

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE MOTIVATION OF TURKISH EFL TEACHERS WORKING AT STATE UNIVERSITIES

(DEVLET ÜNİVERSİTELERİNDE ÇALIŞAN TÜRK İNGİLİZCE
ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN MOTİVASYONU ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA)

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ABSTRACT

Following a qualitative research design, this study examines the motivation of Turkish EFL teachers working at state universities in Turkey. Purposeful sampling was used in the selection of participants and 20 teachers working at different universities participated in the study. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and daily reflection entries. In the analysis of data, qualitative content analysis scheme of Creswell (2011) was used. The results revealed that teacher motivation is an inner driving force that is essential to sustain the profession for teachers. Students, administrative issues and workplace conditions were found to be the main factors that influence teacher motivation negatively or positively. Teachers also stated that better working conditions, a more sincere institutional atmosphere and more systematic administration would make them more motivated in their profession. Discussing the results in relation to the literature, this study offers several suggestions that would be helpful in increasing EFL teachers' motivation.

Keywords: Teacher motivation, Turkish EFL teachers, qualitative study.

ÖZET

Nitel bir araştırma desenine sahip bu çalışmada Türkiye'deki devlet üniversitelerinde çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin motivasyonu incelenmektedir. Araştırmaya farklı devlet üniversitelerinde çalışan 20 okutman katılmış ve katılımcıların belirlenmesinde amaçlı örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme ve günlük yansıtıcı yazımlar ile toplanan veriler Creswell (2011)'in nitel içerik analizi şemasına bağlı olarak analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar öğretmen motivasyonunun öğretmenler için mesleği devam ettirmek adına temel bir itici güç olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ayrıca öğrencilerin, yönetimle alakalı konuların ve çalışma koşullarının öğretmen motivasyonunu olumlu ya da olumsuz etkileyen faktörler olduğu belirlenmiştir. Çalışmaya katılan öğretmenler daha iyi çalışma koşullarının, kurumlarında oluşturulacak daha samimi bir ortamın ve daha sistemli bir yönetim anlayışının onları mesleklerinde daha motive edeceğini belirtmişlerdir. Çalışmanın son bölümünde bu sonuçlar alanyazındaki çalışmalar eşliğinde tartışılmış ve İngilizce öğretmenlerinin motivasyonunu arttırmaya yardımcı olacak bazı öneriler getirilmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Öğretmen motivasyonu, Türk İngilizce öğretmenleri, nitel araştırma

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INTRODUCTION

Definitions of Motivation

Language learning and teaching is a process that is closely related to human psychology. There are numerous studies in the literature (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1991; Ellis, 1994; Dörnyei & Cziser, 1998) which demonstrate the significance of affective factors in this process. Among these factors, motivation plays a crucial role in pursuing this process efficiently. Due to its significant impact and relatively complex nature, motivation has been the focus of many researchers (Gardner, 1985; Williams & Burden, 1997; Dörnyei & Otto, 1998) and several definitions of the concept have been offered as a result. For Ryan and Deci (2000, p.54) “to be motivated means to be moved to do something”. In addition to this, Dörnyei (2001, p.7) states that “motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activity.” Taking such definitions as starting points, several scholars in psychology proposed important motivational theories that guided researchers in their investigations. Among these theories, self-determination theory introduced by Ryan and Deci (2000) has been quite influential.

Self-Determination Theory and Motivation

Self-determination theory is regarded as one of the most influential theories in motivational psychology (Dörnyei, 2000). Viewing self-determination as a pre-requisite for any behaviour, the theory divides motivation into three categories; intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation results from the interest in an activity combined with the joy and satisfaction of doing it whereas extrinsic motivation occurs when external factors foster or encourage a person to succeed an activity. Amotivation, on the other hand, is usually the state of lacking an intention to act, which may result from the facts that the individual does not value the activity, does not feel competent or thinks that the activity is unfeasible.

