Title: Secondary school beginning teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy, school culture, and professional commitment in Ethiopia

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Abstract:

Beginning is the foundation of any profession, and a good beginning is crucial for success in one’s professional life (Fottland, 2004). Although lifelong commitment to successful teaching may be achieved by successful early professional experiences (Andrew & Quinn, 2005; Olebe, 2005), little is known about the factors contributing to beginning teachers’ professional commitment in Ethiopia. The main purpose of the present study was to address this void by investigating secondary school beginning teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy, school culture, and professional commitment in Ethiopia, and to develop the best predictive model of beginning teachers’ professional commitment using demographic, self-efficacy, and school culture variables. The respondents were 381 secondary school beginning teachers in East Shoa and West Arsi Zones of Oromiya regional state, Ethiopia. They responded to a 4-part questionnaire—demographic variables, the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), School Culture Survey (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998) and Professional Commitment Scale (Allen, Meyer, & Smith, 1993).

Result showed that the background variables—age, gender, level of education, teaching experience, school type and school setting—have significant but small effects on the perceptions
of beginning secondary school teachers’ professional commitment in Ethiopia. Beginning
teachers in Ethiopia claim high levels of self-efficacy—efficacy in student engagement,
instructional strategies, classroom management, and overall efficacy; school culture—
collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, collegial support,
unity of purpose, normative, and continuance professional commitment tend to be neutral.
Especially female beginning teachers in Ethiopia tend to have lower levels of self-efficacy and
effective professional commitment than their male counter parts.

Further, results showed weak to moderate significant positive relationships between self-
efficacy and school culture variables ($r = 0.14$ to 0.39), while only affective professional
commitment was significantly correlated ($r = 0.14$ to 0.22) with self-efficacy variables. The
relationships between school culture and professional commitment variables were positive ($r =
0.06$ to 0.37). Relative to the rest of the school culture variables, stronger relationships exist
between collaborative leadership and affective ($r = 0.36$) and normative ($r = 0.37$) professional
commitment; teacher collaboration and affective ($r = 0.33$) and normative ($r = 0.36$) professional
commitment.

Collaborative leadership, self-efficacy in student engagement, gender and school type
were significant predictors of affective professional commitment (explaining 16% of the
variance). Collaborative leadership, school type, teaching experience, level of education, and
teaching subjects were significant predictors of normative professional commitment (explaining
21% of the variance). Implications and recommendations for school practices and future
research are discussed.