

## Investigation of the Factors Causing Motivation Loss of the Lecturers in Language Teaching

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### Abstract

Each country has a different cultural origins and tendency to shape its future. Since Turkey's social, economic and geographical conditions differ from those of other countries, the Turkish education system also differs from that of other countries. Quality education and training occurs through effective communication between institutions, teachers, students and families. However, while managing and directing education, the teacher is undergoing loss of motivation and inefficiency in school environment. In the study we tried to find out and investigate the factors causing loss of motivation for the teachers in language teaching. We interviewed eight Language Lecturers teaching English, French, German, Arabic and Turkish Languages at the College of Foreign Language in various universities in Turkey so as to obtain the data. We asked three open ended questions to the lecturers in our study; "What affects your motivation in classroom environment?", "What are the factors that cause loss of motivation for you?", "What do you do to motivate yourself to teach language?" We used qualitative research method to determine and assess the level of motivation loss, and to compare them regarding the gender of the teachers and the students, the experiences of the teachers and the kinds of the language. The opinions obtained from the lecturers through face to face interview revealed that the implementation of distant-education in English Language courses, indifference of the students to French and German Languages, lack of communication, inadequate social facilities and the alphabet difference of the students coming from Turkic Republics and Arabian Countries were the main reasons for the factors causing motivation loss of the teachers in language teaching.

**Keywords:** Loss of motivation, lecturer, language teaching, communication, distant-education, classroom management

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# Dil Eğitiminde Okutmanların Motivasyon Kaybına Neden Olan Etmenlerin İncelenmesi

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## Öz

Her ülkenin kültürel kökenleri ve geleceği sekillendirme yaklaşımları farklıdır. Türkiye'nin sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel yapıları ile coğrafik şartları diğer ülkelerinkinden farklı olduğu için Türk Eğitim Sistemi de farklılıklar göstermektedir. Kaliteli ve nitelikli eğitim, kurumlar, öğretmenler, öğrenciler ve veliler arasındaki etkili iletişim sayesinde gerçekleşmektedir. Ancak eğitim faaliyetleri sürecinde, öğretmenler okul ortamında bir takım verimsizlik ve motivasyon kaybı yaşamaktadır. Bu çalışmamızda dil öğretiminde okutmanların yaşadığı motivasyon kayıplarının sebeplerini bulmaya ve incelemeye çalıştık. Verileri elde edebilmek için Türkiye'nin çeşitli illerindeki üniversitelerin Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okullarında görev yapan sekiz İngilizce, Almanca, Fransızca, Arapça ve Türkçe okutmanı ile yüz yüze görüşmeler yaptık. Çalışmamıza katılmayı kabul eden okutmanlara "Sınıf ortamında motivasyonunuzu etkileyen etmenler nelerdir?", "Motivasyon kaybınıza neden olan etmenler nelerdir?" ve "Dil öğretirken kendinizi motive etmek için neler yaparsınız?" şeklinde üç açık uçlu soru sorduk. Motivasyon kaybı seviyelerini belirlemek, öğretmenlerin cinsiyetlerine, hizmet yıllarına ve öğrettikleri dillere göre göre bunları karşılaştırmak için nitel araştırma yöntemi kullandık. Okutmanlarla yapılan yüz yüze görüşmelerden elde edilen görüşler, İngilizce derslerinin uzaktan eğitim şeklinde yapılması, öğrencilerin Fransızca ve Almanca'ya karşı ilgisiz olması, iletişim eksikliği, idarenin ilgisizliği, okulun sosyal imkanları, fiziki şartlar ve yabancı öğrencilerin ana dillerinin alfabelerinin farklı olması dil öğretiminde öğrencilerin motivasyon kayıplarına sebep olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Motivasyon kaybı, dil öğretimi, okutman, iletişim, uzaktan eğitim, sınıf yönetimi

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## **1. Introduction**

The foundations of the concept of motivation extend to the first-century philosophers, however, its theoretical and scientific investigation began with the Industrial Revolution and it was intended as a means of increasing employee productivity. The concept is expressed as a process that includes all the elements that lead to a targeted struggle. Today, the theory of motivation, which is a candidate for being a new discipline, has become a research and study field that aims to reach the highest level of performance and to benefit from human potential at the highest level. In terms of professions, teaching profession needs motivation much more than others, as the locomotive of this profession is the teacher itself, and the motivation loss of the teacher results in negative effects on students' learning and learning environment.