Another important point about the theory is that it places these three categories on a continuum to demonstrate how self-determined each type is. For instance, if the behaviour is the result of an individual’s own interest or desire, this individual is believed to be more intrinsically motivated and accordingly more self-determined. On the other hand, behaviour is regarded less self-determined when it is the result of some external sources. Finally, when the person does not perceive any relationship between the behaviour and the outcome, this situation refers to amotivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Due to its well-defined continuum and constructs, the theory has been the baseline of numerous studies in various fields of study focusing on the motivation of individuals. However, it is rarely used in investigating the motivation of language teachers. Thus, the researcher believes that focusing on language teacher motivation within the scope of self-determination theory will significantly contribution to the literature in the field of education

Motivation of EFL Teachers

Stevick (1980, p. 4) states that “success depends on what goes on inside and between people in the classroom.” Metcalfe and Game (2006) also express that the vitality of the classroom comes from an energy that is created between not only students but also teachers; it is an energy both teachers and students share. With this new understanding, teacher motivation has been an important topic. Before this, motivation was solely attributed to the students, how they could be motivated or what teacher could do to motivate them more. Gardner (2007) utters that teacher motivation has a strong influence on student motivation. Thus, with the importance of teacher motivation concept, more emphasis is given on the issue, and it has become the subject of few researchers (Atkinson, 2000; Baum, 2002). According to Brophy (1983), for an influential learning and teaching atmosphere, teacher willingness is a must. Thus, teacher eagerness and motivation are preliminary elements for a fruitful learning and teaching environment, because motivating students is related to how motivated the teachers are (Atkinson, 2000; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). As Bernaus et al (2009, p. 29) state “teacher motivation is the most important variable because if teachers are not motivated, the whole notion of strategy is lost. As all these researchers mentioned above suggest, the classroom interactions contain both students and teachers. They are inseparable because they both contribute to the learning-teaching process hand in hand.” Thus, the importance of teacher motivation has begun to be understood better, because a less motivated or demotivated teacher cannot be expected to motivate her/his learners. With respect to this, teacher motivation has started to be investigated.

Shoaib (2004) carried out a study which investigated the motivation of foreign language teachers. He concluded that EFL teachers feel demotivated because of the conflict between commitment and the inadequacies of the educational institutions they work in. The results suggested that the job itself was not a demotivating factor. Bradley (2010) looked into the motivation of three EFL teachers in Japan in terms of the global education material that they thought, their reasons for doing volunteer work, and the motivation of their learners. The findings demonstrated that these teachers are highly motivated because they had the freedom in terms of the materials to be used in the class and their students are highly motivated. Dweik and Awajak (2013) studied the motivational level of English language teachers in Jordan. One hundred EFL teachers teaching in secondary schools participated in the study. The results showed that the Ministry of Education, the school principals, the English language supervisors, the teachers’ colleagues and their students do not motivate the English language teachers in the Jordanian public secondary schools. These teachers stated that they are motivated due to the reasons that they like their jobs, and teaching will help them in the future because of the prestigious role of being an English teacher. Another study has been carried out by Kazerouni and Sadighi (2014) who examined one hundred female teachers from public guidance school and private language institutes in Shiraz. The findings displayed that both groups were satisfied with various aspects of their job. They were unhappy with physical conditions of their school, benefits, working hours,

government and professional association work, and school administration. Connie (2000) also investigated teacher motivation and demotivation in Mexico and offered that better performance among students, well-motivated students, successful activities, support and respect by administrators and a flexible curriculum were the motivating factors for the participant teachers. The demotivating factors were identified as a lack of enthusiasm in teaching, low salary, lack of teaching materials, heavy workload and an inflexible curriculum. Besides, Hettiarachchi (2013) investigated the aspects of motivation and demotivation among Sri Lankan English language teachers. The findings showed that students themselves, the act of teaching students, and the prestigious social position for English teachers in Sri Lanka were the main motivators for teachers. The main demotivators for the participants included limited facilities for teaching and learning in schools, inefficiency of school administration and zonal education offices, difficulties in obtaining teacher transfers, the discrepancy between the English proficiency, and the poor relationship between colleagues.

Along with these studies conducted in different settings, there are also a few studies carried out in Turkey. Fidan (2014) carried out a study to find out the factors that influenced the motivation of English language instructors. According to the results obtained from 40 language instructors teaching at public universities in South Anatolia Region of Turkey, some factors related to teachers' background, external factors such as the institution and city where instructors taught, the students and the classroom facilities affect teacher motivation. Kiziltepe (2008) carried out a study to investigate the sources of motivation and demotivation among teachers at a public university. Students, career and social status and ideals were motivating factors; however, student, economics, structural and physical characteristics, research and working conditions were demotivating factors. Students were found to be the main source of motivation or demotivation among the participants. Aydin (2012) investigated the demotivating factors in EFL teaching at the elementary level. The results demonstrated that the problems were related to the teaching profession, curriculum, working conditions, students and their parents, colleagues and school and administrators, and physical conditions.

