

Full Length Research Paper

Self-efficacy as predictor of collective self-efficacy among preschool teachers in Turkey

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This study investigates the effect of preschool teachers' collective self-efficacy. A study group consists of 172 preschool teachers who are working in public preschools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in different cities of Turkey. In this study, teacher self- efficiency scale is employed to assess professional efficiency perception of teachers. Schwarzer et al have developed the scale, Sünbül and Arslan studied validity and validity of scale, and adopted it to Turkish. For identifying teachers' collective self-efficacy, the Collective Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Arslan and Sünbül (2006) has been applied. In data analysis, Pearson product-moment correlation, and simple linear regression analysis method has been used. As a result of the study, it was found that there was a positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and collective self- efficacy. Besides, it was found that teachers' self-efficacy significantly explain collective self- efficacy.

Key words: Teacher, self-efficacy, collective self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a profession that takes the administrative tasks related to education, teaching of the state (Dagli, 2002). Teaching is a significant profession that shapes the way of life and development of individuals, and society. For this reason, one of the basic elements that make teaching processes meaningful, effective and productive is the role of teacher (Alkan, 2000).

Teachers as the architects of the society must be trained at the level to meet the needs of the country and today's conditions (Kösterioğlu and Kösterioğlu, 2008). The extent to which the teacher have the qualifications related to the teaching profession and their attitudes towards the teaching profession has an important place

in the nature for the educated teachers (Capri and Celikkaleli, 2008; Bozdoğan et al., 2007; Aydın and Sağlam, 2012).

Proficiency is the ability to have the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes required to carry out tasks specific to a profession (Yesilyurt, 2011). According to Bandura (1977), competence refers to self-judgment on the capacity of an individual to organize and successfully perform activities necessary to demonstrate certain performance (Senemoğlu, 1997). There is an important place in the formation, development and orientation of society in education and training.

The architects of education and training are teachers

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(Cırcır, 2006). The level of teacher qualifications is also an important factor affecting the level of learning of the learners. The more qualified the teacher is, the greater the student learning and the persistence of the learning become (Karacaoglu, 2008).

It seems that the sense of the competence of teachers is very important in terms of learning and teaching activities in effective ways the teaching process is carried out, and motivating the students to learn. However, the teacher who has the responsibility of educating the individual should also have adequate education-teaching understanding, knowledge and attitude (Sünbül and Arslan, 2006). The competency level of teachers regarding interpersonal relationships is important in terms of their profession (Sünbül and Arslan, 2006). It is expected that teachers will have the ability to facilitate their learning, to be effective instructor, to organize their group work, and to attract the interest of their students as well as their knowledge (Karacaoglu, 2008).

Although, the personality and professional qualities of the teachers have a great effect on the students at every stage of education, their role is more significant for the children who have newly separated from the family environment, recently joined a social atmosphere outside from their family, encountered a new and different model after the role models of their mother, father, relatives etc. (Koçyiğit, 2011). It is only possible to provide a quality education, a befitting structure and materials, a program suitable for its own purpose, through cooperation from administrators to teachers from the health personnel to the employees as a whole acting in the frame of common purpose (Zembat, 1992).

The teacher, who is one of the most important elements in pre-school education, plays an important role in the attainment of the goals, and quality of pre-school education (Koçyiğit, 2011). Traits of teachers are one of the main determinants that influence the quality of preschool education, and the development of the child. Children discover and benefit from the learning opportunities presented in a supportive environment that they are only valued, they are sure that they feel safe, and they are valued. The most important component of this supportive environment is a consistent, and secure relationship between the teacher and the child (MEB, 2012). The pre-school teacher is the person who is with the children at any moment, and the children trust a teacher who communicates with them and shares their own enthusiasm with them as well (Poyraz, 2011). The extent to which the child can discover, learn and know depends on how fast the child's environment is supportive, and what possibilities are offered to the child.

