

The Effect of Geography Teachers' Self-Efficacy Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Teaching on Motivation

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The aim of this study is to examine the effects of geography teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and attitudes toward teaching on their motivation levels. In this context, 299 geography teachers who were actively working participated in the research. A positive relationship was found between the geography teachers' self-efficacy perceptions, their attitudes towards teaching, and their motivations. According to the results of the study, as the service years of geography teachers increase, their motivation levels decrease. Furthermore, it was observed that female geography teachers' attitudes towards teaching were higher than male geography teachers. Finally, it was seen that geography teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and attitudes toward teaching predicted their motivation positively and significantly. The findings are discussed in light of the literature.

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Keywords: Self-Efficacy, attitude, motivation

INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform a task or achieve a specific goal. It is a crucial aspect of human psychology that can have a considerable impact on an individual's motivation, performance, and general well-being. According to one study, self-efficacy is a significant predictor of exercise behavior and physical fitness (McAuley & Blissmer, 2000). One reason for the effectiveness of self-efficacy is that it influences people's expectations and their perceptions about their abilities. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to see challenges as opportunities to learn and grow, whereas those with low self-efficacy perceive them as threats to their self-esteem (Bandura et al., 1997). As a result, individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals, persist in dealing with difficulties, and to develop coping skills. On the other hand, those with poor self-efficacy may avoid challenges or set low expectations for themselves.

Fortunately, self-efficacy is not a fixed characteristic; it can be improved in different ways. Mastery experiences that involve completing tasks successfully or achieving goals are effective ways of increasing self-efficacy (Bandura et al., 1997). For example, an individual who has never played tennis may initially have low self-efficacy regarding the sport. Yet, with lessons and regular practice, they can gradually build confidence in their ability to play. Other methods of increasing self-efficacy include modeling, social persuasion, and physiological feedback (Bandura et al., 1997). Self-efficacy is a very important concept in education and can have a direct impact on teachers' performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. It reflects teachers' belief in their ability to influence students' learning and meet instructional goals. In this article, we explore the notion of teachers' self-efficacy and the research that examines it.

Bandura (1997) defines teacher self-efficacy as a belief in one's competence to organize and conduct the actions necessary to achieve certain results. It refers to a teacher's confidence in his/her ability to impact student learning, manage classroom behavior, and implement effective teaching strategies (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). One of the reasons teacher self-efficacy is so effective is that it affects how teachers approach their work. Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident, enthusiastic, and persistent in their efforts to improve student learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). They are more likely to establish challenging goals, develop creative solutions to problems, and adapt their instructions to meet students' needs. On the other hand, teachers with low self-efficacy may feel overwhelmed, disinterested, or discouraged by their work responsibilities.

Fortunately, teacher self-efficacy can be developed in a variety of ways. An effective way to increase self-efficacy is professional development focused on improving teaching skills and knowledge (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). For example, a teacher who is trained in how to use technology in the classroom may be more confident in his/her ability to integrate technology effectively. Mentoring, coaching, and peer collaboration are further approaches for increasing self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

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Teacher self-efficacy is a critical concept in education since it has a significant impact on teacher performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to be more effective in their teaching, more involved in their work, and more satisfied with their work. Studies have shown that teacher self-efficacy is positively associated with student achievement and engagement. Fortunately, self-efficacy can be developed by professional development, mentorship, coaching, and peer collaboration. Teachers can increase effectiveness and contribute to better learning outcomes for their students by increasing their self-efficacy.

Attitude is an important aspect of our lives since it has a great influence on our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Attitude refers to the way we think, feel and act toward ourselves, others, and the world around us. Attitude is an internal state shaped by our beliefs, values, experiences, and social environment (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). It can be positive or negative and can affect our mood, motivation, and behavior. For example, if we have a positive attitude toward our work, we may feel more motivated and engaged with our tasks and perform better. Studies have revealed that attitude can have a significant impact on various aspects of our lives. For example, Friedman et al. (2015) found that a positive attitude toward aging was associated with better physical and cognitive health in older adults. Verplanken et al. (2014) show that a positive attitude toward exercise is associated with increased exercise frequency and commitment.