Although these studies revealed the importance of teacher motivation, and the sources of their motivational levels, how motivated teachers are, what factors influence their level of motivation positively or negatively, and what solutions can be found to maximize their motivation still remain as important issues to be examined. For these reasons, based on the paucity of research on language teacher motivation in the literature, especially in Turkey, and the need for investigating the motivational aspects of language teachers thoroughly, this study aims to investigate the factors that affect Turkish EFL teachers' motivation positively or negatively within the scope of self-determination theory, and to propose several suggestions offered by the teachers that are expected to be effective in increasing the motivational levels of EFL teachers and so the quality of language teaching process. The following research questions will be addressed throughout the study.

1. What are the factors that influence Turkish EFL teachers' motivation?
2. What are the participant Turkish EFL teachers' suggestions to increase teacher motivation?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study followed a qualitative research design. According to Creswell (2011, p.206) "in qualitative inquiry, the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon". As this study aims to explore the issue of teacher motivation in-depth, a qualitative approach was employed throughout the study.

Participants

Creswell (2011) states "in qualitative research, we identify our participants and sites on purposeful sampling, based on places and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon" (p.205). According to this definition, purposeful sampling was utilized in this qualitative study. Based on this, the researcher chose "information-rich participants" (Patton 1990, p.169; cited in Creswell, 2011) who were believed to give rich and in-depth information about the central phenomenon, which is teacher motivation in this study. These participants were all English language instructors working at the preparatory programs of different state universities in Turkey. 10 of them were males, and 10 were females. Their ages differed from 28 to 45, and also their years of experience differed from one instructor to the other. Among the total number of the participants, 14 instructors were married and 6 of them were single. Their educational background also differed. They had BA, MA or PhD in ELT. Finally, they had differences with respect to their weekly course load. All taught between 15 and 25 hours per week. By taking these features into consideration, Maximal Variation Sampling and Homogeneous Sampling were utilized in this study. According to Creswell (2011), "Maximal Variation Sampling is a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on certain characteristics or traits" (p. 207-208). In this study, the participants differed on certain characteristics which were gender, years of experience, age, educational background, weekly course load and marital status. As the researcher purposefully selected these participants who had various characteristics, maximal variation sampling was used. This study made use of homogeneous sampling as well, because according to Creswell (2011), certain individuals were chosen because they all had a similar feature. In this study, all the participants shared a similar trait that was they all worked at the preparatory programs of different state universities in Turkey as English language instructors.

Research Setting

The preparatory programs of different state universities in Turkey are the settings in this study. They all offer 25 or 30 hours of English to the learners per

week, and the lessons are given in an integrated way or separate skills. If the preparatory program offers an integrated curriculum, learners are exposed to English and all the skills together. However, if the program is skills-based, then reading, listening, writing and speaking, shortly all skills, are practiced in different class hours. At all settings, the learners have to take the proficiency exam at the beginning of the preparatory program. This exam covers listening, language use, reading and vocabulary questions, and the learners are expected to write an essay on a given topic. In certain settings, speaking exam is also a part of the proficiency exam. This exam determines whether they will start the preparatory program or they will start to study in their departments. The ones who get 60 or over from the proficiency exam have the right to go on their education in their departments.

Instructors, on the other hand, are the academic people conducting the lessons in these extensive programs. They have to teach at least 12 hours per week and they may have some office duties in curriculum, testing or teacher training.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection instruments of this study included one-on-one interviews with 20 English language instructors working at preparatory programs of different state universities in Turkey, and reflection reports written by randomly chosen 5 participants among these twenty participants, so this study is qualitative in nature. In these one-on-one interviews, open-ended questions were asked to the participants. These questions include:

1. What does *motivation* mean to you?
2. What comes to your mind when you hear *teacher motivation*? Why?
3. What do you think about the role of teacher motivation in teaching and learning process? Why do you think so?
4. How motivated do you feel as a language teacher? Why?
5. What factors affect your motivational level as a language teacher? Why? Can you give examples? or Can you specify these, please?
6. What are your suggestions to increase teacher motivation? Why?

The interviews were conducted in Turkish, the mother tongue of participants, so that they would feel more relaxed and free while answering the questions. Another reason for this was to obtain more ideas from the participants, and using their mother tongue is believed to foster the flow of ideas between the researcher and the participants, and help them express themselves better. The interview was piloted with 3 instructors in order to detect any ambiguous items that would hinder the participants from comprehending the questions clearly. The participants were requested to ask any questions that would help them understand the questions better. Moreover, all the instructors were asked for their consent to take part in the interview and they were requested to sign a consent form. Each interview

approximately lasted for about 20 minutes, and all of them were audio-recorded by the researcher.

