

# Foreign Language Teacher Motivations for Professionalization

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## Abstract

What motivates language teachers to pursue professionalization? Using the American example of National Board certification, this study examined the strength and interrelationships of five motivational factors for foreign language teacher professionalization: improved teaching, financial gain, internal validation, external validation, and collaboration. A total of 433 foreign language teachers participated in the online survey. Repeated measures ANOVAs found improved teaching, financial gain, and internal validation were strong motivations, whereas the other two were less strong or weaker motivations. Additionally, correlational analyses showed a negative correlation between the two highest motivations, improved teaching and financial gain, indicating that they may represent two distinguishing motivational dimensions. These findings dispute teachers' supposed lack of extrinsic motivations and support a continuum of motivations for professionalization, as seen in the types of extrinsic motivations in Self-Determination Theory.

**Keywords:** Foreign language teachers, teacher motivation, teacher professionalization, advanced certification

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## 1. Introduction

Motivation is a topic of great interest in the second language teaching literature (e.g., Csizér & Kormos, 2008; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008), and why language learners pursue or do not pursue language studies fascinates the profession. Less frequently, however, do we explore language teachers' motivations, with Zhao (2008) lamenting it as "one of the most often overlooked areas in foreign and/or second language teaching and learning" (p. 183). This study seeks to fill that gap in the language teacher motivation literature, focusing on language teacher professionalization. Using National Board (NB) certification as a proxy, this study explores American language teachers' motivations for voluntary professionalization and the relationships among those motivational factors.

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## 2. Teacher Motivation and Self-Determination Theory

Motivation remains difficult to pin down, even after decades of serious study. Initially, human motivation was painted in terms of needs and instincts (Bayer, Ferguson, & Gollwitzer, 2003), but more recent models have focused on the finer points of human drives. While the motivation literature is vast and a thorough review is beyond the scope of this article, we use general, occupational, and teacher motivation, along with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), to situate our argument.

Locus of control and psychological needs figure “not only in the *level* of motivation (i.e., how much motivation), but also in the *orientation* of that motivation (i.e., what type of motivation)” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54, emphasis in original). Deci (1995) maintains that self-motivation is central to successful goal achievement, and Dzubay (2001) contends that teachers are more inclined to professional growth when they choose their own career goals and connect or collaborate with others. Autonomy and choice encourage teacher motivation, and deJesus and Lens (2005) argue that “the greater the personal desire to continue in the teaching profession, the greater the intrinsic motivation” (p. 125). Forcing a teacher to engage in professional growth does little to enhance his or her motivation and may result in counter-productive outcomes (Dzubay, 2001).

Intrinsic/extrinsic (Deci, 1975) and instrumental/integrative dualisms (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) dominated previous motivational theories. Expanding the intrinsic/extrinsic dualism, SDT explores the psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and depicts motivation as a continuum, depending on one’s perceived locus of causality (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61). That continuum ranges from amotivation to extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation. The types of motivation vary as the “degree to which a behavior is *autonomous* versus *controlled*” (emphasis in the original, Deci & Vansteenkiste, p. 30) and “the extent to which the motivation is ‘self-determined’” (Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000, p. 61).

A subtheory within SDT is called Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61), which expands the SDT continuum’s extrinsic motivation to four distinct levels, depending on the degree of autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Moving from amotivation on the left to intrinsic motivation on the right in Table 1, one notes increasing levels of internalization or the “process of taking in a value or regulation” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 60) and the accompanying change in perceived locus of causality (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The level closest to amotivation is external regulation in which external pressure or reward provokes action. Next is introjection, which triggers action to avoid guilt or anxiety or inspire pride. Identification, as the name suggests, produces action because of the personal identification with the task. The last level of extrinsic motivation is integration, in which a person performs an action because it originates from a sense of self. Finally, intrinsic motivation prompts action for the pleasure or gratification gained. This expanded model shows that varying levels of motivation can span from “impoverished” to “active, agentic states” (p. 55) within extrinsic motivation.