Attitude can also affect our relationships with others. For example, Murray et al. (2011) show that a positive attitude toward others is associated with higher social support and lower stress levels. Similarly, Gifford (2016) shows that a positive attitude toward environmental sustainability is connected with increased engagement in pro-environmental practices. Teaching is a noble profession that plays a critical role in shaping the future generation and therefore society. Despite its importance, the teaching profession is often underestimated and underappreciated. Teachers encounter several challenges that can negatively affect their attitude toward their work such as low pay and a lack of support from management. A study by Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that teachers' attitudes toward their profession were significantly related to their job satisfaction, burnout, and commitment. The study also revealed that teachers with positive attitudes toward their profession tended to have higher levels of job satisfaction and were less likely to experience burnout. In another study conducted by Aksoy and Bozgeyikli (2016), the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards their profession were investigated. The study found that pre-service teachers generally had positive attitudes towards teaching, but their attitudes varied depending on factors such as gender, academic achievement, and the prestige of the teaching profession in their culture. For example, female pre-service teachers had more positive attitudes towards the profession than male pre-service teachers.

A study by Phan and Johnston (2020) examined students' attitudes toward teaching as a profession. According to their findings, students' attitudes were influenced by variables such as the quality of their education, the support they received from their teachers, and the perceived status of the teaching profession. The students who received high-quality teaching and support tended to have more positive attitudes toward the teaching profession, while students who perceived teaching as a low-status profession tended to have more negative attitudes. Similarly, a study by Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that teachers' attitudes toward their profession were strongly influenced by the working conditions. Teachers who had supportive colleagues, manageable workloads, and professional development opportunities tended to have more positive attitudes toward their profession, while those faced with stressful working conditions tended to have more negative attitudes. Finally, a study by Liu and Ramsey (2008) examined the attitudes of Chinese teachers toward their profession. According to the study, Chinese teachers had generally positive attitudes toward teaching, but their attitudes were affected by factors such as their level of job satisfaction, the status of the teaching profession in Chinese culture, and the quality of support they received from their schools.

For a teacher, motivation is a key factor for teaching effectively and inspiring students. However, as in other professions, teachers might suffer with motivation at times. This is especially difficult when teachers are dealing with the demands of a difficult class or the stress of a changing educational

environment. Fortunately, there is a variety of research that provides insight into teacher motivation, factors that drive teacher performance, and strategies that can help them stay motivated in the long run. Here are some important facts to keep in mind about teacher motivation:

A sense of purpose

Research shows that teachers who have a strong sense of purpose and personal satisfaction are more likely to be motivated and satisfied in their work. In a study published in the *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, researchers discovered that teachers who regard their work as personally meaningful are more likely to engage in professional development and other activities that contribute to their growth (Vallerand et al., 1992) Furthermore, teachers who believe that their job has a positive impact on their students are likely to be more motivated to continue their profession.

Supportive school culture

Teachers working in schools with a positive, supportive culture are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their work. Researchers found that teachers who perceive their school culture as positive and supportive are more likely to have high levels of motivation, job satisfaction, and dedication to their career in a study published in the *Interactive Learning Environments*. Positive relationships with colleagues, supportive leadership, and access to resources and professional development opportunities are all examples of supportive school culture (Chiu & Churchill, 2016).

Growth and development opportunities

Teachers with opportunities for growth and development are more likely to be motivated and involved in their work.

Researchers found that teachers who participate in professional development programs are more likely to have high levels of job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment to their profession in a study published in the *Journal of Teaching and Teacher Education*. Additionally, teachers who believe they have opportunities for growth and development are also more likely to be motivated and engaged in their work (Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006).

Autonomy and control

Teachers who have a sense of autonomy and control over their work are more likely to be motivated and involved in their job. According to a study published in the *Journal of Research in Personality*, researchers found that teachers with a sense of autonomy are more likely to have high levels of job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment to their profession (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Autonomy can take many forms, such as the ability of making decisions about curriculum and teaching methods, collaborating with colleagues, and providing input into school policies and practices.

Work-life balance

Finally, work-life balance is a crucial aspect of teacher motivation. Teachers who can maintain a healthy balance between their professional and personal life are more likely to be motivated and involved in their profession. In a study published in the *Journal of Education and Practice*, researchers found that teachers with higher levels of work-life balance are more likely to have higher levels of motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment to their profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Teachers who can manage their workload effectively, take breaks when needed, and prioritize self-care are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their work in the long run.

This research was carried out to examine the effects of geography teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and attitudes towards teaching on their motivation. For this reason, "What are the self-efficacy perceptions of geography teachers and their attitudes towards teaching?"