Among the twenty participants, 5 instructors were chosen to write reflection reports. They wrote these reports after the interviews were completed, and they wrote these reports daily during two weeks. They expressed how they felt that day, what happened and what factors made them happy/more motivated or sad/ less motivated as an instructor.

Data Analysis

In this study, interviews and reflection reports were used to gather the data. Creswell (2011) states that “qualitative research is inductive in form, going from the particular or the detailed data to the general codes and themes” (p.238).

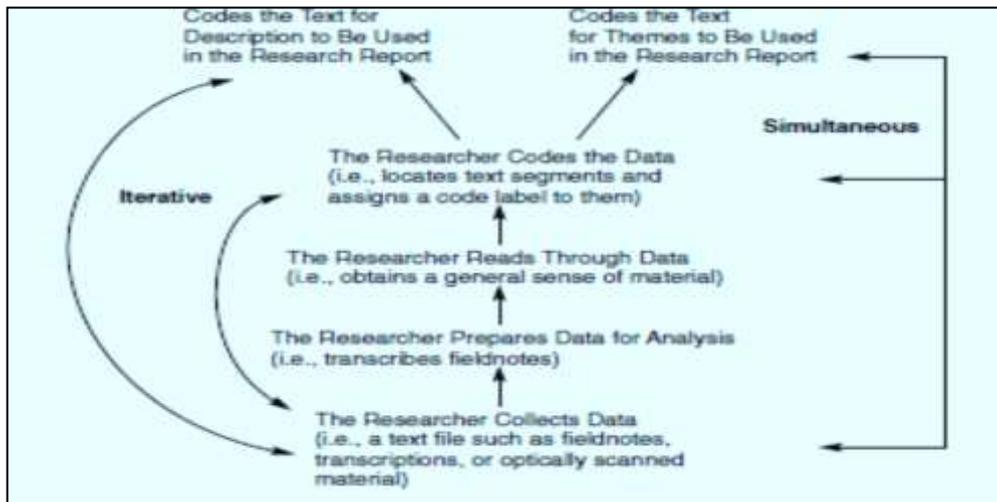


Figure 1. The scheme of qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2011, p. 237)

The figure above shows the framework that was followed during the data analysis process. Firstly, the researcher organized her data based on the interviews and reflection reports, and the data were transcribed. Transcription is defined as “the process of converting audiotape recordings into text data” by Creswell (2011, p. 239). After the researcher replayed the recordings, she converted them into the text data. After transcribing all the talks between the researcher and the participants, exploring the data was the first step for the researcher. Upon exploring them, the researcher coded the data. This inductive process was utilized in order to “make sense out of text data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes” (Creswell, 2011, p.243). During the generation of these broad themes, the constant comparison design as shown in Figure 2 was followed. The researcher constantly compared codes to codes and themes to themes in order to reach the final version of themes to be presented. In that way, the researcher aimed to get in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon which is teacher motivation in this study by developing these themes.

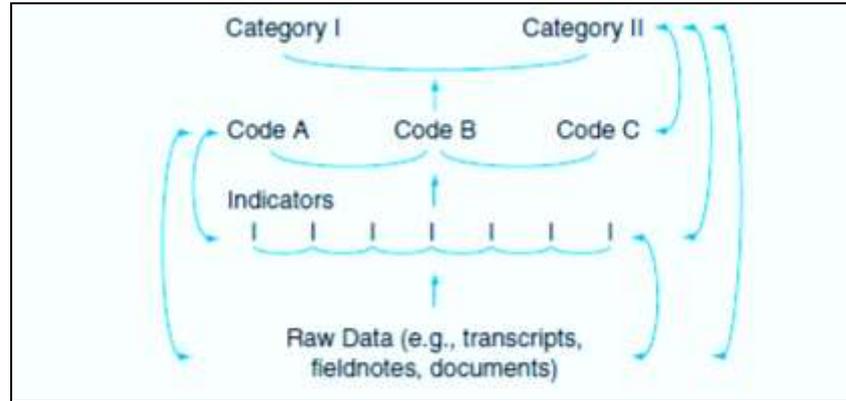


Figure 2. The constant comparison design (Creswell, 2011, p. 423)

So as to evaluate the validity of qualitative studies, Guba and Lincoln (1985) use the well-known term trustworthiness which includes four constructs as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In order to increase the trustworthiness of this study, several procedures were followed. First of all, in addition to using different forms of data collection methods which included interviews and reflections, different individuals were included in the study to triangulate the data and accordingly to increase the credibility and confirmability. Besides, the data analysis processes were crosschecked by a colleague having a PhD for external auditing which ensures dependability and confirmability. Hence, with the help of external audit, different points of the study were reviewed by another person. Finally, apart from piloting of the interviews with 3 instructors, to get expert opinion, interview questions were checked by 5 colleagues who have MA degree in ELT.

