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To Link this Article: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v3-i3/955 DOI: 10.6007/IJARPED/v3-i3/955

Received: *15 July 2014,* ***Revised:*** *16 August 2014,* ***Accepted:*** *12 August 2014*

Published Online: 29 September 2014

In-Text Citation: (Butucha, 2014)

To Cite this Article: Butucha, K. G. (2014). Relationships between Secondary School Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Self-efficacy and Professional Commitment in Ethiopia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, *3*(3), 72–93.

Vol. 3(3) 2014, Pg. 72 - 93

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ISSN: 2226-6348

Relationships between Secondary School Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Self-efficacy and Professional Commitment in Ethiopia

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Abstract
The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the secondary school beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment, and explore differences between the perceptions of teachers in the variables of concern. This study employed a descriptive correlational design. Respondents were 381 secondary school beginning teachers. They responded to a 3-part questionnaire—demographic variables, the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), and Professional Commitment Scale (Allen et al., 1993). Results showed that beginning teachers in Ethiopia claim high levels of self-efficacy—efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, classroom management, and overall efficacy and affective professional commitment; while their perceptions of normative and continuance professional commitment tended to be neutral. Especially female beginning teachers in Ethiopia tended to have lower levels of self-efficacy and affective professional commitment than their male counterparts. Further, results showed weak to moderate significant positive relationships between self-efficacy and affective professional commitment (r = 0.14 to 0.22). Implications and recommendations for school practices and future research are discussed.
Keywords: Affective, Beginning Teachers, Commitment, Continuance, Efficacy, Normative, Perceptions

Introduction

Research has revealed that beginning teachers' positive teaching experience in the first year enhances their commitment, increases their organizational skills and planning, stimulates their performance in a team atmosphere and influences their decision to remain in the profession. On the other hand, early negative experiences lead to job related tensions and a decreased sense of commitment (Olebe, 2005; Ruhland, 2001). It is, therefore, important to analyze and understand the relationships between beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment in order to seek ways of improving their professional life (Harrison & Dymoke, 2006).

Although there has been an increasing interest to attract more professionals to teaching and retain them, it has been observed that in Ethiopia the teaching profession is considered as a

low status profession and as a result, there is a decreasing interest in joining teaching and respect for teachers is also decreasing. The signs of positive images for the teaching profession are gradually vanishing. This low regard for the teaching profession leads many beginning teachers to see the profession as a difficult one. Although there could be a number of factors to be considered for this conditions, knowing beginning teachers' levels of their own self-efficacy and professional commitment deserves careful investigation. Based on this, the present study endeavors to investigate relationships between beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment.

Statement of the Problem

Many media reports reveal that in Ethiopia there is a high teacher attrition rate and that the crisis of teachers' shortage appears to be a serious challenge for the ministry of Education of Ethiopia (Tesfaye, n.d.). Although there has been an increasing interest to attract more professionals to teaching and retain them, no adequate research has been found to address issues pertaining to beginning teachers, their perceptions about the teaching profession in terms of their own self-efficacy and professional commitment. This situation reveals the need for assessing beginning teachers' perceptions of self-Efficacy and professional commitment. Thus, the research problem of this study was, to determine the secondary school beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment in Ethiopia, and determination of how the perceptions of self-Efficacy and professional commitment are related is of paramount importance in seeking
a solution to the teachers shortage.

Research Questions

To better understand the stated problems of the study, this researcher has endeavored to investigate the following two questions:

i. How do the perceptions of the beginning teachers differ across the selected demographic variables in terms of self-efficacy and professional commitment in Ethiopia?
ii. What relationships exist between beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment?

Review of Related Literature

Self-efficacy

In the discussions of teacher shortages and attrition rates, addressing the self-efficacy of beginning teachers is important. Many writers have defined self-efficacy and its impact on teaching and learning (Bandura, 1977; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2003; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, n.d.; Santrock, 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007; Hoy, 1990). Self-efficacy is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainment" (Bandura, as cited in Campbell et al., 2004, p. 54). The study of self-efficacy in teaching can be dealt with in terms of efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management.

Efficacy in Student Engagement. Sergiovanni (2000) defines academic engagement as "the degree to which students are connected to their academic work, try hard, are persistent, and seem committed to learning" (p. 28). Student engagement will lead to academic engagement which, in turn, leads to student achievement. Bandura (1993); Shaughnessy (2004); Ware and Kitsantas (2007) suggested that teachers who have strong belief in all the learners' capacity to achieve always strive for academic excellence and are committed to their profession, and are optimistic about those students who achieve less scores that proper strategy will enable these students to achieve more scores. The instructional strategies used by such teachers include open-ended, inquiry method, student-centered teaching strategies, critical thinking, analysis and synthesis; whereas teacher and subject centered teachings are related to teachers with low sense of efficacy. According to Stronge (2002), confidence in one's own self-esteem and expecting high performance from their students are common among self-efficacious teachers.

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies. Teachers who believe in their own self
efficacy understand their subject matter very well, are ready to fulfill their students' expectations, make their teaching approach enjoyable, and persistently explore ways that work best for their individual learners (Anthony & Kritsonis, 2006; Bandura, 1993; Hefer, 2006; Kaplan & Owings, 2002; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). Highly self-efficacious teachers provide more learning experiences to their students than low self-efficacious teachers (Çakiroglu et al., 2005; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007).

