about their profession as most of the teachers (61%) surveyed are new in the profession (1-5 years' experience) has an impact on this result.

It was found that teachers' self-efficacy perceptions do not change significantly depending on gender. Unlike this research, some studies in the literature (Korkut, 2009; Korkut & Babaoğlu, 2012; Özata, 2007) revealed that male teachers have higher self-efficacy than female teachers. But, many studies in the literature (Aksoy, 2011; Benzer, 2011; Gömleksiz & Serhatlıoğlu, 2013; Gür, 2008; Koparan, Öztürk, & Korkmaz, 2011; Milner & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2003; Özerkan, 2007; Tunç-Yüksel, 2010; Üstüner, Demirtaş, Cömert, & Özer, 2009) reached similar findings to this study. In this case, it can be said that gender is not an effective variable on teachers' self-efficacy. In other words, male and female teachers have similar views regarding self-efficacy perceptions. In addition, it was found that teachers' self-efficacy perceptions do not change significantly depending on branch. Several studies in the literature (Aksoy, 2011; Gür, 2008; Karacaoğlu, 2008; Üstüner, Demirtaş, Cömert, & Özer, 2009) reached similar findings. In this case, it can be said that branch is not an effective variable on teachers' self-efficacy.

It was found that teachers' professional commitment levels do not change significantly depending on gender. This finding supports the findings of similar studies in the literature (Arjunan & Balamurugan, 2013; Çelik, 2011; Turhan, Demirli, & Nazik, 2012; Zöğ, 2007). However, in some studies in the literature (Artun, 2008; Coladarci, 1992; Ekinci, 2012) it was found that female teachers are more committed compared to male teachers; while in one study (Butucha, 2013) it was found that male teachers are more committed to the profession emotionally compared to females. Hence, it is seen that there are different results in the studies; it can be said that the results of these studies are due to differences in sample groups of the studies. According to the results of this study, it can be said that gender is not an effective variable on teachers' professional commitment; male and female teachers have similar levels of professional

commitment. In addition, it was found that teachers' professional commitment levels do not change significantly depending on branch. Similarly, in Artun's (2008) study, it was found that teachers' organizational commitment levels do not change significantly depending on branch. In this case, it can be said that teachers' professional commitment do not change significantly according to branch and branch is not an effective variable on teachers' professional commitment.

Furthermore; a positive, moderate level and significant relationship was found between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment. Similarly, in Shukla's (2014) study, a positive, low level and significant relationship was found between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment; in Coladarci's (1992) study, it was found that teachers who have high level of general and personal self-efficacy have higher level of professional commitment. Also, in Ware & Kitsantas's (2007) study which aimed to determine to what level teachers' general and personal self-efficacy explain their professional commitment, it was found that 18% variance in teachers' professional commitment can be explained by teachers' personal and general efficacy. In fact, the literature highlights that teachers' self-efficacy and professional commitment are closely related (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001) and teachers' self-efficacy affects their professional commitment (Darling-Hammond, 2003). When these findings are considered together, it is seen that there is a positive correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and professional commitment. In this case, it can be said that as teachers' self-efficacy perceptions increase, so does their professional commitment.

In this study the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and professional commitment was analyzed; in further studies, the factors that can affect teachers' professional commitment can be analyzed or a regression analysis can be made including predictor variables of professional commitment.

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