In many countries it has been witnessed that the teachers are severely demoralized, they are in despair, and their courage is broken. Teachers do not think that their profession is as respected as it used to be. This problem is one of the sources of the problem of leaving the profession in many developed countries. Hence, countries such as the United States are under discussion both in terms of recruiting teacher education and increasing salaries in parallel (Wagner, 2008). In general, both in developed and developing countries, teachers are concerned about their professional status. In most developing countries, the motivation of teachers is increasingly fragile and declining. In addition, teachers have low self-confidence in their professional roles. Although there is a strong relationship between teacher motivation and quality education, this factor is neglected by both national and international policy makers (VSO, 2002).

### **1.1 Motivation Loss**

It is often pronounced that teachers are the most important factor determining the quality of education, whereas national and international policy makers are developing and designing new policies. In this process, they tend to ignore the needs of teachers. Teachers often do not see themselves as part of the educational reform efforts; on the contrary, they consider themselves to be a passive practitioner of the decisions or a technical "input" (VSO, 2002, p.1). As a result of all these problems, countries that already do not have enough teachers have to encounter important problems with the teachers such as constant displacement, loss of confidence, and low level of professional commitment. Teachers need to create a good educational environment for their students, but they often feel helpless to improve their situation. Moreover, while academic literature and policy debates often refer to teachers' deficiencies, studies on teachers' working and living conditions are often neglected (VSO, 2002). All these issues lead to demoralisation and motivation loss for the teachers in teaching profession.

Teachers were free to determine and evaluate the purpose and content of education for centuries until recently. In other words, teachers were able to decide and implement the most fundamental aspects of education on their own. Since the 19th century, as a result of the professionalization of education processes, and the separation of the educational practices such as program development and instructional design from one another, as well as the changing role of the teacher in this process, there has been a significant reduction in the roles of decision making process of the teachers. From this perspective, the creation of a national curriculum and its implementation by the teacher necessarily changed the role of the teacher. Nowadays, teachers have been significantly removed from the decision-making position. Others have been

making decisions on behalf of teachers (Gür, 2006). In other words, teachers are increasingly being reduced to a practitioner status rather than an expert status that refer to their own decisions. Ready programs are offered to teachers, and the details of the implementation of these programs are given to them. According to this approach, which envisages controlling each step of the teachers, education is concerned with the development of some educational processes and materials that an inexperienced teacher can easily follow and implement. In summary, many of the decisions that the teacher can take and implement on his own are readily presented to him or her for practising in school environment, which makes the teachers unskilled (Apple, 1986, 1995; Shannon, 1989).

The teachers, to live according to the motives and values, should agree that they are an important part of their personality, and they guide their lives even if teachers do not realize them. Certain motives such as power, success, dignity, love and independence give the teaching staff in tertiary education the key to happiness in a sense. The desire for independence keeps them away from their loyalties in their daily lives. The teachers are expected to have a desire to establish close relationships, and they want to see people they love. To satisfy their curiosity, the teachers struggle to extract the information from where it is kept. Not only the lack of independence and power, but the sense of failure also gives rise to motivation loss in teaching profession.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

In the field of motivation and motivation loss of teachers, there have been a lot of studies and research in literature. According to Recepoglu (2011), motivation emerges as an effective tool that teachers most need in education recently, and the fact that teachers have a high level of job motivation and that teachers can be effective and productive are of great importance in terms of job satisfaction and job performance.

It is argued in the studies by Mackenzia (1983), Lezotte (1985), Good and Brophy (1986), Bickel (1990) and Şişman (2002) that motivation and, accordingly, teacher performance have an important role in the effectiveness of schools. It is emphasized that the primary goal of the school management should be motivation of the teachers.

Yıldırım and Keskinliç Kara (2017) carried out a study on hopelessness level of the teachers and proposed that quality and happy working environments and opportunities should be provided as qualified education in order to prevent teachers from getting desperate and to receive qualified teaching and training services from teachers. They also argued that it is important for teachers to feel good about themselves in terms of their mental and physical health and to make them feel and see them as qualified individuals in the society of material and social aspect.

According to Dogan (2012), it is important to identify and eliminate the causes of motivation loss, fear, anxiety and hopelessness in teachers. Providing a more qualified education and improving the working conditions for educating hopeful and productive teachers can be beneficial for making a positive contribution to the students and every segment of the society.

Schein (1997), Bozkurt (1997), Ostroff ve Rothausen (1997) and Aytaç (2003) have the conclusion that organizational climate, on the one hand, is affected by leadership style,

organizational culture and organizational structure, on the other hand, it directly affects the work behaviour, work-related emotions and attitudes of the people.