RESULTS

During the interviews, the initial questions were asked to the participants to express their understanding of teacher motivation and its importance in teaching-learning process. The results revealed that teacher motivation is vitally important in this process and teachers attach different meanings to the notion of teacher motivation, all of which highlight the importance of it. Table 1 presents the phrases that teachers use for defining teacher motivation.

Table 1. The meaning of teacher motivation for the participant teachers

Teacher motivation is....	the enthusiasm to teach the inner energy of teachers the level of occupational commitment being happy at work the inner force to sustain the job of teaching the fundamental feeling to do this job
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As the results reveal, all teachers believed that teacher motivation is a crucial and essential factor which may even influence the sustainability and effectiveness of teaching process. Besides, it may also determine a teacher's enthusiasm and energy towards teaching and influence his/her commitment to the occupation and

institution. In other words, it is seen that teacher motivation refers to many positive factors for language teachers.

Factors Affecting Teacher Motivation

The first research question of this study investigated the factors that influenced language teachers' motivational levels. The findings derived from the interviews and reflections are shown with their frequencies in Table 2.

Table 2. Factors affecting teacher motivation

Sub-factors (Codes)	Factors (Themes)	Frequency
Motivational level of learners Their enthusiasm for participation Misbehaviours in classroom atmosphere Their proficiency level Their success as the feedback of teaching	Learners	19
Fair distribution of workload Transparency Punishment-reward system Attitudes towards teachers Attitudes towards suggestions Instructional policies (testing, curriculum etc.)	Administrative Issues	16
Facilities of the institution Relationship with colleagues Current workload Institutional atmosphere Financial issues Support for professional development	Working Conditions	14

The results above revealed that learners, administrative issues, and working conditions are influential on teacher motivation. Among these factors, learners were found to be the mostly stated factor. Their motivation, enthusiasm for learning, proficiency level, behaviours in class and success rate played important role on teachers' motivational level. The results also showed that another factor which significantly affected teachers' motivation was administrative issues. Teachers expressed that attitudes of administrators toward teachers, transparency in their decisions, existence of punishment-reward systems applied by them, instructional policies made by them, and their workload distribution influenced their motivation considerably. Finally, it was also found that teachers' motivational level was influenced by the conditions in their workplace such as their relationship with colleagues, facilities of their institution, financial issues, the amount of workload, support of the institution for professional development and the atmosphere in the institution.

Teacher's Suggestions to Increase Their Motivational Level

The final questions of the interviews focused on teachers' suggestions on how to increase language teachers' motivational levels. The participants expressed various suggestions on several topics and the results derived from the analysis of these data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Suggestions to increase teachers’ motivational level

Sub-factors (Codes)	Factors (Themes)	Frequency
Better attitudes towards teachers Asking teachers’ ideas in decision-making Better instructional policies and targets Rewards and celebration for good job	Administrative Issues	20
Physical facilities of the institution A better institutional atmosphere Better salaries In-service training opportunities Support for professional development Less workload and more space for private life	Working conditions	18
Ways to increase learner motivation	Learners	6

Although the results regarding the teachers’ suggestions on how to increase their motivation show parallelism with the factors affecting their motivational levels in terms of the content, it is seen that their order of importance is different, and teachers generally stated the factors that would improve their welfare. According to them, betterment in administrative issues such as better attitudes towards teachers, asking their ideas in decision making, setting clear goals or policies and rewards for teachers’ good jobs is the most important factor to increase their current motivational level. Another factor that would increase teacher motivation was found to be the betterment of workplace conditions. The teachers expressed that they would feel more motivated if they had more physical facilities in their workplace, a more sincere institutional atmosphere, more opportunities for in-service trainings or professional development and less workload in their workplace. Finally, although it was the most important factor affecting teacher motivation, the issue of better and more motivated learners was stated by few teachers as a factor that would increase their current motivation.