Table 1.  
Levels of motivation (based on Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61)

Classical model	Amotivation	Extrinsic motivation: the “activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome” (p. 60)				Intrinsic
SDT and OIT	<b>Amotivation:</b> lack of motivation	<b>External regulation:</b> “behaviors are performed to satisfy an external demand or obtain an externally imposed reward contingency” (p. 61)	<b>Introjection:</b> inspires the “feeling of pressure in order to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego-enhancements or pride” or “ego involvement” (p. 62)	<b>Identification:</b> “the person has identified with the personal importance of a behavior and has thus accepted its regulation as his or her own” (p. 62)	<b>Integration:</b> “occurs when identified regulations have been fully assimilated to the self” and “through self-examination and bringing new regulations into congruence with one’s other values and needs” (p. 62)	<b>Intrinsic:</b> “the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence” (p. 56)
Perceived locus of causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat external	Somewhat internal	Internal	Internal

SDT has informed L2 (e.g., Noels, 2009; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000; Yashima, 2009) and teacher motivational research (e.g., Malmberg, 2006; Turner, Waugh, Summers, & Grove, 2009), and this study provides an empirical application of the theory to language teacher motivational research.

### 3. Foreign Language Professionalization in the United States

Teacher professionalization is critical for the quality of education, as the quality of student language learning is inextricably tied to the quality of language teachers (Byrnes, 2009). In the United States, teacher quality has occupied much attention since the enactment of the now infamous No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, which made the phrase “highly qualified teacher” part of common educational parlance. That Act has focused popular attention on the educational system and given accountability an integral role, with high stakes assessments swaying an increasing number of decisions.

However, No Child Left Behind is a mixed blessing for the language teaching community. Although foreign languages now occupy a space among the “core academic subjects,” they are not subjected to mandated standardized testing like math and reading are. Therefore, less time is spent in language instruction, and the push for accountability has forced all untested content areas to the periphery (Rosenbusch, 2009). The belief that “we have been marginalized as a profession” (Glisan, 2005, p. 270) endures, along with professional isolation, substandard funding, and antiquated teaching materials (Glisan, 2005). This is particularly the case in elementary schools (Cox, 2005), given that languages aren’t typically taught until high school in the United States.

Advanced certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has been an indicator of teacher excellence and professionalization to American policymakers, parents, and teachers for well over a decade. Desired impacts of this advanced certification include identifying accomplished teachers, developing their skills, and improving teacher quality, student learning and

education in general (NBPTS, 2001). Over 91,000 teachers across the United States have demonstrated their teaching abilities and earned NB certification in 24 different specialties, including World Languages Other than English (NBPTS, 2010a).

The NBPTS highlights the uniqueness of the foreign language instruction, including its interdisciplinary nature, interactivity, and students of varying ages and ability levels in the same classroom. Moreover, the role of world language teachers “continually changes as research into second-language acquisition evolves” (NBPTS, 2001, p. 2). It is also exceptional because of the variety of student backgrounds and language skills, as well as the fact that many teachers have to travel between rooms or schools at the elementary and middle school levels (NBPTS, 2001).

Advanced certification for foreign language teachers debuted in 2001, and the first group of NB certified teachers of World Languages Other than English was announced in November 2002. At present, 1505 foreign language teachers have chosen to pursue NB certification and professionalization: 53 teachers of students aged 3 through 10 (the Early and Middle Childhood) and 1452 teachers of students aged 11 through over 18 (the Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood level) (NBPTS, 2010b). Initially, two levels of certification were available in French, German, Latin, Japanese, and Spanish. Unfortunately, only certification at the Early Adolescence and Young Adulthood level in French and Spanish is currently available, while certification at the other level and languages were deemed “low demand” (NBPTS, 2008a). The NBPTS is careful to state that their decision “is not a value judgment and is based strictly on market demand,” pointing out that “low candidate volume may result in psychometric or financial problems” (NBPTS, 2008b, p. 9). Professional organizations of language teachers and the NBPTS are working “on expanding the languages and teaching levels available for National Board Certification” (AATSP, 2008; ACTFL, 2008). That effort included a request for members of the language teaching community to comment on the revised World Languages Other than English standards. Until now, however, there has been little progress in ensuring that teachers of all languages and all levels are able to pursue NB certification and the accompanying professionalization.

That lack of opportunity is a significant challenge to the professionalization of foreign language teachers, some of whom struggle for the very survival of their programs and jobs in an era of budget cuts and No Child Left Behind (Byrnes, 2005). Furthermore, attempting NB certification costs \$3000 (NBPTS, 2010b), much of which comes from personal resources (Hildebrandt, 2008). Given all of these challenges, why then have over 1500 American foreign language teachers voluntarily pursued NB certification?