This question constitutes the main problem of the research. In line with this basic problem;

1-What is the effect of geography teachers' self-efficacy perceptions on their motivation?

2-What is the effect of geography teachers' attitudes towards teaching on their motivation? are the other questions that constitute the sub-problems of the research.

It is important in that it is the first study to measure the effect of geography teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and attitudes towards teaching on their motivation.

This research, which was carried out with a total of 299 geography teachers, 161 women and 138 men, who participated in the research, is limited to the province of Izmir and the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year.

METHOD

Research Design

Adopting a quantitative method, this study utilized a correlational survey research design. With the aim of gaining a greater understanding about a population, survey research designs administer a survey to the population or a sample, and they might be conducted as non-casual survey or correlational survey research designs. A correlational survey is a research design which aims to investigate the change between two or more variables and the degree of the change (Karasar, 2016).

Participants

The number of participants was 299 geography teachers, of whom were 161 females (53,8 %) and 138 (46.2 %) males. The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 64 ($M=40.88$, $SD=8.88$). While 60.5 percent of them ($n=181$) were undergraduates or held associated degrees, 38.5 percent ($n=115$) were postgraduates. Also, one percent ($n=3$) had a high school degree. Their teaching experience was between 1 and 41 years ($M= 15.40$, $SD=9.90$).

Data Collection Tools

Teacher's Self-Efficacy Scale

Teacher's self-efficacy scale developed by Schmitz and Schwarzer (2000) was adapted into Turkish by Yilmaz, et al. (2004), and the adaptation process was conducted with the opinions of experts having a degree of German. Also, its Turkish version was analyzed in terms of content and measurement and evaluation by the experts. Based on their opinions, some adjustments were implemented and it was applied to 87 teachers for validity and reliability. Factor analysis of the scale showed that it has two dimensions with 8 items although the original scale included 10 items. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of the adapted scale was calculated as 0.79

Attitudes Toward Teaching Scale

The attitude toward teaching scale developed by Demirel and Ünişen (2018) measures teachers' attitude toward the teaching profession. The scale with 28 items consists of four factors: giving value, burnout, apathy, and openness to professional development. The scale's Pearson Correlation coefficient between the scores through re-test was 0.87.

Teacher's Motivation Scale

The scale used in the study by Polat (2010) was utilized. The scale with two dimensions and 24 items in total consists of 12 items in the dimension of internal motivation and 12 in the dimension of external motivation. It is a 5 point likert scale representing 1 for "Never", 2 for "Rarely", 3 for "Sometimes", 4 for "Often", and 5 for "Always". The reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.87.

Data Analysis

In this study investigating to what extent teachers' self-efficacy scores and attitudes toward teaching scores predict their motivation, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The structural equation modelling analysis was utilized through the program AMOS 19, and for the measurement of percentage, frequency, correlation, and multiple regression, SPSS 18 was used.

Findings

Firstly, the normal distribution of the data was examined through histogram and Q-Q plot graphs. According to the graphs, the assumption of the data's normal distribution and the peak values was met. To investigate the correlation between variables, Pearson Correlation analysis was carried out. Accordingly, there was a positive correlation between the teachers' self-efficacy scores and attitudes toward teaching scores ($r = .37$, $p < .01$). The correlation between their self-efficacy scores and motivation was also positive ($r = .33$, $p < .01$). Similarly, the correlation between their attitudes toward teaching and motivation was positive ($r = .44$, $p < .01$). The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis

	1	2	3
Self-Efficacy	–	.37**	.33**
Attitudes Toward Teaching		–	.44**
Motivation			–
<i>A</i>	.84	.95	.91
<i>M</i>	25.71	121.33	93.23
<i>SD</i>	.02	1.05	.91

** $p < .01$

A statistically significant difference was found in participants' attitudes toward the teaching profession according to the gender variable $t(299) = 2.32, p < .05$. It was concluded that female geography teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession ($M = 123.58, SD = 16.56$) were higher than male geography teachers' attitudes *tutumlarına* ($M = 118.71, SD = 16.64$).