Efficacy in Classroom Management. Classroom management is defined as organizing, controlling, and creating positive climate and incentives (Bosch, 2006; Hoy & Hoy, 2006). Broadly defined, classroom management refers to "how the teacher works, how the class works, how the teacher and students work together, and how teaching and learning happen" (Bosch, 2006, p. 2). The main purpose of classroom management is to preserve a positive and fruitful learning environment somewhat free of behavioral evils that are hindrances to student success (Hoy & Hoy, 2006).

Professional Commitment

Teachers' professional commitment refers to the measure of strength of the teachers' identification with the goals and values of the school and its communities (Coladarci, Firestone, & Rosenblum, as cited in Solomon, 2007). "Teachers can be committed to their school, to their careers, or to their students and teaching" (Kurz et al., 2007, p. 10), but here the focus is on the professional commitment. Allen and Meyer (1990) adapted their work from organizational commitment and defined three different types of professional commitment, the affective, normative, and continuance professional commitment. According to them, these three professional commitments correspond to (a) emotional, (b) feeling of obligation, and/or (c) economic reasons of a person. An employee may be committed to the profession because of one of the above single mental state or combination of two or even three of them.

Affective Professional Commitment. Affective professional commitment refers to teachers' emotional connection to, identification with, and participation in the teaching profession and its objectives in regard to (a) motivation of the teacher to identify with and the aspiration not to drop the profession for self-interested desires, (b) compliance to teach altruistically and contribute to the success of the teaching profession, and (c) keenness to make special

sacrifice—do further than regular potential and to tolerate challenging situations (Bagraim, 2003; Ugboro, 2006; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007).

Normative Professional Commitment. Normative professional commitment refers to the feelings of moral responsibility of people to stay in the profession (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Bagraim, 2003; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). It is "the sense of obligation of the professional towards the profession to uphold the values" (Maheshwari et al., 2007, p. 8).

Continuance Professional Commitment. Continuance commitment refers to "commitment based on costs that employees associate with leaving" the profession (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 1). It is "the extent to which individuals believe that they must remain in the teaching profession because of lack of alternatives or possible disruptions resulting from leaving their jobs" (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007, p. 304). It is the "economic compulsions that make the professionals stay with the profession and its values" (Maheshwari et al., 2007, p. 8).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study

The theoretical and conceptual framework (figure 1) shows the relationship between the demographic variables, the self-efficacy and professional commitment variables. It shows that demographic variables are expected to influence teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy, and professional commitment, but the reverse is not anticipated to be true in each case. On the other hand, the constructs teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment are expected to be interdependent and indicated by bold arrow heads on both ends.

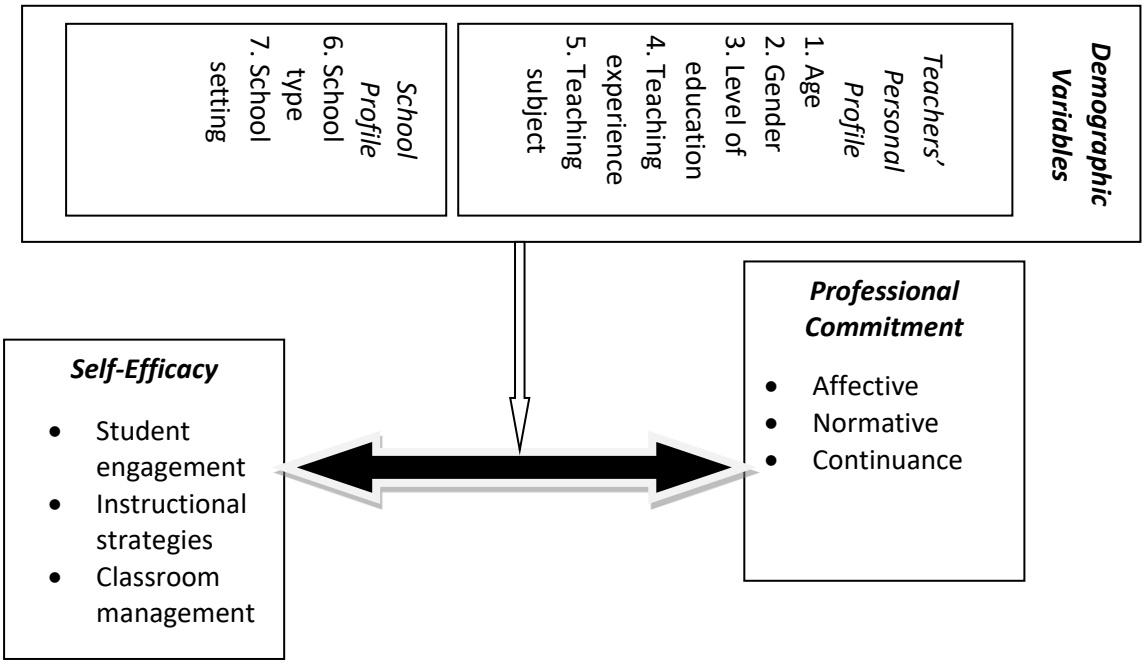

Figure 1. The theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive correlational design. The primary purpose of this study was to assess and explore the extent to which self-efficacy and professional commitment is

related to each other. Relationships among the variables of interest were assessed using the survey instruments for data gathering and analyzed using SPSS for Windows version 11.5.

