



## EXAMINATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL LEVELS OF TEACHERS – CASE OF ELAZIG PROVINCE, TURKEY

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### Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to identify the levels of teacher perceptions on psychological capital and the sub-dimensions with respect to gender, marital status, professional seniority, branch and educational status variables. The study was designed with the relational screening model. The study group consists of a total of 356 teachers working in 21 secondary school institutions in the center of Elazığ. The Psychological Capital scale was used in the study. According to the study results, psychological capital levels of teachers are at; “high level” for the psychological resilience, hope and self-efficacy dimensions, “moderate level” for the optimism dimension. It was observed that psychological capital levels of teachers significantly differ at resilience and hope dimensions for the gender variable; at all dimensions for the marital status variable; at hope and self-efficacy dimensions for the professional seniority. There were no significant differences in teacher opinions for the branch and educational status variables.

**Keywords:** positive psychology, psychological capital, teacher

### 1. Introduction

It is well known that today there are organizations which operate so as to fulfill various goals. The prior resource of these organizations to continue their existence is human. In addition, having different talents and skills with respect to this need of human resource is accepted as an advantage for organizations. In other words, it is possible to say that organizations with qualified workers are in a competitive environment and can attain their goals easier when compared with their rivals.

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Planning and using financial capital, as well as human capital, is crucial in the process of fulfilling organizational goals. Understanding the behaviors of individuals in the organization, properly assessing the factors playing a role in displaying these behaviors and canalizing these according to the organization's benefit are important points. This means an organization obtains maximum benefit from the worker and takes advantage from the workers' various properties.

While, until the end of the previous century, psychological science had focused on negative aspects such as failure and despair in individuals (Çimen and Özgan, 2018), the focus moved to strong positive features of individuals with the positive psychology approach introduced by Seligman (1998). Samancı and Basım (2018) state that positive psychological capital refers to the positive strong qualifications of workers and how they can better improve these qualifications. In addition, it focuses on who the worker is, which positive characters the worker has and whether or not they can be improved. Luthans, Luthans and Luthans (2004), who have a similar approach, state that positive psychological capital is concerned with "*who the individual is*" and then "*who can the individual be*". Also, they also point out that economic capital focuses on "*what they individual possesses*", human capital focuses on "*what they individual knows or which talents he has*" and social capital focuses on "*who is known with respect to relationships*". The basis of psychological capital approach refers to the workers' skill to transfer the economic, human and social capital he or she has to the organizational environment so as to increase organizational productivity (Envick, 2005).

The term psychological capital consists of elements self-efficacy, hope, optimism and psychological resilience. Self-efficacy refers to the confidence the worker has to display all the characteristics and skills he or she has so as to fulfill the goals. Hope refers to being willing to attain goals and the capacity to produce alternative solutions in cases of possible negative states (Luthans and Youssef, 2004: 153). Optimism refers to being to think positive about the future and having expectations about obtaining positive outcomes at its maximum level (Uysal, Özçelik and Uyargil, 2018). Psychological resilience refers to being able to show the resistance and skill to overcome unexpected states when an individual comes across them (Luthans, 2002).

In the national and international literature only a small amount of sections in studies on positive psychological capital and positive psychology focus on educational organizations. In addition, it is evident that recently the term psychological capital is dwelt upon more in the field of educational sciences (Aydın, Yılmaz and Altinkurt, 2013; Eryılmaz, 2013; Eser, 2018; Göçen, 2019; Kaya, Balay and Demirci, 2014; Kelekçi and Yılmaz, 2015; Öztekin Bayır, 2018; Tösten and Özgan, 2014; Tösten, Avcı and Yıldırım, 2018). It is assumed that there is a positive relationship between psychological capital levels and performances of teachers in educational institutions. With this respect, the extent of the psychological capital levels of teachers working in secondary school institutions is crucial. The purpose of this study is to identify the levels of psychological capital and its sub-dimensions (optimism, resilience, hope and self-efficacy) of teachers working in official secondary school institutions in the center of Elazığ. With this respect, answers for the following questions were sought:

- 1) At what level do teachers perceive their general psychological capital levels?
- 2) At what level do teachers perceive their psychological capitals with respect to the optimism, psychological resilience, hope and self-efficacy sub-dimensions?
- 3) Do teacher perceptions about their psychological capital levels significantly differ according to gender, marital status, professional seniority, branch and educational status?