DISCUSSION

The Role and Meaning of Motivation for Language Teachers

The notion of motivation in language learning process has generally been attributed to learners and scholars tended to define it in a learner-centred way. Although many studies in the literature (Atkinson, 2000; Baum, 2002; Gardner, 2007) highlight the importance and necessity of teacher motivation in this process, a clear and specific definition of teacher motivation has not been made. In this sense, the results driven from teachers’ opinions on what motivation is for them put forward significant elements that will help scholars understand the notion of teacher motivation through the eyes of teachers. In general, emphasizing the vital role of motivation in language teaching process, teachers define it as “the fundamental inner energy and enthusiasm which is essential to sustain and manage the language teaching process.” It is clearly seen that teachers have a quite intrinsic perception in defining teacher motivation and they highlight the intrinsic elements of the self-determination theory in their definitions. As Gagne and Deci (2005) argue, intrinsic motivation refers to the internal force that manifests the potential in human nature.

In this regard, teachers emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation in their profession. Their opinions also show parallelism with the general definition of motivation made by Dörnyei (2001, p.7) as “motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activity”, but as the following utterances by interviewees 7 and 11 illustrate, teacher motivation is a *sin qua non* for language teachers.

“In my opinion, it is the most important thing we need to do our job. If you aren’t motivated, then everything you do is meaningless. But if your motivational level is high, you do everything willingly and you enjoy all of them. I mean, it is a kind of force that pushes you.”

“Well, all you need to do this job. The inner enthusiasm and willingness to teach. For example, I don’t have it now, so I am frustrated to be here (smiling).”

For this reason, it can be concluded that in a general sense, teacher motivation is an intrinsic phenomena for teachers and though it has not been a popular topic among scholars in the field, it is seen that teacher motivation is a crucial factor to maintain the challenging process of language teaching.

Factors Affecting Teacher Motivation

Another focus of this study was to identify the factors that are influential on teachers’ motivational levels. The results showed that although teachers’ definition of their own motivation includes intrinsic elements, they expressed quite extrinsic elements when they were asked to talk about the factors that would influence their motivation negatively or positively. These factors included learners, administrative issues and working conditions. As Deci and Ryan (2000) state, extrinsic motivation factors are present where the work is performed and this is quite in line with the utterances of teachers which put forward mostly work-related factors. Among these factors, learners were found to be the most important factor that influenced teachers’ motivation. The sentences uttered by interviewees 4 and 9 present the importance of learners on teacher motivation.

“I can say that students are at the top of the list because they affect my willingness and enthusiasm very much. If they are motivated and eager to learn, I feel the same to teach, but when they are in a bad mood, trying to teach becomes a torture for me, like in this year.”

“Well, it is hard to say this or that is the most important factor, but based on my experience, I can say that learners are important for my motivation because I remember I have always been more motivated to teach better learners.”

Moreover, one of the instructors (interviewee 15) who participated in reflection writing part of the data collection process emphasized the role of student behaviours on teacher motivation in one of her reflections.

“Last weekend, I sacrificed my free time and prepared some worksheets and activities for them. But when I went to class on Monday and saw all these reluctant students doing nonsense things or being busy with their smart phones, I regretted having prepared all these things and I lost all my enthusiasm for teaching.”

During interviews, another instructor (interviewee 2) mentioned a positive role of learners on his motivation level:

“....For example, my class had the best average grade in the mid-term exam last week and I got really happy. It was very nice to see that my efforts worked. As long as they study like that, of course I teach them willingly.”

In general, it can be seen that the findings of this study regarding the impact of learners are in line with several studies conducted by Bernaus, Wilson and Gardner (2009), Bradley (2010), Dweik and Awajan (2013), Fidan (2014) and Kızıltepe (2008) which also demonstrated that students may both have positive and negative effects on teachers' motivational levels. In all these studies, teachers think that their willingness and enthusiasm are significantly affected by the learner profile they have, and this might even change the way they teach their students.

Another crucial factor found to be influential on teacher motivation is administrative issues. The results revealed that attitudes of administrators, transparency in decision-making processes, punishment-reward systems they applied and instructional decisions they made played important roles on teachers' motivation level. One of the instructors (interviewee 4) stated that in one of his reflections that he was not happy with the attitudes of administrators in his workplace:

“...On Wednesday I had to leave my class early and the following day they warned me not to do this again. I know there are some more experienced teachers who do the same thing but they never warn them. They don't know such warning never works. Such unfair attitudes just break my motivation and also my commitment to this school.”