Survey Instruments

The succeeding sections deal with the demographic questionnaire and the three survey instruments. Description, validity and reliability of the two survey instruments used for the study are presented.

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale

The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) was developed at College of Education, the Ohio State University by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), and also referred to as Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale. The developers have authorized the free use of this instrument for educational purposes (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The scale measured the following dimensions: (a) efficacy in student engagement, (b) efficacy in instructional strategies, (c) efficacy in classroom management, and (d) the overall self-efficacy.

Validity and reliability. The developers of this instrument claim that the TSES has sufficient validity and reliability (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Thus, it has been used in a number of studies in USA (Capa, 2005; Frederiks, 2004, Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, 2002), Iran (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008), Canada, Cyprus, Korea, Singapore, and the USA (Bong et al., 2008), and reported to be valid. Therefore, it was assumed that the instrument is suitable for the proposed study in Ethiopia too.

Table 1
Summary Table of Reliability Coefficients of TSES, Short and Long Form

Self-efficacy	Long form alpha	Short form alpha
TSES	0.94	0.90
Efficacy in **i**nstructional strategies	0.91	0.86
Efficacy in **c**lassroom management	0.90	0.86
Efficacy in **s**tudents engagement	0.87	0.81

Rating and scoring. The items were rated using a 5-point scale from *nothing* (1) to a *great deal* (5). The higher scores indicate higher levels of agreement on self-efficacy. Each subscale score consisted of the mean (*M*) of the responses to the items in that factor (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The scores for the total scale were computed from the mean scores of each item of all respondents. Therefore, the total score of TSES and each subscale could vary from 1 to 5. The TSES consists of 24 items divided into three subscales as indicated in Table 1.

Professional Commitment Scale

The instrument chosen to measure teachers' perceptions of their professional commitment was the 18-item, and three factor PCS developed by (Allen et al., 1993). This is the most commonly used instrument to measure commitment (Aamodt, 2007). Since the instrument was developed to measure teachers' occupational commitment, it is adapted with permission for this study. The method of adaptation was by replacing reference point "occupation" by

the noun "profession," preceded by the noun "teaching" to make "teaching profession." This instrument measured the affective, normative, and continuance professional commitment.

Validity and reliability. The developers of PCS reported that the instrument has good validity. They stated, "By demonstrating that the patterns of empirical findings match the hypothesized patterns, further evidence is provided for the construct validity of the measure" (Allen et al., as cited in Andrews, 2007, p. 71). This instrument has been used in a number of studies in various countries including USA (Andrews, 2007; Culpepper, 2000), South Africa (Bagraim, 2003), Malaysia (Abdul Karim & Noor, 2006), India (Maheshwari et al., 2007) and Denmark (Cohen, 2007). Table 2 summarizes the reliability coefficients of PCS. Allen and Meyer (1990) have reported that the instrument has adequate validity and reliability.

Table 2
Summary Table of Reliability Coefficients of PCS

APC	NPC	CPC	(Reference)
0.73	0.87	0.75	(Allen et al., 1993)
0.69	0.78	0.56	(Maheshwari et al., 2007)
0.68	0.70	0.73	(Turner & Chelladurai, as cited in Andrews, 2007)

Note: APC = Affective Professional Commitment, NPC = Normative Professional Commitment, CPC = Continuance Professional Commitment.

Rating and scoring. Each item in this scale was rated using a 5-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The higher scores indicate higher levels of agreement and the lower scores indicate lower level of agreement. Each factor score consisted of the mean (*M*) of the responses to the items in that factor. Therefore, the total score of each item in this scale could vary from 1 to 5. In this scale items 2, 4, 5, 8 and 17 are reversed items and therefore, the scores for each of these items were recorded as suggested by the developers of the scale.

Population and Sample

This research was conducted on public and private secondary schools in East Shoa and West Arsi zones of Oromiya Regional State, Ethiopia. All beginning teachers in the randomly selected schools were chosen for the study. To determine the sample size, statistical formula for unknown population was used (Creative Research Systems, 2011).

Based on this formula, with 95% level of confidence and 0.95 confidence interval the sample size needed was 381 secondary school beginning teachers.

Data was gathered by this researcher, following the research procedures. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by not requiring the respondents write their names on the questionnaire, and by reporting results only as group data. Participants were asked to place the completed questionnaire inside the envelope provided, seal it, and put it in a drop box placed in teachers' office.

Analysis of Data and Presentation of Findings

Data was collected via a survey conducted on beginning public and private secondary school teachers. Out of a total of 33 public and 15 private secondary schools in these regions, 23 public and 11 private secondary schools were randomly selected for the study. A total of 537 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 392 or (73%) were returned.

Validity Analysis of the Instruments

Since all the three instruments—the TSES and PCS—used in this study were developed in the western context, it was necessary to conduct a validity analysis in the Ethiopian context. Literature indicates that for fully structured, developed, and validated instruments, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is the only appropriate method and AMOS for SEM is appropriate for CFA (Byrne, 2001). Thus, the CFA was done using AMOS for SEM software version 17.0 to check whether each scale could be formed into an independent model with a goodness of fit and with each item contributing significantly to the scale in terms of the sample population of this study. Models of goodness of fit were generated and then the models for each of the scales were examined with model fit indicators and significance indicators. Significant χ^2 values for the models would suggest a poor fit. In such cases, other fit indices such as goodness of fit index (*GFI* > 0.90), normed fit index (*NFI* > 0.90), comparative fit index (*CFI* > 0.90), Critical Ratio (*CR* > 1.96), and *p*-values ($p < 0.05$) were examined, especially in relation to the sample size of the present study (Byrne, 2001).