#### **4. Method**

##### *4.1. Aim of Study*

This study examines the strength and interrelationships of motivational factors for foreign language teacher professionalization using the five motivational factors empirically extracted in a previous study (Hildebrandt & Eom, 2011). Those factors include improved teaching, financial gain, internal validation, external validation, and collaboration. The investigation of motivational levels and relationships, it is hoped, will facilitate and encourage language teachers’ professionalization.

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in the importance of the five motivational factors? If so, how do they differ?

RQ2: What are the interrelationships of the motivational factors? Are they all positively or negatively correlated?

#### 4.2. Participants

Participants are United States teachers who earned NB certification in World Languages Other than English and represent the population of professionalized foreign language teachers. All 814 foreign languages teachers who were NB certified between 2002 and 2006 were contacted, mostly via email. Approximately 25 were sent letters of invitation when email addresses could not be found online. Of those contacted, 433 completed the survey for a 53.32% response rate.

#### 4.3. Instrument

Data for this study were collected using a web-based survey. The survey contained 24 items regarding motivations for professionalism. Although items were not explicitly derived from other surveys, some quantitative studies did inform the creation of the survey's motivational categories (Belden Russonello & Stewart Research and Communications, 2002; Goldhaber, Perry, & Anthony, 2005), as did literature on teacher motivation (Dzubay, 2001; Ozcan, 1996; Nieto, 2003; Sinclair, Downson, & McInerney, 2006).

Participants indicated their response of Strongly disagree, Disagree, Slightly disagree, Slightly agree, Agree, and Strongly agree by clicking a radio button for each item. The survey used a five point Likert scale, with response values ranging from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 0 (Strongly Disagree). Nine teachers piloted the electronic survey to enhance the instrument's usefulness; based on those pilot data, changes in item wording were made. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) is 0.88, supporting consistency of responses across the survey.

#### 4.4. Procedure

The target participants were identified from the NBPTS website (<http://www.nbpts.org/>), and they were sent an introductory email or letter. Following Thomas' (1999) suggestions, the email included the purpose and importance of the study, participant selection procedures, and the approximate amount of time for survey completion. All the correspondences to the participants were examined by several teachers and researchers in the field and found to be adequate. The Office of Human Subjects at the authors' institution approved the survey and other related materials at the time of data collection.

Participants completed the survey anonymously after either clicking the link within the email or typing the URL into their browser. On the introductory page, the participant agreed to the study conditions and clicked the "Begin survey" button at the bottom of the webpage. If he or she chose not to participate, the "Exit the survey" button could be clicked. Upon completing the survey, the participant submitted responses by clicking the "Submit Form" button. By hitting that button, responses were recorded, and the participant was directed to a webpage thanking him or her for participating in the study. Two weeks after the initial contact, a follow-up email or letter was sent to thank the teachers for their participation if they already completed the survey or to consider completing the survey if they had not already done so.

#### 4.5. Motivation Variables

A previous factor analysis revealed five factors of teacher motivation for professionalization (Hildebrandt & Eom, 2011). See Appendix A for the items associated with each factor.

*V1: Improved teaching motivation:* Six items were factored on the improved teaching factor. Professional development and renewal, along with being a more effective teacher, were explicitly

mentioned in the items. Avoiding stagnation and thinking about what they do and why they do it were also included.

V2: *External validation motivation*: The second factor, external validation, was composed of ten items. This motivational factor was about career advancement, enhanced leadership role, and recognition and validation.

V3: *Financial gain motivation*: Three items associated with this factor spoke to potential financial gain as a result of professionalization. The items represented ideas of possible increases in salaries and their expectations for financial gain through NB certification.

V4: *Collaboration motivation*: This factor concerned teachers' desires to collaborate and contained three items.

V5: *Internal validation motivation*: This variable highlighted the centrality of the self as a motivation for professionalization. The two items explore advanced certification as a means to prove to themselves that they are a good teacher.

#### 4.6. Data Analysis

To answer RQ1, this study used repeated measures Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) to compare the five motivational factors for their relative significances. Repeated measures of ANOVA require equal variances and covariances for each level of the within-subject variables, known as the sphericity assumption (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008). When the assumption is violated, it can be dealt with by adjusting the degree of freedom or by using a multivariate approach.