In addition to being a model for the students, the teacher plays an important role in preparing the necessary tools and materials for his education and training, in organizing the environment, transferring knowledge and following up the results and outcomes (Yeşilyaprak, 2004).

Teachers gain the significant part of their competencies

in pre-service training, in other words teacher training programs (Yeşilyurt, 2011; Seferoğlu, 2004). The extent to which the child can discover, learn and know is correlated with how fast the child's environment is supportive, and what possibilities are offered to the child are closely related (MEB, 2012).

A good teacher continuously develops himself/herself from professional and personal aspects, explores and evaluates opportunities and possibilities for self-improvement (Seferoğlu, 2004). The teacher should be eager to develop himself/herself, and to become more professionally qualified. How they perceive the concept of professional competence is important for this. The cooperative behavior of a teacher who perceives that s/he is professionally competent may influence his/her behaviors. For this reason, the effect of perceptions of professional competence on pre-service teachers' competence to work with their colleagues was investigated in this study.

The main purpose of this study, was to investigate preschool teacher' self-efficacy as predictors of collective self-efficacy among a sample of Turkish preschool teachers. Based on the previous literature, the study research questions were:

1. What is the relationship between preschool teacher's self-efficacy and collective self-efficacy?
2. How would the preschool teacher's self-efficacy predict the collective self-efficacy of Turkish preschool teachers?

METHODOLOGY

Design of the study

This study was conducted with a causal design in order to investigate to what degree is the preschool teacher' self-efficacy in predicting collective self-efficacy. Causal design is a kind of research design that investigates the cause-effect relationship that occurs or already exists among some variables. When it is assumed that the relationship among the variables is a cause-effect relation, a causal research design is used (Karadağ, 2009). Taking this into account, the preschool teacher' self-efficacy is an independent variable, while collective self-efficiency is a dependent variable.

Participants

The sample set of the research was taken from preschool teachers from Turkey. 172 preschool teachers selected by random element sampling method consisted of study group. The teachers who took part in the study were aged between 24 to 43 years old (Mean=27.5, Standard deviation=3.2) 123 of the teachers were female and 49 were male. Occupational experience ranged from 1 year to 28 years.

Instruments

Teacher self-efficacy scale

Teacher self-efficacy scale was developed by Schmitz and Schwarzer (2000), and adapted for Turkish samples by Sünbül and

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Preschool teachers' self-efficacy	172	31.52	4.87	9	36
Preschool teachers' collective self-efficacy	172	40.3	6.2	12	48

Table 2. Relation between preschool teachers' self-efficacy and collective self-efficacy.

Variable	Preschool teachers' collective self-efficacy
Preschool teachers' self-efficacy	0.71

Arslan (2006). A 10-item teacher self-efficacy scale refers to rating on a 4-point likert type scale (1 = *not at all true*, to 4 = *exactly true*). Higher scores on the scale items indicate higher levels self-efficacy. The internal consistency coefficients of the scale were found to be 0.74.

Collective teacher self-efficacy scale

Collective teacher self-efficacy scale was developed by Schwarzer et al. (1999), and adapted to Turkish samples by Arslan and Sünbül (2006). A 12-item teacher self-efficacy scale refers to rating on a 4-point likert type scale (1 = *not at all true* to 4 = *exactly true*). Higher scores on the scale items indicate higher levels collective self-efficacy. The internal consistency coefficients of the scale were found to be 0.88.

Data analysis

In the research, teachers' collective self-efficacy scale and teachers' collective self-efficacy scale were filled by preschool teachers in the study group in order to obtain data related to collective self-efficacy and self-efficacy. Total scores for preschool teachers' self-efficacy, and collective self-efficacy were obtained from the completed scales. The analysis of the relationship between preschool teachers' self-efficacy and collective self-efficacy was made with 'Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients' technique. In order to determine explanatory power of preschool teacher' self-efficacy for collective self-efficacy, simple linear regression analysis was used. SPSS for WINDOWS 16.0 was used for data analysis. Significance level on research was accepted as 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section contains the findings of the research. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistic findings of pre-service teachers regarding perceived self-efficacy scores, and collective self- efficacy scores.