The CFA model fit analysis for the 24-item long form TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) showed that χ^2 was significant, suggesting a poor fit. However, the other goodness of fit indices such as (*GFI* > 0.90, *NFI* > 0.90, and *CFI* > 0.90), and Critical Ratio (*CR* > 1.96), and *p*-values ($p < 0.05$) of each item confirmed a good fit of the models for the given sample data.

The CFA for the original three scale, and 18-items PCS, developed by Allen et al (1993) showed that goodness-of-fit indices of these scales revealed that the original
6–item affective and continuance professional commitment scales proposed by the developers did not fit the data. Close examination of the goodness of fit models revealed that items number 2 and 5 of affective professional commitment, and item number 17 of continuance professional commitment were not contributing significantly to the model. Further, the analysis showed that when these items were removed from each scale, the model improved significantly. Thus out of the 18 items, only 15 were used for the analysis

Reliability Analysis of the Instruments

To ensure their quality and reliability in terms of the Ethiopian context, reliability analysis of the three instruments was conducted using SPSS for windows version 11.5. Internal consistency was tested with Cronbach's alpha. In this study, the reliability coefficients of the long form, 24–item TSES with three subscales ranged from 0.74 to 0.89 compared to the alpha coefficients of 0.87 to 0.94 reported by the developers of the instrument (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The initial reliability analysis of the PCS in this study showed alpha values ranging from 0.44 to 0.61 compared to 0.69 to 0.87 reported by the developers of the instrument (Allen et al., 1993), and 0.56 to 0.78 in an Indian study (Maheshwari et al., 2007). In this study, both affective ($\alpha = 0.55$) and continuance ($\alpha = 0.44$) professional commitment showed alpha values lower than the minimum alpha coefficients ($\alpha \geq 0.60$) required for data analysis and interpretation (Leech, 2005). Similar to the CFA results, the reliability analysis

suggested the removal of item numbers 2 and 5 from the affective professional commitment and item number 17 from continuance professional commitment scales. Thus, data analysis was done after removing these items.

Treatment of the Data

The following steps were taken in the process of data analysis: All the responses were coded and analyzed using SPSS for windows version 11.5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of instruments was done using AMOS for SEM version 17.0. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were obtained for each of the variables. Differences in perceptions of beginning teachers' self-efficacy and professional commitment in relation to the demographic variables were tested using independent samples *t* test for dichotomous grouping variables and one-way ANOVA with post hoc tests for grouping variables with more than two categories. Relationships among the variables of the study were tested using correlation analysis.

Answers to the Research Questions

The first part of Research Question 1 dealt with beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy in relation to the demographic variables. The null hypothesis for this part stated that "beginning teachers do not differ in perceptions of their self-efficacy when grouped according to the demographic variables." The hypothesis was further divided into seven null sub-hypotheses corresponding to the seven demographic variables. Each hypothesis was tested using one-way ANOVA or independent samples *t* test.

Results of the analysis indicated that out of the seven demographic variables, only grouping by gender, level of education, and school type showed significant differences in perceptions of beginning teachers' self-efficacy. Table 3 shows the summary results of this analysis when grouped by gender. Self-efficacy in instructional strategies (M = 4.21, SD = 0.47) than both diploma holders (M = 4.05, SD, 0.55) and others (M = 4.16, SD = 0.30). The Games Howell post hoc test was performed for grouping by level of education. Results confirmed that there are significant differences between only diploma and BA/BSC (MD = 0.16, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the null sub-hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3

Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy by Gender (N = 381)

Self-efficacy	Gender	*N*	*M*	*SE*	*MD*(*SED*)	*t*-value	*p*-value
Efficacy in student engagement	Male	339	3.98	0.03	0.21(0.09)	2.33	0.02*
	Female	42	3.77	0.08			
Efficacy in instructional strategies	Male	339	4.20	0.03	0.24(0.08)	3.02	0.00**
	Female	42	3.96	0.08			
Efficacy in classroom management	Male	339	4.05	0.03	0.30(0.09)	3.26	0.00**
	Female	42	3.75	0.09			
Overall self-efficacy	Male	339	4.08	0.02	0.25(0.08)	3.31	0.00**
	Female	42	3.83	0.08			

Note: Mean categories: *Nothing* =1.00-1.79; *Very little* = 1.80-2.59; *Some influence* = 2.60-3.39;

Quite a bit = 3.40-4.19; *A great deal* = 4.20-5.00. *SE* = Standard error of the mean. *MD* = Mean difference. *SED* = Standard error of the difference. *Significant at 0.05 level. **Significant at 0.01 level.

Level of education. The null sub-hypothesis for this section stated that "there is no significant difference in beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy when grouped by level of education." One-way ANOVA was conducted to test this hypothesis. Results showed that significant differences existed in teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy in instructional strategies when grouped by level of education F (2, 378) = 3.62, p < 0. 05 (see Table 4). BA/BSC degree holders indicated higher perceptions of efficacy in instructional strategies and classroom management. This could be due to the fact that BA/BSC degree holders are more equipped with different strategies of teaching and thus, feel more confident about teaching than the diploma holders.