In addition, this study conducted correlational analyses to answer RQ2. When the repeated measures revealed hierarchical aspects of the motivational factors, the correlational analyses revealed how they are related to each other in pairs. For example, two motivational factors may not be statistically different in their average ratings, but that may not mean that they are the same in nature. Correlational analyses allowed the researchers to inspect the relational directions and strengths, as well as to define the characteristics and relations of the motivational factors for language teacher professionalization.

## 5. Results

The descriptive analysis showed that the improved teaching motivation showed the highest rating among the five factors ( $M = 4.85$ ,  $SD = .10$ ), followed by financial gain ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ), internal validation ( $M = 4.5$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ), and external validation ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = .85$ ). Collaboration received the lowest rating ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ). Table 2 presents the average ratings of the five motivational factors in order from the highest to the lowest.

Table 2  
The Results of Means and Standard Deviations of Five Motivations

	Improved Teaching	Financial Gain	Internal Validation	External Validation	Collaboration
$N = 433$					
Mean	4.85	4.60	4.50	4.16	3.85
Standard Deviation	.994	1.52	1.42	.849	1.30

Before conducting the repeated measures ANOVA, the sphericity assumption was tested to select proper approaches to the analyses. The Mauchly Test of Sphericity was found significant,  $p = .000$ , with  $\epsilon =$

.600 of Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon, indicating the violation of the assumption. Thus, in the following analyses, the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used to adjust the degrees of freedom.

With that correction, repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted to examine if there were significant differences between the average ratings of the five motivational factors. Results showed that the certified teachers rated the five motivational factors differently,  $F(2.40, 270.9) = 53.45, p = .000, \eta^2 = .331$ . The effect size of eta is typical to larger than typical based on the effect sizes usually found in behavioral studies.

To cope with the violation of sphericity assumption, multivariate tests of repeated measures were also conducted. Wilk's Lambda is a good and commonly used multivariate  $F$  statistics (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008) and was found significant,  $F = 122.5, df = 4, 429, p = .000, \eta^2 = .730$ . The multivariate results concurred with the univariate tests with adjusted  $dfs$  and confirmed significant differences between the motivational factors of teacher professionalization.

Upon the confirmation of a difference among the motivational factors, pair wise comparisons of within subject contrasts are followed to examine which pairs of motivations are significantly different. The pair contrasts involve multiple comparisons and are adjusted with the Bonferroni correction. The comparisons show that most of the motivation pairs are significantly different at the .01 level (see Table 3).

Table 3  
The Results of Pair Wise Comparisons

Variable A	Variable B	Mean Dif. (A-B)	Std. Error	$p$
Improved Teaching	Financial gain	.253	.095	.082
	Internal Validation	.348	.055	.000*
	External Validation	.687	.047	.000*
	Collaboration	1.014	.054	.000*
Financial Gain	Internal Validation	.095	.108	1.00
	External Validation	.434	.078	.000*
	Collaboration	.761	.100	.000*
Internal Validation	External Validation	.339	.062	.000*
	Collaboration	.666	.079	.000*
External Validation	Collaboration	.327	.059	.000*

\* Significant at the 0.01 level.

Improved teaching received the highest rating from the participants and was significantly different from the motivations of internal validation, external validation, and collaboration,  $p < .01$ . Interestingly, it was not significantly different from financial gain,  $p = .082$ . This suggests that the motivation to improve teaching is equally important as the financial gain motivation for teacher professionalization.

Financial gain was significantly higher than the external validation and collaboration motivations,  $p = .000$ . However, it is not much different from internal validation,  $p = 1.00$ , indicating that self-validation is an equally important motivation for professionalization as financial gain. Finally, collaboration is the least important motivation in teacher professionalization with a significantly lower rating than all the other motivational factors,  $p = .000$ .

In sum, repeated measures ANOVA analysis results revealed that the five motivational factors are not equal in their importance. With follow up analyses of pair comparisons, it was revealed that all the pairs of motivations have a statistically significant difference in their ratings except for the pair of improved teaching and financial gain and the pair of financial gain and internal validation.

The results of the ANOVAs indicate a division of more important motivators and less important ones. The top three motivations include improved teaching, financial gain, and internal validation. Two pairs of the top three motivations do not yield a statistical significance, indicating their equivalent levels of importance. Improved teaching is of the highest importance, but its difference from financial gain is not significant. In addition, financial gain is not significantly different than the subsequently ranked internal validation. These three factors form a strong motivation group for teacher professionalization, whereas the other two can be labeled less strong or weaker motivations.