One-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to examine whether geography teachers' service years have an effect on their teaching motivation. According to the results of the analysis, 4 different categories were formed: those 1 to 5 years of service ($n = 54$), those with 6 to 10 years ($n = 66$), those with 11 to 20 years ($n = 72$) and those with 21 years and more ($n = 107$). According to the results of the analysis, it was seen that the years of service had a significant effect on teaching motivation ($F(3, 296) = 2.616, p < .05, \eta^2 = .26$). According to the results of post-hoc pairwise comparisons conducted using the Tukey HSD test, it was found that the motivation of geography teachers with a service years of 21 years and above ($M = 90.84, SD = 16.86$), was lower than those with 11 to 20 years of service ($M = 91.68, SD = 14.67$), and those with 6 to 10 years of service ($M = 95.90, SD = 15.76$) had a lower level of motivation than those with 1 to 5 years of service ($M = 96.76, SD = 14.41$). In other words, it can be said that as the service years of geography teachers increase, their teaching motivation decreases.

As the study investigates to what extent teachers' self-efficacy scores and attitudes toward teaching scores predict their motivation, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The peak values were examined and no peak values were observed. The Durbin-Watson autocorrelation with a value of 1.75 was obtained and the assumption was met. Multiple regression analysis was run through SPSS to predict geography teachers' self-efficacy attitudes toward teaching scores as an indicator of motivation. The findings show that two variables (teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward teaching) statistically and significantly predicted their motivation ($F(2, 297) = 44.00, p < .001, R^2 = .23$). In other words, about 23 percent of geography teachers' level of motivation was predicted by these variables. The value of R^2 was at in-between values.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study found that geography teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward teaching significantly predicted their motivation. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their capacity to perform certain tasks and conditions. The studies show a positive correlation between a teacher's self-efficacy and his/her motivation to maintain a high standard of teaching. According to a study by Bandura et al. (1997), individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in activities corresponding to their belief and goals and they are more persistent in the face of obstacles, which indicates that teachers with high self-efficacy tend to show high motivation and adherence to their profession even when they face challenges.

Another study conducted by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) revealed that teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to attend professional development activities and search for opportunities for professional growth. This indicates that teachers with high self-efficacy are motivated toward not only maintaining the profession but also improving their teaching skills and practices continuously.

Given the role of self-efficacy in teachers' maintaining and improving their teaching practices, it is essential that teacher education programs and institutions support teachers in enhancing their self-efficacy. One way to support teachers' self-efficacy is mentorship, as stated by Ashton and Webb (1986). Their study revealed that activities with mentorship providing feedback and emotional support could significantly increase teachers' self-efficacy and motivation.

Another way of supporting teachers' self-efficacy is professional development activities that address teachers' skills and development of their confidence in particular subjects. For example, a study conducted by O'Neill and Stephenson (2013) found that a professional development activity aiming to improve teachers' skills of technology usage in the classroom reasonably increased their self-efficacy in technology usage and their motivation to integrate technology into their teaching practice.

Attitudes toward teaching have a significant impact on individuals' motivation to remain in the profession. While negative attitudes might decrease motivation, positive attitudes might increase motivation. For example, Katz and Earl (2009) found that negative attitudes, influenced by aspects such as low status and low salary, are crucial obstacles to individuals considering teaching a profession. Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) state that negative attitudes toward teaching are one of the main reasons for the high rate of teacher turnover.

On the other hand, positive attitudes toward teaching might increase individuals' motivation to remain the teaching profession. A study by Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) found that positive attitudes have a positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction and motivation.

Another study by Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011) shows that teachers' self-efficacy has a positive relationship with their endurance in their profession. Also, Pajares and Miller (1994) discovered that teachers' self-efficacy has a positive effect on students' success in mathematics and science. Consequently, teachers' self-efficacy plays a key role not only in their motivation to remain in their profession but also in the contribution they play in students achieving their learning outcomes. Teacher education programs, faculties, professional development activities, mentorship and coaching activities should prioritize the development of teacher self-efficacy through targeted resources and support. It is therefore recommended that geography teacher training prioritizes the subject of teacher self-efficacy.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed by the author(s) with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Ethics Approval

The formal ethics approval was granted by the Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Ege University. We conducted the study in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration in 1975.

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Research and Publication Ethics Statement

The study was approved by the research team's university ethics committee of the Ege University (Approval Number/ID: 1886). Hereby, we as the authors consciously assure that for the manuscript "The Effect of Geography Teachers' Self-Efficacy Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Teaching on Motivation" the following is fulfilled:

- This material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere.
- The paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner.
- The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research.
- All sources used are properly disclosed.

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