## **2. Method**

The study was designed with the descriptive screening model. Descriptive studies aim at describing an event or fact in its present form (Karasar, 2012: 81). With this respect, this study is a screening study that describes opinions of teachers, who work in secondary school institutions in the center of Elazığ, about their psychological capital levels.

### **2.1 Population and Sample**

The population of the study consists of 2576 teachers working in official secondary school institutions in Elazığ. The sample consists of 21 secondary school institutions in the center of Elazığ that were selected through the random sampling method. Thus, a total of 356 high school teachers, 183 male and 173 female, participated in the study. The confidence interval of the sample was determined as 95 % and thus, the error rate ( $z$ ) was identified as 1.96.

### **2.2 Data Collection Instrument**

The Psychological Capital scale was used in the study. The scale consists of a total of 24 questions, which were developed by Luthans, Avolio, Avey and Norman (2007), concerning the optimism, resilience, hope and self-efficacy dimensions. There are six items under each dimension of the psychological capital scale. The validity and reliability analyses were conducted by Çetin and Basım (2012) and the scale was introduced to Turkish. Findings obtained from the analyses show that the reliability coefficients of the scale sub-dimensions are .67 (optimism), .81 (hope), .68 (psychological resilience) and .85 (self-efficacy). The total Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as .91.

In the study, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on the scale and it was observed that the scale consists of four sub-dimensions as in the original scale. At the end of the analysis, overlapping items (load values that are close to .10 and that are obtained from more than one factor) and items with threshold value below .40 were examined. As a result of this assessment, items 3., 4. and 8. That were under the threshold value were eliminated from the scale. In the scale, which resulted from the EFA, with 21 items scale and four sub-dimensions, it was observed that there are six items under the optimism sub-dimension (1., 6., 8., 11., 15. and 16.), five items under the resilience sub-dimension (3., 5., 7., 10. and 19.) six items under the hope sub-dimension

(2., 4., 9., 14., 17. and 21.) and four items under the self-efficacy sub-dimension (12., 13., 18. and 20.).

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients of the study were calculated as optimism (.59), psychological resilience (.80), hope (.82) and self-efficacy (.88) respectively. The total Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as .93. Based on these results, the scale can be accepted as reliable. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted on the scale and observed that the goodness of fit values are at accepted level ( $\chi^2/df=2.813$ ; GFI=.878; AGFI=.842; CFI=.921; NFI=.884; TLI=.908; RMSEA=.071 and SRMR=.045). These values were accepted as proofs showing that the scale maintains the validity of its original four factor structure (optimism, psychological resilience, hope and self-efficacy).

### 2.3 Data Analysis

The SPSS 22 (Statistical Package for Social Science) was used in analyzing and evaluating the findings of the study. Based on the sub-goals of the study, the "arithmetic mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (SD)" values of teacher perceptions were examined so as to identify psychological capital perception levels of teachers at the optimism, psychological resilience, hope and self-efficacy dimensions. "Arithmetic mean, standard deviation, t-test, One Way Anova and Gabriel HSD tests" were used in identifying whether or not psychological capital perception levels of teachers significantly differ at the optimism, resilience, hope and self-efficacy dimensions with respect to their gender, marital status, professional seniority, branch and educational status.

### 3. Findings

The average and standard deviation values of the perceptions concerning the psychological capital levels of teachers working in secondary school institutions are given on Table 1.