Table 4  
The Results of Correlational Analyses

	Improved Teaching	Financial Gain	Internal Validation	External Validation	Colla-boration
Improved Teaching	1.00				
Financial Gain	-.213* ( <i>p</i> = .000)	1.00			
Internal Validation	.606* ( <i>p</i> = .000)	-.176* ( <i>p</i> = .000)	1.00		
External Validation	.449* ( <i>p</i> = .000)	.156* ( <i>p</i> = .001)	.449* ( <i>p</i> = .000)	1.00	
Collaboration	.543* ( <i>p</i> = .000)	-.093 ( <i>p</i> = .053)	.283* ( <i>p</i> = .000)	.417* ( <i>p</i> = .000)	1.00

\* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In addition to repeated ANOVAs, this study conducted correlational analyses in order to examine the strengths and directions of correlational associations of motivational factors. In terms of correlational strengths, all the Pearson-Product correlation coefficients of the pairs were found significant, except for the pair of financial gain and collaboration,  $r = -.093$ ,  $p = .053$  (see Table 4). This indicated that the financial gain and collaboration motivations were independent of each other. All the other motivations were significantly correlated.

The results of both the ANOVA and correlation analyses revealed noticeable characteristics of language teacher motivations for professionalization. First, the improved teaching motivation showed strong correlations with the other factors:  $r = .606$ ,  $p = .000$  with internal validation;  $r = .449$ ,  $p = .000$  with external validation; and  $r = .543$ ,  $p = .000$  with collaboration. While improved teaching was strongly associated with the other motivations, it was significantly more important than the others. In other words, while improved teaching was strongly related with internal validation, external validation, and collaboration motivations, it received significantly higher ratings than all the others.

Second, in terms of correlational directions, financial gain showed a unique behavior. It was negatively correlated with improved teaching and internal validation. The average rating of the financial gain motivation was not significantly different from those of the improved teaching and internal validation motivations, but it was in an opposite direction or negatively correlated. That is, those who



valued improved teaching and internal validation tended to give low ratings for financial gain. In addition, financial gain showed the smallest  $r$  values compared to all other motivations:  $r = -.213$ ,  $p = .000$  with improved teaching,  $r = -.176$ ,  $p = .000$  with internal validation,  $r = .153$ ,  $p = .001$  with external validation, and  $r = -.093$ ,  $p = .053$  with collaboration. This finding implies that financial gain was a different type of motivation than the others. Those who rated financial gain high tended to give lower ratings of improved teaching, internal validation, and collaboration. It was also noticeable that external validation was positively correlated with financial gain.

Finally, other salient findings centered on external validation and collaboration. External validation was the only factor that showed a positive correlation with all the other factors. Collaboration received the lowest rating of all, which implies it to be the weakest motivational factor for language teacher professionalization. It was not significantly correlated to financial gain indicating independence of their relations.

The correlational analyses revealed that the three factors, improved teaching, internal validation, and collaboration, formed one group that is in contrast to financial gain. External validation that showed positive correlations with all the other motivations appeared to be in the middle of between these contrasting types of teacher motivations.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. Levels of Motivations for Teacher Professionalization

The motivational factors under investigation are not equal in their importance, with improved teaching, financial gain, and internal validation found to be stronger motivations, while external validation and collaboration are weaker motivations. Of the stronger motivations, two support the common perception of teachers as self-sacrificing and devoted to their students. Financial gain, the third of the stronger motivations, was compellingly different. Further, external validation, although a weaker motivation, figures into language teacher motivations for professionalization. Casting teachers as predominantly selfless tells us only part of the story, and policymakers and administrators should attend to extrinsic motivations while encouraging language teacher professionalization. With that said, the most highly rated motivation for professionalization is to improve teaching, which supports workers being motivated by the prospect of doing their job more effectively (Hirschhorn, 1993). It also supports Kubanylova (2006), who explains that student learning “becomes a primary motive of L2 teachers to teach and develop professionally” (p. 12). Despite the challenging conditions described above, this study’s language teachers are motivated to improve their teaching.