Table 4
Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy by Level of Education (N = 381)

Self-efficacy	Level of education	*N*	*M*	*SE*	*F*	*p*-value
Efficacy in student engagement	College diploma	84	3.93	0.07		
	BA/BSC	289	3.97	0.03	1.60	0.85
	Other	8	3.92	0.14		
Efficacy in instructional strategies	College diploma	84	4.05	0.06		
	BA/BSC	289	4.21	0.03	3.60	0.03*
	Other		4.16	0.11		
Efficacy in classroom management	College diploma	84	3.93	0.07		
	BA/BSC	289	4.04	0.03	1.136	0.32
	Other	8	4.06	0.15		
Overall self-efficacy	College diploma	84	3.97	0.06		
	BA/BSC	289	4.07	0.03	1.51	0.22
	Other	8	4.05	0.11		
Efficacy in instructional strategies (Games-Howell post hoc test)						
Comparisons	Level of Education	*N*	*M*	*MD*	*SE*	*p*-value
College diploma	BA/BSC	289	4.21	(0.16)	0.07	0.04*
	Other	8	4.16	(0.11)	0.12	0.67
BA/BSC	College diploma	84	4.05	0.16	0.07	0.04*
	Other	8	4.16	0.05	0.11	0.88

Note: Mean categories: *Nothing* =1.00-1.79, *Very little* = 1.80-2.59, *Some influence* = 2.60-3.39,
Quite a bit = 3.40-4.19, *A great deal* = 4.20-5.00. *SE* = Standard error of the mean. *MD* = Mean difference. *SED* = Standard error of the difference. *Significant at 0.05 level.

School type. The null sub-hypothesis for this section stated that "there are no significant differences in beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy when grouped by school type." Independent samples *t* test was performed to test this hypothesis. Summary of the test is indicated in Table 5. As shown in the table, beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy in instructional strategies (t = -3.82, $p < 0.01$), and overall self-efficacy (t = -2.50) differed significantly when grouped according to school type.

Table 5
Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy by School Type (N = 381)

Self-efficacy	School type	*N*	*M*	*SE*	*MD*(*SED*)	*t*-value	*p*-value
Efficacy in student engagement					(0.07)		
	Public	268	3.94	0.04	(0.06)	(1.15)	0.25
	Private	113	4.01	0.05			
Efficacy in instructional strategies					(0.21)		
	Public	268	4.11	0.03	(0.05)	(3.82)	0.00**
	Private	113	4.32	0.04			
Efficacy in classroom management					(0.11)		
	Public	268	3.98	0.04	(0.06)	(1.79)	0.07
	Private	113	4.10	0.05			
Overall self-efficacy					(0.13)		
	Public	268	4.01	0.03	(0.05)	(2.50)	0.00**
	Private	113	4.14	0.04			

Note: Mean categories: *Nothing* =1.00-1.79; *Very little* = 1.80-2.59; *Some influence* = 2.60-3.39;
Quite a bit = 3.40-4.19; *A great deal* = 4.20-5.00. *SE* = Standard error of mean. *MD* = Mean difference. *SED* = Standard error of the difference. **Significant at 0.01 level.

When the perceptions of self-efficacy in instructional strategies was considered, teachers in the private schools scored higher (M = 4.31, SD = 0.42) than those in public schools (M = 4.11, SD = 0.50). Thus, the corresponding null sub-hypothesis is rejected. In overall self-efficacy, again teachers in the private schools scored higher (M = 4.14, SD = 0.40) than those in the public schools (M = 4.01, SD = 0.50). Beginning teachers in public schools scored lower in their perceptions of self-efficacy and all its sub variables. This could be due to the fact that in public schools teachers handle a large number of students and especially the beginning teachers feel frustrated due to lack of experience.
The second part of Research Question 1 asked, "How do the perceptions of the beginning teachers' differ across the selected demographic variables in terms of professional commitment?" The corresponding hypothesis to this question stated that "there is no significant difference in beginning teachers' perceptions of professional commitment when grouped according to the demographics." For the three professional commitment variables—affective, normative, and continuance professional commitment—seven null sub-hypotheses were stated corresponding to the seven demographic variables—age, gender, level of education, teaching experience (years), school type, school setting, and teaching subjects. To test these hypotheses, one-way ANOVA or independent samples *t* test was used. Results

showed that beginning teachers' perceptions of professional commitment differed when grouped only according to age, gender, teaching experience, and school type. The discussions of these findings are presented in the following subsections.

Age. Independent samples *t* test was conducted to determine if there is significant difference in beginning teachers' perceptions of professional commitment when grouped by age of the respondents. Results showed significant differences only in normative professional commitment when grouped by age (t = 2.44, p = 0 .02). The age group below 26 indicated a higher level of normative professional commitment (M = 3.15) than the age group 26 and above (M = 2.95; see Table 6).

Gender. Independent samples *t* test was conducted to determine if there was significant difference in beginning teachers' perceptions of professional commitment when grouped by gender. Results indicated that only the affective professional commitment showed significant difference when grouped by gender,(t = 1.97, p = 0 .05). Male teachers indicated higher level of affective professional commitment (M = 3.58, SE = 0.05) than female teachers (M = 3.32, SE = 0.13, see Table 7).