**Table 1:** Psychological capital level averages of teachers

| Dimensions               | N          | $\bar{x}$   | SD          |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Optimism                 | 356        | 3.72        | .753        |
| Psychological Resilience | 356        | 4.41        | .942        |
| Hope                     | 356        | 4.42        | .889        |
| Self-efficacy            | 356        | 4.58        | .987        |
| <b>General Average</b>   | <b>356</b> | <b>4.25</b> | <b>.792</b> |

According to Table 1, teacher perceptions concerning the psychological capitals were highest at the self-efficacy ( $\bar{x} = 4.58$ ) dimension then at "I strongly agree) level for the hope ( $\bar{x} = 4.42$ ) and psychological resilience ( $\bar{x} = 4.42$ ) dimensions. The participants also stated their opinions at "I strongly agree" level for the optimism ( $\bar{x} = 3.72$ ) dimension

and general average ( $\bar{x} = 4.25$ ). Study findings show that psychological capital levels of teachers are at high level for the psychological resilience, hope and self-efficacy dimensions and moderate level for the optimism dimension.

Results of the t test, which was conducted to identify whether or not psychological capital levels of teachers differ according to the gender variable, are given on Table 2.

**Table 2:** T test results that show whether or not opinion averages differ according to gender

| Dimensions               | Gender | N   | $\bar{x}$ | SD    | t      | SD  | p     |
|--------------------------|--------|-----|-----------|-------|--------|-----|-------|
| Optimism                 | Male   | 183 | 3.65      | .765  | -1.779 | 354 | .076  |
|                          | Female | 173 | 3.79      | .735  |        |     |       |
| Psychological Resilience | Male   | 183 | 4.28      | .987  | -2.616 | 354 | .009* |
|                          | Female | 173 | 4.54      | .875  |        |     |       |
| Hope                     | Male   | 183 | 4.33      | .901  | -2.131 | 354 | .034* |
|                          | Female | 173 | 4.53      | .867  |        |     |       |
| Self-efficacy            | Male   | 183 | 4.52      | 1.028 | -1.255 | 354 | .210  |
|                          | Female | 173 | 4.65      | .940  |        |     |       |
| <b>General Average</b>   | Male   | 183 | 4.16      | .811  | -2.205 | 354 | .028* |
|                          | Female | 173 | 4.34      | .763  |        |     |       |

\*p < 0.05.

According to the data on Table 2., teacher perceptions about their psychological capital levels significantly differ with respect to gender at the psychological resilience ( $t = -2,616$ ,  $p = .009$ ) and hope ( $t = -2,131$ ,  $p = .034$ ) dimensions and at general average ( $t = -2,205$ ,  $p = .028$ ) in favor of female teachers. There were no significant differences observed at the self-efficacy ( $t = -1,255$ ,  $p = .210$ ) and optimism ( $t = -1,779$ ,  $p = .076$ ) dimensions between male teacher and female teacher perceptions.

The t-test and Mann Whitney U (MWU) test were conducted to identify whether or not teacher perceptions about their psychological capital levels differ according to the marital status variable. The significance level of the Levene test was set as a criterion in determining the test to be used. The non-parametric MWU test was taken into consideration in cases where Levene significance level was below .05 and the parametric t-test was taken into consideration in cases where Levene significance level was above .05. Results of the two tests are given on Table 3 rather than on different tables.

**Table 3:** Results of the t test and MWU that show whether or not opinion averages differ according to marital status

| Dimensions    | Marital Status | N   | $\bar{X}$ | SD   | SD  | Levene |      | Mean Rank | Rank Sum | t/U   | p     |
|---------------|----------------|-----|-----------|------|-----|--------|------|-----------|----------|-------|-------|
|               |                |     |           |      |     | F      | p    |           |          |       |       |
| Optimism      | Married        | 275 | 3.77      | .728 | 354 | 1.159  | .282 | -         | -        | 2.412 | .016* |
|               | Single         | 81  | 3.54      | .812 |     |        |      |           |          |       |       |
| Psychological | Married        | 275 | 4.46      | .896 | 354 | 3.099  | .079 | -         | -        | 2.024 | .044* |