Language teacher motivations for professionalization can be instrumental in nature, and teacher motivation can increase with economic rewards (Ozcan, 1996). This is of particular interest since many industrialized countries base promotions and pay raises on degrees earned and years of experience (Troen & Boles, 2003) instead of teacher effectiveness (Goldhaber, 2009). Kelley and Kimball (2001) found that money was a strong initial attractor to the process of professionalization, but that attraction later diminished as other motivators strengthened. The current study, however, finds that financial gain is just as important a motivation as improved teaching, with no statistically significant difference between the ratings of the two motivations. Given the relatively low salaries of teachers compared to other fields, teaching is rarely pursued by those seeking wealth. Financial gain, however, is a nucleus motivation of teachers in this study and a means of sidestepping the traditional teacher pay scale system (Cavalluzzo, 2004). The states and districts that provide financial incentives to individual teachers who become NB certified, and thereby more professionalized, are on the right track (Oliver & Peker, 2004). The current economic climate, however, has prompted changes in financial incentives for professionalization

throughout the country. It is hoped that this study's findings will encourage policymakers and administrators to consider financial incentives for teachers' professionalization efforts.

The teachers in the current study desired to prove themselves good teachers, volunteered to go through a rigorous certification process, and were tenacious, showing a high degree of self-motivation (Deci, 1995). Internal validation, ranked the third strongest of this study's five motivations, is significantly less important than improved teaching but not that different from the financial gain motivation. Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) described internal validation as especially important to teachers since professional perks are not necessarily available. That desire to prove to themselves they are good teachers is of import for teachers seeking professionalization.

Internal validation, though, is not the only form of affirmation that motivates teachers in this study. External validation occupies a spot in the less important motivation group, with a significantly lower rating than the preceding internal validation. That differentiation supports Ryan and Deci's (2000) argument that there exist different degrees of perceived locus of causality. Further, external validation was significantly different in ratings as all four of the other motivations, indicating its independence from the others. Workers, including teachers, are generally motivated to advance their careers and get ahead in the organization (Hirschhorn, 1993). Whether originating from the profession itself, students, administrators, other teachers, or parents (Johnson, 1990), increased political rewards and honor (Ozcan, 1996) can be powerful incentives for language teacher professionalization and make up part of external validation. Although this study confirms the importance of external validation, such as career advancement and recognition, it is not as persuasive of a reward as the more internally prompted forces described above.

As for the least important motivation, collaboration received significantly lower ratings than all the others. This statistical difference makes sense considering teachers' independence in their instructional practices. Collaboration is not an obligatory attribute of the teaching profession on a day-to-day basis and, despite stated desires for collaboration, it may not be a high priority in every day teaching routines. While Park, Oliver, Johnson, Graham, & Oppong (2007) found that teachers wanted to collaborate with others in the process of professionalizing, they are not required to do so to be successful. Most teachers are already overloaded with teaching, grading, advising, and administrative work that collaboration may seem a trivial luxury. It is encouraging to see that, despite its lowest ratings, collaboration is still a part of language teacher motivations. Because other motivations are higher, however, collaboration may seem less important.

## *6.2. Foreign Language Teacher Professionalization and Motivational Theories*

The results of correlational analyses revealed an interesting perspective on the relationships of the five motivational factors. Three motivations, including improved teaching, internal validation, and collaborations, were strongly and positively correlated with each other, while their correlations with financial gain were in the negative direction with smaller correlation coefficient values. External validation was the only factor that showed a positive correlation with financial gain even though their coefficient value was not as strong as those with the others. Based on the direction of correlations, it can be speculated that external validation is located at a neutral position along the two dimensions of motivational factors, of which each end point is represented by financial gain and improved teaching.

In order to explain these relationships, the motivation factors are juxtaposed to motivational theories. First, following the intrinsic and extrinsic classifications of motivations (Ryan & Deci, 2000), three motivations of improved teaching, internal validation, and collaborations can be classified as the intrinsic, whereas financial gain and external valuation are labeled as the extrinsic. It is meaningful to find that teacher motivations are not all about intrinsic ones as previously speculated (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Too

often, teaching professions are viewed as altruistic and self-giving. Extrinsic motivations in the form of salary, status, work schedule, and power are not as prevalent in teaching as they may be in other jobs (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Troen & Boles (2003) describe teaching as “a flat career” (p. 73) that “offers no promotions, and pay raises are based almost exclusively on years of service or earned academic degrees” (p. 60). Furthermore, there is an absence of “external incentives or rewards for acquiring knowledge, sharpening skills, or improving performance” (p. 60). However, this study has found that extrinsic motivations such as financial gain and external validations are critical. The authors suggest that, in order to improve teacher quality and professionalization, it is important to employ financial and promotional incentives to recognize our language teachers for their professional achievements.