Table 6
Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Commitment by Age (N = 381)

Professional commitment	Age	*N*	*M*	*SE*	*MD (SED)*	*t*-value	*p*-value
Affective	Below 26	243	3.57	0.06	0.04(0.09)	0.45	0.65
	26 and above	137	3.52	0.07			
Normative	Below 26	243	3.15	0.05	0.20(0.08)	2.44	0.02*
	26 and above	137	2.95	0.07			
Continuance	Below 26	243	3.23	0.05	0.10(0.08)	1.24	0.21
	26 and above	137	3.13	0.07			

Note: Mean categories: *Strongly disagree* = 1.00-1.79; *Disagree* = 1.80-2.59; *Neutral* = 2.60-3.39; *Agree* = 3.40-4.19; *Strongly agree* = 4.20-5.00; *SE* = Standard error of the mean. *MD* = Mean difference. *SED* = Standard error of the difference. *Significant at 0.05 level.

Teaching experience. One-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in beginning teachers' perceptions of professional commitment when grouped by teaching experience. Results indicated that significant differences existed in beginning teachers' perceptions of normative professional commitment when grouped by years of teaching experience $F(4, 374) = 2.52$, $p < 0.05$. Similarly, continuance professional commitment showed significant difference when grouped by years of teaching experience $F(4, 374) = 2.77$, $p < 0.05$. When normative professional commitment was considered, teachers with less than one year teaching experience showed higher perceptions of normative professional commitment (M = 3.25, SE = 0.07) than those with teaching experience of 3 to 4 years (M = 2.96, SE = 0.11).

Table 7
Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Commitment by Gender (N = 381)

Professional commitment	Gender	*N*	*M*	*SE*	*MD(SED)*	*t*-value	*p*-value
Affective	Male	339	3.58	0.05	0.26 (0.15)	1.97	0.05*
	Female	42	3.32	0.13			
Normative	Male	339	3.08	0.04	-0.05(0.13)	-0.35	0.71
	Female	42	3.12	0.13			
Continuance	Male	339	3.20	0.04	0.00(0.12)	0.04	0.97
	Female	42	3.19	0.11			

Note: Mean categories: *Strongly disagree* = 1.00-1.79; *Disagree* = 1.80-2.59; *Neutral* = 2.60-3.39; *Agree* = 3.40-4.19; *Strongly agree* = 4.20-5.00. *SE* = Standard error of the mean. *MD* = Mean difference. *SED* = Standard error of the difference. *Significant at 0.05 level.

Scheffe post hoc test, however, indicated no significant difference in normative professional commitment when grouped by teaching experience When continuance professional commitment was considered, teachers with 1-2 years of teaching experience indicated higher continuance professional commitment (*M* = 3.33, *SE* = 0.09,) than those with 4-5 years teaching experience (*M* = 3.01, *SE* = 0.71; see Table 8). But the Scheffe post hoc test indicated that the difference is not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

School type. Independent samples *t* test was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in beginning teachers' perceptions of professional commitment. when grouped according to school types. Table 9 summarizes the result of the *t*-test analysis.

Table 8
Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Commitment by Years of Teaching Experience (N = 381)

Professional commitment	Experience	*N*	*M*	*SE*	*F*	*p*-value
Affective	Less than one year	89	3.62	0.09	0.88	0.48
	1-2 years	73	3.61	0.10		
	2-3 years	86	3.43	0.10		
	3-4 years	54	3.47	0.12		
	4-5 years	77	3.61	0.10		
Normative	Less than one year	89	3.25	0.07	2.52	0.04*
	1-2 years	73	3.18	0.08		
	2-3 years	86	2.99	0.09		
	3-4 years	54	2.96	0.11		
	4-5 years	77	2.97	0.09		
Continuance	Less than one year	89	3.25	0.08	2.77	0.03*
	1-2 years	73	3.33	0.09		
	2-3 years	86	3.28	0.08		
	3-4 years	54	3.05	0.75		
	4-5 years	77	3.01	0.71		

Note: Mean categories: *Strongly disagree* = 1.00-1.79; *Disagree* = 1.80-2.59; *Neutral* = 2.60-3.39; *Agree* = 3.40-4.19; *Strongly agree* = 4.20-5.00. *SE* = Standard error of the mean. *SED* = Standard error of the difference. *Significant at 0.05 level.

As the results show significant difference existed in normative (t = 3.32, p < 0.01) and continuance (t = 2.04, p < 0.05) professional commitment when grouped by school type. In terms of normative professional commitment, public school teachers have higher normative professional commitment (*M* = 3.17, *SE* = 0.05) than private school teachers (*M* = 2.88, *SE* = 0.08). Teachers in public schools also perceived higher continuance professional commitment (*M* = 3.25, *SE* = 0.05) than those teachers in private school (*M* = 3.07, *SE* = 0 .07).

Table 9
Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Commitment by School Type (N = 381)

Professional commitment	School type	*N*	*M*	*SE*	*MD(SED)*	*t*-value	*p*-value
Affective	Public	268	3.60	0.05	0.14(0.10)	1.43	0.15
	Private	113	3.46	0.08			
Normative	Public	268	3.17	0.05	0.28(0.08)	3.32	0.00**
	Private	113	2.88	0.08			
Continuance	Public	268	3.25	0.05	0.17(0.08)	2.04	0.04*
	Private	113	3.07	0.07			

Note: Mean categories: *Strongly disagree* = 1.00-1.79; *Disagree* = 1.80-2.59; *Neutral* = 2.60-3.39; *Agree* = 3.40-4.19; *Strongly agree* = 4.20-5.00; *SE* = Standard error of the mean. *MD* =

Mean difference. *SED* = Standard error of the difference. *Significant at 0.05 level; **Significant at 0.01 level.