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|-----------------|---------|-----|------|-------|-----|-------|-------|--------|----------|----------|-------|
| Resilience      | Single  | 81  | 4.22 | 1.068 |     |       |       |        |          |          |       |
| Hope            | Married | 275 | 4.49 | .856  | 354 | .614  | .434  | -      | -        | 2.682    | .008* |
|                 | Single  | 81  | 4.19 | .963  |     |       |       |        |          |          |       |
| Self-efficacy   | Married | 275 | 4.67 | .920  | 354 | 4.304 | .039* | 186.59 | 51313.00 | 8912.000 | .006* |
|                 | Single  | 81  | 4.27 | 1.139 |     |       |       | 151.02 | 12233.00 |          |       |
| General Average | Married | 275 | 4.31 | .688  | 354 | 3.895 | .049* | 184.70 | 50792.00 | 9433.000 | .036* |
|                 | Single  | 81  | 4.03 | .879  |     |       |       | 157.46 | 12754.00 |          |       |

\*p < 0.05

According to the data on Table 3, the Levene test results indicate that the variances are not homogeneous at the self-efficacy ( $F=4.304$ ;  $p=.039$ ) dimension. In cases where the variances are non-homogeneous, the parametric t-test is not conducted so as to identify whether or not the variation between the averages of the two groups is statistically significant at .05 level. The non-parametric MWU test was conducted instead. When the values and significance levels of the parametric t-test and non-parametric MWU test are considered, there is a significant difference between the averages of married teachers and single teachers with respect to the self-efficacy ( $U = 8912.000$ ;  $p = .006$ ), optimism ( $t = 2.412$ ;  $p = .016$ ), psychological resilience ( $t = 2.024$ ;  $p = .044$ ) and hope ( $t = 2.682$ ;  $p = .008$ ) dimensions. It was observed that averages of married teachers are higher at all dimensions than the averages of single teachers.

Results of the t test, which was conducted to identify whether or not teacher perceptions about their psychological capital levels differ according to the branch variable, are given on Table 4.

**Table 4:** T test results that show whether or not opinion averages differ according to branch

| Dimensions               | Branch  | N   | $\bar{x}$ | SD    | t     | SD  | p    |
|--------------------------|---------|-----|-----------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Optimism                 | Science | 133 | 3.75      | .772  | .719  | 354 | .473 |
|                          | Social  | 223 | 3.70      | .742  |       |     |      |
| Psychological Resilience | Science | 133 | 4.44      | .909  | .518  | 354 | .605 |
|                          | Social  | 223 | 4.39      | .863  |       |     |      |
| Hope                     | Science | 133 | 4.47      | .903  | .719  | 354 | .473 |
|                          | Social  | 223 | 4.40      | .882  |       |     |      |
| Self-efficacy            | Science | 133 | 4.58      | .962  | -.058 | 354 | .954 |
|                          | Social  | 223 | 4.59      | 1.003 |       |     |      |
| General Average          | Science | 133 | 4.28      | .788  | .558  | 354 | .577 |
|                          | Social  | 223 | 4.23      | .796  |       |     |      |

According to the findings on Table 4, it is evident that psychological capital levels of teachers do not significantly differ with respect to their teaching branch. In addition, it was also observed that Science field teachers have a higher psychological capital perception than Social field teachers.

Results of the t test, which was conducted to identify whether or teacher perceptions about their psychological capital levels differ according to the educational status variable, are given on Table 5.

**Table 5:** T test results that show whether or not opinion averages differ according to educational status

| Dimensions               | Educational status | N   | $\bar{X}$ | SD    | t     | SD  | p    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----|-----------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Optimism                 | Bachelor's         | 280 | 3.70      | .725  | -.743 | 354 | .458 |
|                          | Master's           | 76  | 3.77      | .848  |       |     |      |
| Psychological resilience | Bachelor's         | 280 | 4.40      | .927  | -.388 | 354 | .698 |
|                          | Master's           | 76  | 4.45      | 1.000 |       |     |      |
| Hope                     | Bachelor's         | 280 | 4.41      | .867  | -.325 | 354 | .745 |
|                          | Master's           | 76  | 4.45      | .973  |       |     |      |
| Self-efficacy            | Bachelor's         | 280 | 4.57      | .936  | -.550 | 354 | .582 |
|                          | Master's           | 76  | 4.64      | 1.160 |       |     |      |
| <b>General Average</b>   | Bachelor's         | 280 | 4.24      | .760  | -.546 | 354 | .585 |
|                          | Master's           | 76  | 4.29      | .904  |       |     |      |

According to Table 5, it is evident that psychological capital perceptions of teachers do not significantly differ according to educational status. In addition, averages of teachers with a Master's degree are higher than averages of teachers with a Bachelor's degree.