Interviewee 1, on the other hand, stated that she did not have any problems with administrators' attitudes but she was disturbed with the decisions they made on their own.

“For example, they changed the course book this year though we were happy with the previous one. They should have asked our opinions because we are using that book not they. I can't understand why they changed it without asking us. This is not a good feeling, you know, not being valued.”

The lack of a punishment-reward system was found to be another factor that influences teachers' motivation and this situation is clear in the institution of interviewee 8.

“I go to my classes on time, leave on time, I read the exam papers very carefully, but I know many colleagues who even do not conduct his/her classes. So, how can you be motivated when you know a colleague works less than you but you are treated the same.”

As the utterances above illustrate, if not performed properly, administrative issues influence teacher motivation negatively and become a significantly demotivating factor for teachers. In a case study conducted on a novice Turkish EFL teacher, Aydın (2012) revealed that the communication problems among the

teachers and school administrators were also factors leading to demotivation. In addition to this, investigating the motivation of English language teachers in Sri Lankan public schools, Hettiarachchi (2013) found that several issues related to administration of schools were main demotivators for the teachers. The study conducted by Connie (2000) in Mexico, an EFL context, revealed that support and respect by administrators were among the main motivators for language teachers. Showing parallelism with these works, the current study also puts forward that several administrative issues such as their unfair attitudes, lack of a reward-punishment system and disregarding teachers' opinions affect EFL teachers' motivation negatively.

Other factors that were founded to be influential on teachers' motivation are related to working conditions. The teachers stated that facilities of their institution, their current workload, the atmosphere in their institutional, the amount of their salaries and the support provided by their institution for professional development affect their motivation negatively or positively. For instance, one of the instructors (interviewee 1) mentioned the positive effects of the facilities provided by her institution:

“In fact I am very happy to work for my institution. We have all the technological equipments in our classrooms; our offices are well-designed and modern. It is like my second house and I come to work willingly every day.”

On the other hand, interviewee 18, working at a developing state university, expressed totally opposite feelings mentioned above:

“To be honest, my institution provides nothing for me. Technological equipments do not work and nobody cares. Look at this room and these tables. I don't even have a printer in my office. How motivated can I be in such an atmosphere?”

Moreover, some participants believed that the atmosphere in their institution, relationship and collaboration among colleagues are very important for them. The utterances of interviewee 4 present a good example for this issue:

“Actually, I am not happy in my workplace because I don't like my colleagues. They are not sincere, they are always gossiping about others. What makes me angry most is they are not open to new ideas and they don't want any changes. They affect my enthusiasm”.

Although they were satisfied with their current salaries and money was not a main determinant in their motivational level, some of the instructors believed that they deserved more and they would work harder and better if they earned more money in this job:

“.....we had a pay raise last year but I don't think it is enough. Well, money is not a main factor which can motivate me but I believe instructors deserve much more because we work a lot. For example it would be great if we earned 5 thousand a month.”

The results regarding the role of working conditions on teachers' motivation are also supported by several studies in the literature. Kızıltepe (2008) investigated

the motivating and demotivating factors among teachers at a Turkish public university and found out that the physical facilities and working conditions such as the course load and salaries were main demotivators for them. Furthermore, examining the job satisfaction and motivational level of Iranian EFL teachers, Kazerouni and Sadighi (2012) concluded that better working conditions may result in increased teacher job satisfaction. Based on this, it is concluded that the results of the study are in line with the ones in the literature and put forward that working conditions are important factors on the motivational level of teachers.

Suggestions of teachers to increase teacher motivation

The last research question aimed to identify teachers' own suggestions on how their motivation can be increased. In this regard, teachers expressed their opinions during the interviews and the results revealed some important points. It was found that although the learners were at the top of the list that affect teacher motivation, it was at the bottom of the list suggested by the teachers to be improved or changed, and only 6 participants stated that it would be better and motivate them to find some ways to motivate learners. It might be due to the fact that the teachers are aware of the fact that they could not directly change the profile of students they have every year, and for this reason they preferred to have some other improvements that would directly influence their welfare in a positive way.

According to the teachers, the most important changes should be made on administrative issues to increase their motivation. The results showed that teachers want to be valued more while making instructional decisions and to have more sincere and respectful attitudes from administrators. The sentences below uttered by interviewee 1 summarize the importance of such a change.

“...if they make me feel valuable for this institution; for example taking my suggestions into consideration while making a decision, or asking my ideas on a topic or they treat me fairly, like everyone in this school, I am sure I would feel better and motivated.”