The second Research Question investigated the relationships between self-efficacy and professional commitment. The research question asked, "What relationships exist between beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment?" The null hypothesis tested stated that "there is no significant relationship between beginning teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment" (null hypothesis 2b).

The correlation matrix (Table 10 gives summary results of the relationships between teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment. Results indicated significant positive correlations between affective professional commitment and teachers'self-efficacy in instructional strategies (r = 0.19, p < 0 .01), efficacy in student engagement (r = 0.22, p < 0 .01), classroom management (r = 0.14, p < 0.01) and overall self-efficacy (r = 0.21, p < 0.01) leading to the rejection of the corresponding null hypothesis. This means, self-efficacious teachers tended to be affectively committed.

Normative professional commitment indicated no significant relationship with any of the self-efficacy variables. Continuance professional commitment showed a significant but weak relationship only with self-efficacy in classroom management (r = 0 .07, p < 0 .05). This means, self-efficacious teachers in classroom management have slightly higher tendency towards continuance professional commitment. The non significant very low negative correlation between continuances professional

Table 10
Relationships Between Teachers' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy and Professional Commitment (N = 381)

	Self-efficacy			
Professional commitment	Instructional strategies	Student engagement	Classroom management	Over all self-efficacy
	r (r^2)	r (r^2)	r (r^2)	r (r^2)
Affective	0.19(0.04)** Weak	0.22 (0.03)** Weak	0.14 (0.02) ** Weak	.21 (0.04)** Weak
Normative	0.001 (-) Weak	0.07 (0.004) Weak	0.03 (0.00091) Weak	0.042 (0.002) Weak
Continuance	-0.001 (0.0001) Weak	0.08 (0.006) Weak	0.10(0.01)* Weak	0.07 (0.005) Weak

Note: r < 0.30 is considered as weak correlation; r ≥ 0.30 30 moderate; r ≥ 0.50 large; r ≥ 0.70 very large. * significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

commitment and self-efficacy in instructional strategies (r = -0.001, p > .01) indicated that self-efficacy in instructional strategies and continuance professional commitment are not related, and if any, it is an inverse relationship. All the correlations were low.

Discussion on the Major Findings Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this section, a discussion of the major findings of the study, the conclusion of the research, and recommendations for practice and future research are presented. This study is of particular importance for three reasons. First, it examined the perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment of secondary school beginning teachers, a topic which has not been relatively examined. Second, the study was conducted in the cultural and geographical location, Ethiopia, where no similar studies had been conducted so far. Third, the study of self-efficacy, may help educators in terms of issues that they should consider in addressing and enhancing beginning teachers' professional commitment, in order to reduce teachers' attritions.

Discussion on the Major Findings

This section gives the discussion of the main findings of this study based on the two research questions stated. The findings are presented in two main sections. The first section addresses findings associated to the demographic characteristics of beginning teachers in relation to the main variables of the study. The second section deals with relationships between teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment.. In the discussions of the findings of this study, it was endeavored to relate what the previous studies have revealed. Their possible inferences to educational practices are also investigated.

Findings Associated to the Demographics

The present study analyzed the responses of 381 beginning teachers from 34 secondary schools in East Shoa and West Arsi Zones of Oromiya regional state, Ethiopia. Significant findings associated to the respondents' demographic profiles and perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment are discussed in the following sections.

Age

The majority of beginning teachers come from the young age group who are in the age category of 26 and below (63.8%). Only 6 teachers (1.6%) were in their early thirties and one teacher (0.3%) in the late thirties. This is apparently because of it being an expected age range at which many young people complete their undergraduate studies and enter into the profession. The present study did not find significant effect of age as it relates to the self-efficacy variables as well as teachers' perceptions of affective and continuance professional commitment.

Gender

Gender difference was also found in teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy. In contrast to the finding of Evans and Tribble (1986) in the US, who found female teachers to be more self-efficacious,. This study indicated male teachers to be consistently more self-efficacious than females in terms of self-efficacy in student engagement (MD = 0.21, p < 0.05), self-efficacy in instructional strategies (MD =0.24, p < 0.01), self-efficacy in classroom management (MD = 0.30, p < 0.01), and overall self-efficacy (MD = 0.25, p < 0.01), This could be due to the fact that teaching is preferred by males more than females in Ethiopia. Another reason could be

that the female to male teacher ratio is very small and the female teachers may be suffering from lack of peer support or isolation.

This study revealed that male teachers' perceptions of affective professional commitment were significantly higher (*MD* = 0.26, *p* = 0.05) than female teachers. One possible reason for this may be that females in Ethiopia do not prefer teaching as their profession. Another reason could be that since female teachers are fewer in number, may be they are experiencing isolation (lack of collaboration) and intending to leave the teaching profession. It could be possible that schools are not providing a friendly environment for beginning female teachers. One also could wonder if females are less motivated and lack a sense of competence in teaching hence this research has found low perception of self-efficacy of female beginning teachers. The levels of perceptions of affective, normative, and continuance professional commitment of female teachers in this study were generally low, suggesting that school administrators explore reasons why professional commitment levels of female beginning teachers are lower than male teachers and seek ways of attracting and recruiting female teachers to the profession to get desirable outcome. It also suggests the need for further investigation to come up with specific recommendation of how to motivate and attract more females to the teaching profession in Ethiopia.