A One Way Anova analysis was conducted to identify whether or teacher perceptions about their psychological capital levels differ according to the professional seniority variable and the results are given on Table 6.

**Table 6:** One Way Anova Analysis Results According to the Professional Seniority Variable

| Dimension                | Seniority                 | N   | $\bar{X}$ | SD    | Source of Variance                       | Sum of Squares              | SD              | Mean Square   | F     | p     | Gabriel |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----|-----------|-------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------|-------|---------|
| Optimism                 | 1 - 5 years               | 56  | 3.54      | .856  | Between groups<br>Within groups<br>Total | 3.111<br>197.979<br>201.090 | 3<br>352<br>355 | 1.037<br>.562 | 1.844 | .139  | -       |
|                          | 6 - 10 years              | 58  | 3.73      | .717  |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
|                          | 11-15 years               | 69  | 3.86      | .716  |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
|                          | 16 + years                | 173 | 3.71      | .737  |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
|                          | Levene: .575;<br>p= .632  |     |           |       |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
| Psychological resilience | 1 - 5 years               | 56  | 4.12      | 1.067 | Between groups<br>Within groups<br>Total | 6.017<br>309.067<br>315.084 | 3<br>352<br>355 | 2.006<br>.878 | 2.284 | .079  | -       |
|                          | 6 - 10 years              | 58  | 4.40      | .826  |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
|                          | 11-15 years               | 69  | 4.45      | .899  |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
|                          | 16 + years                | 173 | 4.49      | .942  |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
|                          | Levene: 1.182;<br>p= .317 |     |           |       |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
| Hope                     | 1 - 5 years               | 56  | 4.16      | .958  | Between group<br>Within groups<br>Total  | 6.286<br>274.398<br>280.683 | 3<br>352<br>355 | 2.095<br>.780 | 2.688 | .046* | 1-5.16+ |
|                          | 6 - 10 years              | 58  | 4.32      | .840  |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
|                          | 11-15 years               | 69  | 4.50      | .880  |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |
|                          | 16 + years                |     |           |       |  |                             |                 |               |       |       |         |

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|---------------|----------------|-----|---------|-------|--|-------|---|-------|-------|-------|---------|
|               | 16 + years     | 173 | 4.51    | .873  |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |
|               | Levene: .127;  |     | p= .944 |       |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |
| Self-efficacy | 1 - 5 years    | 56  | 4.25    | 1.178 | Between<br>groups<br>Within<br>groups<br>Total | 7.927 | 3 | 2.642 | 2.755 | .042* | 1-5.16+ |
|               | 6 - 10 years   | 58  | 4.54    | .847  |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |
|               | 11-15 years    | 69  | 4.68    | .993  |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |
|               | 16 + years     | 173 | 4.66    | .944  |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |
|               | Levene: 1.226; |     | p= .300 |       |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |
| Total         | 1 - 5 years    | 56  | 3.99    | .935  | Between<br>groups<br>Within<br>groups<br>Total | 4.965 | 3 | 1.655 | 2.674 | .047* | 1-5.16+ |
|               | 6 - 10 years   | 58  | 4.21    | .700  |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |
|               | 11-15 years    | 69  | 4.34    | .748  |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |
|               | 16 + years     | 173 | 4.31    | .777  |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |
|               | Levene: .902;  |     | p= .440 |       |  |       |   |       |       |       |         |