Another instructor (interviewee 10) offers a solution which, he believes, would increase the performance of all instructors.

“...The best solution for that would be a well-defined punishment-reward system. If you do your job well, you are rewarded through several ways but if you ignore your responsibilities and don't do your job properly, you would be punished, even lose your job. Within such a system, everyone will do his/her job in a maximum level.”

As Kazerouni and Sadighi (2012) put forward, administrative support is one of the key factors to decrease the burnout of teachers and increase their motivational level. Moreover, investigating the impact of several variables on teachers' job satisfaction in Singapore, Matthew (2005; cited in Salifu & Agbenyega, 2013) concluded that effective leadership and treatment of principles towards teachers may increase the job satisfaction of working teachers. In line with these studies, the current study also maintains that positive changes in administrative issues that

would make them feel more valuable for the institution will have significantly positive effects on teachers' motivation.

The participant teachers also stated that their motivational level would increase if they had better working conditions. These conditions included better physical facilities and relationship atmosphere in their institution, better salaries, more support for professional development and less workload imposed by their institution. On this issue, interviewee 5 stated that:

“... a better and more spacious room with a nice computer, and classrooms equipped with all technological devices. Such things would motivate me.”

Another instructor touched upon the atmosphere among colleagues in their institution.

“... to be honest, nobody loves each other in our school. It would be very nice if we had a friendlier atmosphere. To do this, we could have weekly meetings outside or the administrators could organize some weekend trips. I believe such activities would increase the motivation of all.”

Interviewee 10, on the other hand, expressed more financial and emotional support for his professional development would increase his motivation.

“I went to an international conference last week and I made a presentation with the name of this institution. However, I met all the expenses myself, and I had to make-up all the courses. That should not be the case. I mean this institution should support me financially and decrease my workload since I represent it internationally.”

All these sentences uttered by the participant teachers reveal the importance of better working conditions in increasing their motivational levels. As Kızıltepe (2008) argues, current working conditions at state universities in Turkey serve as demotivators for most of the instructors and betterment in these conditions would increase their job satisfaction and motivation. Besides, Aydın (2012, p. 10) concludes that “since teachers need to work under better working conditions, it becomes mandatory to solve their economic problems and to offer a moderate workload. Further, the responsibility of teachers concerning social activities and regular duties during school time should be redesigned to increase their motivation and efficiency in their teaching activities.” Supported with the results of these studies in the literature, this study also put forward that it is very likely that teachers' motivation will increase and they will work more enthusiastically when they have better working conditions.

CONCLUSION

Following a qualitative research design, this study investigated the factors that influence the motivational of language teachers working at state universities. Within this purpose, 20 instructors were interviewed through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and 5 of them also wrote daily reflections for two weeks. The transcribed data were analyzed based on the qualitative content analysis scheme of Creswell (2011).

The results showed that teachers' perception of their own motivation is quite intrinsic and they regard the notion of motivation as a basic inner driving-force to sustain their job. On the other hand, when it comes to the elements that influenced their motivation, teachers expressed quite external factors including learners, administrative issues and working conditions that have an influential role on their motivational levels. The general picture of these two findings shows that teachers are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated on a continuum through which external factors contribute to the sustainment of the internal feelings. In other words, as Brown (2001) maintains, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation go hand-in-hand most of the time and they are not mutually exclusive. Finally, the participant teachers stated that several betterments, especially in administrative issues and working conditions, will make them more motivated to do their jobs.

Having the purpose of creating an in-depth focus on the notion of motivation through the narratives of working teachers, this study aims to offer several suggestions which are based on the words of teachers. It is believed that teachers' motivational level and their teaching performance will increase if the following suggestions are taken into consideration in both institutional and national levels.

- Administrators should have fair and equal attitudes towards all the members of their institutions
- Teachers should be included in decision-making processes of schools so that a more collaborative atmosphere can be formed in institutions
- Administrators should put a punishment-reward system into action in their institutions
- The physical conditions of the classrooms, teachers' offices and workplaces should have more facilities for teachers
- In institutions, social activities should be organized to create a more sincere atmosphere among colleagues.
- Teachers who have a desire to develop professionally should be supported more both financially and emotionally.
- A fair and reasonable workload distribution among teachers should be made so that teachers may have some more time for themselves and their own studies.
- Institutions should find several ways and activities to increase student motivation which has a direct impact of teachers' motivation level.
- Salaries and extra course fees of teachers working at state universities should be increased in nation-wide.

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