However, despite meaningful implications, the simple dichotomous classification seemed insufficient to explain the complicated behaviors of the motivational factors in this study. Thus, we would like to discuss the motivational factors further in terms of the Self-Determination Theory. This study finds SDT an appropriate model for teacher motivations because teacher professionalization cannot be *amotivation* (impersonal) nor pure *intrinsic* (internal), but professionalization is “done in order to attain some separable outcome” (p. 60).

The financial gain motivation appears to represent *external regulation*, the external end of the continuum of extrinsic motivations proposed in SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000). (Refer to Table 1 for the details). Financial gain is to “obtain an externally imposed reward contingency” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61). Besides external validation, the only motivation that showed a positive correlation with financial gain appears to be an example of the *introjection* phase of the SDT model. The perceived locus of causality of these two motivations is external and somewhat external, respectively.

On the other hand, improved teaching and internal validation can represent the internal end of the continuum, *integration*, which “occurs when identified regulations have been fully assimilated to the self” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61). The negative correlations of these factors with financial gain can support the opposing end points of the motivation continuum.

While supporting the continuum of motivational theory, the nature of continuum is still questionable. That is, it is desirable to see the motivational factors of this study aligned with the SDT model of motivations, but correlational directions and magnitudes indicate that the shape of this continuum may not be linear but rather curvy. Further rigorous research, such as polynomial analyses, is necessary to find out the shape of motivational continuum.

## 7. Limitations and Future Study

This study has investigated five motivational factors of language teacher professionalization to identify their strengths and associations. It should be noted, however, that only American foreign language teachers who were already NB certified participated in this study. Considering the unique contexts of teacher professionalization, the findings of this study may have some limitations in generalizations. The findings of this study should be cautiously applied to other countries or cultures.

This limitation leads to future research on the motivational orientations of teachers from other cultures. For example, in a previous study by Iyengar and Lepper (1999), Asian American children were more intrinsically motivated when choices were made for them than Anglo American children who were more motivated when they made their own choices. Might this hold true for adult teachers of various cultures?

In addition, the relative strength of the motivating factors for language teachers would be worthy of exploration. Are the ratings of those factors the same for teachers of other content areas? Finally, as financial gain as a result of NB certification becomes more tenuous, will the differences in motivational levels among different groups remain?

Investigating the effects of NB certification on student learning is rich for future study, as is the effect of the new World Languages Other than English standards on the number of NB certified teachers. Whether the motivations in this study hold up for other proxies of professionalization, such as higher educational levels, may also provide opportunity for investigation.

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## Appendix A

### Survey items, grouped by factor

#### *Teaching motivation*

- 4. I thought that NB certification would help me avoid becoming stagnant.
- 8. I saw NB certification as an opportunity for professional development.
- 24. Professional renewal was an important part of my decision to attempt NB certification.
- 10. I thought that NB certification would help me be a more effective teacher.
- 14. Going through the NB certification process would make me think about what I do and why I do it.
- 21. Being a better teacher was a major reason for pursuing NB certification.

#### *External validation motivation*

- 2. I felt that NB certification would increase the recognition that I get professionally.
- 5. I felt that NB certification would help to broaden my job opportunities.
- 6. I thought that NB certification was the next step in my career.
- 7. My voice wasn't being heard.
- 11. I expected to increase my professional status as a result of NB certification.
- 12. I pursued NB certification because it would look good on a resume.
- 13. I attempted NB certification because I am goal-oriented.
- 17. NB certification would help me have positive influence in the policy arena.
- 19. Increased opportunities for leadership were key to my decision to attempt NB certification.
- 20. The fact that NB teachers are sought after prompted me to seek NB certification.

#### *Financial motivation*

- 1. I was tempted by a possible increase in my salary.
- 15. I attempted NB certification for the money.
- 23. Financial gain was central to my decision to attempt NB certification.

#### *Collaboration motivation*

- 9. I felt that attempting NB certification would provide me with opportunities to work closely with colleagues.
- 16. Working with other teachers through the process of NB certification was attractive to me.
- 22. I thought that NB certification would help me work more collaboratively with fellow teachers.

#### *Internal validation motivation*

- 3. Achieving NB certification was a matter of proving to myself that I was a good teacher.
- 18. Validation of myself as a teacher was a central part of my decision to pursue NB certification.