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that pre-service teachers who participated in the survey had an average of 31.52 points of perceived self-efficacy score, and 40.3 points of average level of collective self-efficacy score. Table 2 shows the Pearson moments product correlation coefficient results determining whether there is a significant relationship between pre-service teachers'

perceived self-efficacy scores and collective self-efficacy scores.

As a result of Pearson correlation analysis to determine the relationship between pre-school teachers 'scores obtained from "The Scale of the Perception of the Teaching Profession" and "The Collective Self-Efficacy Scale"; it was found that there was a positive correlation ($r = 0.710$) between pre-service teachers' perceived occupational proficiency scores and collective self-efficacy scores at $p < 0.01$ level. There is a significant positive relationship between pre-service teachers' perceived occupational proficiency scores and collective self-efficacy scores. As teachers' collective self-efficacy increases, perceived occupational proficiency scores increases. As a result of the simple linear regression analysis of whether pre-service teachers' perceived self-efficacy scores explain their collective self-efficacy scores at a significant level, it shows that pre-service teachers' perceived self-efficacy scores explain about 50% of the total variance in their collective self-efficacy scores.

Conclusion

The results of the research show that the perceptions about their profession and collective self-efficacy levels of preschool teachers are significantly related. It can be considered that teachers with high level of professional perceptions are also successful in collective self-efficacy levels. Teachers with a low perception of profession may avoid working with others; they may also think that they are inadequate or unsuccessful.

The finding of this study is consistent with Bandura (1977) who submitted that, people develop special beliefs about their own coping abilities, based on their experiences, and behavioral change increases as their self-efficacy beliefs develop. Therefore, perceptions about themselves are important. It is important whether teachers can see themselves adequate in interpersonal relationship with others; this might affect collective self-efficacy levels especially in professional terms (Table 3).

Proficiency is the ability to have the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes required to carry out tasks

Table 3. Simple linear regression analysis on collective self-efficacy.

Variable	R	R ²	R ² _{ch}	F	df	Beta	β	p
Preschool teacher' self-efficacy	0.710	0.504	0.501	172.467	1/170	-	-	0.00**
	-	-	-	-	-	0.710	0.90	0.00**

specific to a profession (Yeşilyurt, 2011).

If the sense of occupational competence is in low levels, the individual who thinks that they are inadequate in their professional knowledge and background will not want to show their attitudes working together with their colleagues concerning what they will notice their trait in this manner. If the sense of occupational competence is high, it is expected that they will show more willingness to work with colleagues because they have high self-esteem. The sense of competence for interpersonal relations is also very important in terms of their profession (Sümbül and Arslan, 2006).

Work environments can also affect teachers' perceptions about their professions, and collective self-efficacy levels. An individual may be reluctant to work with other individuals in an environment where his/her professional knowledge is not referred, is not supported or appreciated, and his opinions and recommendations are not taken into account. In the school environment, it causes feelings of discouragement, insensitivity and insecurity to develop (Goddard and Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000).

It is also important to give the message that teachers are sufficient as individuals and as groups to strengthen their perceptions of occupational competence (Kurt, 2012). It is therefore important that the working environment allows one to work and to demonstrate professional knowledge. People who benefit from their own knowledge and skills may be more willing to work with other colleagues.

It can be said that it is important for teachers who should have some competence in fulfilling their teaching and responsibilities, to be ready for their profession by having the competencies they should have gained before the service. Teachers in areas where they think they are not professionally competent, they can develop themselves by using electronic resources and taking advantage of electronic media (Seferoğlu, 2004).

In service training activities for teachers will enable them to improve themselves in various subjects and providing trainings enabling them to benefit from their professional knowledge, will contribute because according to this research, the increase in the sense of occupational competence leads to the increase in collective self-efficacy levels.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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