Level of Education

This study showed inverse relationship between level of education and teachers' normative professional commitment. Teachers with bachelor's degrees were less committed normatively than those with college diploma. This is not surprising from the context of the population of this study because the more educated the person, the more employment opportunities he/she has and the less educated the less employment opportunities he/she has. Thus, many bachelor degree holders of this study may be intending to leave the teaching profession while diploma holders have limited options for employment elsewhere and once entered, they would be happy to stay in the teaching profession and willing to do their best.

Teaching Experience

In this study, experience was inversely related to both normative (β = -0.18) and continuance (β = - 0.14) professional commitment. This means, teachers with 1-2 years teaching experience indicated higher normative and continuance professional commitment than teachers with more than two years teaching experience. It appears that when joining the profession teachers have high intentions of remaining in the profession but, they lose some of this eagerness as time progresses.

School Type

It also has been found that beginning teachers in private schools are more self-efficacious (*MD* = 0.21, *p* < 0.01) in instructional strategies and overall self-efficacy (*MD* = 0.13, *p* < 0.01) than their counterparts in the public schools. This could be because of smaller class size in private than public secondary schools.

This study revealed that teachers in public secondary school than private secondary schools perceived higher normative (*MD* = 0.28, *p* < 0.01) and continuance (*MD* = 0.17, *p* < 0.05) professional commitment. This may be due to more job security in public schools than private schools, government incentive plans such us opportunities for free scholarship and other

benefits. Another reason could be attributed to the working and employment conditions. In Ethiopia, many private schools are run by few teachers with heavy class loads and extracurricular activities which could be a reason for teachers' intention to leave the profession. Still another reason could be that public school teachers' employment condition from the start is always on permanent basis while some of private school teachers' employment is on temporary or contract basis and it appears that these teachers intend to leave the teaching profession at the end of their terms of contract.

Perceptions of Self-Efficacy and Professional Commitment

The discussions of this section come from the second research questions which addressed beginning teachers' level of perceptions on self-efficacy and professional commitment. The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of perceptions.

Perceptions of Self-Efficacy

Using a 5-point scale which ranged from 1 (*nothing*), to 5 (*a great deal*) with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest perceived self-efficacy, this study revealed that secondary school beginning teachers' perceived that they can do quite a bit in their
self-efficacy in instructional strategies (M = 4.17), student engagement (M = 3.96), classroom management (M = 4.02) and overall self-efficacy (M = 4.05). From these results it can be inferred that self-efficacy of beginning teachers in Ethiopian secondary schools is high.

Perceptions of Professional Commitment

In this study, although teachers claimed higher levels of self-efficacy (M = 3.96 to 4.17) and affective professional commitment (M = 3.56), their perceptions of normative professional commitment (M = 3.14) and continuance professional commitment (M = 3.19) are rated lower. It appears that teachers are emotionally bound to the teaching profession, finding values in the teaching profession. However, they believe they will lose little if they were to change careers and that they are not obliged to remain in the teaching profession were they provided with better opportunities elsewhere.

The high level of affective professional commitment of beginning teachers in the present study is consistently similar with studies done in other countries. The implication of this is that, like other professionals, beginning teachers in the present study identify with their profession and are willing to accept the goals and values of the teaching profession. It could be that since they have invested a lot of time and energy in their education to attain their profession, they appear to believe that teaching profession is more important to them.

Relationships between Self-Efficacy and Professional Commitment

In this study, a similar positive, but weak correlation between affective professional commitment and the self-efficacy and its sub-variables showed that the more teachers are committed to their profession affectively, the higher their perceptions of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy and commitment are both desirable qualities and their positive correlations cannot be debatable. The implication is that believing that something is achievable in the profession and persistence in it has a direct relationship with one's emotional attachment to the profession.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the present study:

The 24- item TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), has acceptable validity and reliability that allows confidence in the drawing of conclusions from this study in Ethiopian context, while the original 18-items PCS (Allen et al., 1993) did not fit the present data, and required some modifications to make it fit the Ethiopian context. Future researchers who use the *professional commitment scale* (Allen et al., 1993) should analyze the construct validity of the instrument in relation to their population.

The background variables—age, gender, level of education, experience, school type and school setting—have a significant but small effects on the perceptions of beginning secondary school teachers' professional commitment in Ethiopia. Beginning secondary school teachers in Ethiopia claim high levels of perceptions of self-efficacy and affective professional commitment. Qualitative study should be conducted on reasons why the levels of teachers' affective professional commitment in this study is high, while their level of normative and continuance professional commitment is low. Female beginning teachers in Ethiopia tend to have low levels of self-efficacy and affective professional commitment. School administrators should provide special support programs to enhance levels of beginning female teachers' self-efficacy and professional commitment. The following recommendations are forwarded for future research based on the findings of the present study.

1. A similar study might be conducted on experienced teachers in the same cultural and geographical location to see the levels of experienced teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment.
2. Further research should be conducted to find out what factors particularly contribute to beginning teachers' normative and continuance professional commitment in order to promote their moral responsibility to the profession and decision to stay.
3. Further research should be conducted to find out what factors particularly contribute to female teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional commitment in order to increase their participation in the teaching profession.

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