\*p < 0.05

Findings on teacher perceptions about their psychological capital levels with respect to professional seniority are given on Table 6. According to the findings, it is evident that teacher psychological capital levels significantly differ at the hope (F= 2. 688, p= .046) and self-efficacy (F= 2.755, p= .042) dimensions with respect to professional seniority. It was observed that the difference is between teachers with 1-5 years seniority and 16 years and over seniority. There were no significant differences in teacher opinions with respect to professional seniority at the optimism (F= 1. 844, p= .139) and psychological resilience (F= 2. 284, p= .079) dimensions. Results indicate that psychological capital levels of teachers with 16 years and over seniority are higher.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to examine psychological capital perceptions of teachers working in secondary school institutions and the relationship between their perceptions and various variables. With this respect, to what extent the relationship is between psychological capital perceptions of teachers and gender, marital status, professional seniority, branch and educational status was examined. Study results show that psychological capital levels of teachers are at moderate level at the optimism dimension high level at the psychological resilience, hope and self-efficacy dimensions. It was observed that similar results were detected in various studies and that psychological capital levels of teachers are high (Kaya and Altinkurt, 2018; Kaya et al., 2014; Aslan, 2017; Ekin, 2017; Tösten, Avcı and Yıldırım, 2018).

It was observed that psychological capital levels of teachers significantly differ at resilience and hope dimensions in favor of female teachers for the gender variable; and do not significantly differ the optimism and self-efficacy dimensions. This result is partly in line with findings of previous studies. According to studies conducted by Argon and Tükel (2016), Berberoğlu (2013), Büyükgöze and Kavak (2017), Çınar (2011) and Keser (2013). That female teachers have higher psychological capital perceptions



than male teachers at the psychological resilience and hope dimensions show that they are better at finding alternative solutions for negative states they encounter in their professional life and that they believe they will carry out their profession under better conditions in the future.

A significant relationship was observed between psychological capital perceptions of teachers and their marital states at the optimism, psychological resilience, hope and self-efficacy dimensions. However, it was observed that similar previous studies found different result from the findings of this study (Bahadır, 2018; Berberoğlu, 2013; Polatçı, 2011 and Savur, 2013). Findings of this study show that married teachers have a higher psychological capital perception level than single teachers. It can be possible to say that this state is because married teachers are more experienced in age and profession, they have overcome many professional obstacles, they have more responsibilities due to their family life and thus they consider situations in a more optimist and hopeful manner.

It was observed that psychological capital perceptions of teachers do not differ with respect to the branch variable. Results of similar studies (Kahveci, Gülay and Bahadır, 2019; Kaya et al., 2014; Kelekçi and Yılmaz, 2015; Sünkür, 2014) were observed to support the findings of this study. On the other hand, psychological capital level averages of Science field teachers are higher than averages of Social field teachers. This can be because Science field teachers take advantage of the skills that are required for their branch in various situations, they find more practical solutions and thus they have self-confidence and have a more optimist view for the future.

Psychological capital perceptions of teachers do not statistically and significantly differ with respect to educational status. In other words, educational status variables of teachers are not effective on the psychological capital and dimensions of teachers. According to a study conducted by Bostancı and Şarbay (2018) and Yılmaz (2019), psychological capital levels of teachers do not differ with respect to educational status. Findings of this study show that psychological capital levels of teachers with Master's degree are higher than teachers with Bachelor's degree. It can be possible to say that this is because teachers with Master's degree have professionally improved themselves more and are inclined to approach situations in a more positive manner.

Study results indicate that psychological capital levels of teachers significantly differ at the hope and self-efficacy dimensions with respect to professional seniority. There were no statistical and significant differences in teacher opinions with respect to professional seniority at the optimism and psychological resilience dimensions. It was observed that results of the studies conducted by Akman (2016), Kelekçi and Yılmaz (2015) and Tösten (2015) are partly in line with the findings of this study. Findings of this study and results of similar studies show that psychological capital levels of teachers increase while their professional seniority years increase. It can be stated that teachers with higher professional seniority have a more positive perspective in life, solve possible obstacles in a more mature manner and thus have self-confidence.

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