Gök (2009) argued in her study, "Organizational Climate on Motivation", that the organizational climate affects the performances, activities, productivity and hence motivation of employees, and she concluded that an efficient organizational climate to be created by school management will not merely motivate employees, but rather increase their motivation levels.

According to Aksoy (2006), Güven (2007), Everett (1988), Oades (1983), Pennington (1997), Smith (1999), Tiryaki (2008), Tanrıverdi (2007) and Yılmaz (2009), as the age progresses, so do the motivation levels of the teachers decrease. In the study by Receptoğlu (2013), a significant difference was found between the motivation scores of the teachers in the 22-30 age group and those in the 41-50 age group and in the 31-40 age group. The teachers in the 22-30 age group have the highest motivation level, while the 41-50 age group have the lowest motivation level.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Problem Statement and Purpose**

In the study on Investigation of the Factors Causing Motivation Loss of the Lecturers in Language Teaching, we aimed to determine various opinions of the lecturers working in the universities in various cities, and to compare their views over motivation loss. In relevant to the purpose of the study we asked the participant lecturers "What affects your motivation in classroom environment?", "What are the factors that cause loss of motivation for you?", "What do you do to motivate yourself to teach language?"

### **2.2. Methods and Research Design**

We used a qualitative research method to determine and evaluate lecturers' views on Investigation of the Factors Causing Motivation Loss of the Lecturers in Language Teaching. The reason why we have chosen qualitative research method is that this kind of methodological approach enables researchers to evaluate, interpret and make judgement about immeasurable data.

We carried out this research with the views of lecturers teaching foreign languages and Turkish language in various universities in some cities in Turkey through face to face interview. By examining the data obtained by the researcher in the course of coding the data, the researcher tries to separate the data into meaningful parts and to find out what each part conceptually means (Creswell, 2003). Sometimes this can be a sentence, sometimes a paragraph, and sometimes a whole page, while these parts sometimes refer to only one word. These sections, which have a meaningful consistency within themselves, are named by the researcher; In short, it is coded. The investigator codes all the data in this way and thus creates a code list (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

### **2.3. Participants**

The participants in our study were eight lecturers who teach English, French, German, Arabic and Turkish languages in different universities in Turkey. As shown in Table 1 and 2, half of the participants are female; the range of age is 30-55 years, with 6-30 years of teaching experience. We obtained the data from 8 lecturers who admitted to be involved in the interview for the research in face to face interview. The participants were asked whether they were contented to

answer to the questions, and then we applied the tool. The names of the lecturers are coded with letters and numbers.

**Table 1:** *Statistical data as to Gender, Age, Language and Years of Experience of the Lecturers*

GENDER		AGE		LANGUAGE		EXPERIENCE	
Male	4	25-35 years	2	English Language	2	1-10 years	2
Female	4	36-45 years	3	Turkish Language	3	11-21 years	3
		46-55 years	3	French Language	1	22-30 years	3
				German Language	1		
				Arabic Language	1		

## 2.4. Research Instrument

In the study, we used the tool with semi structured interview form to gather data from the lecturers. We asked three open ended questions to the participants. The questions were designed in accordance with the loss of motivation and the importance of motivation in teaching language in school environment. The questions asked to the lecturers during the interview were formed by the help and directions of four experts in the field.

## 2.5. Data analysis

We did the face-to-face interviewing with the participants to obtain the necessary data for our study; we abstracted the statements obtained from the lecturers and made them into pure data. The data were then transferred and digitalized into computer in order to form digital data. We used content analysis with the percentage and frequency values.

## 3. Findings

The oral statements we obtained from the lecturers working in various universities for the questions in the semi-structured interview form were processed after having been typed, arranged, summarized, filtered and extracted. The final statements are given below.

The questions that we asked the lecturers are “What affects your motivation in classroom environment?”, “What are the factors that cause loss of motivation for you?”, “What do you do to motivate yourself to teach language?” The sample statements reflecting the views of the lecturers for the first question are given as followings. From the replies to the questions we have the conclusion that the main sources of Motivation Loss shown in table 2 include distant-education, indifference to French and German languages, lack of communication, alphabet difference of foreign students, inappropriate physical conditions, lack of social facilities, and non-participation in decision-making process.

**Table 2:** *Content analysis in terms of the source of motivation loss*

The Source of Motivation Loss	Branch of Lecturer	Number	%
Distant-education	Turkish	3	62,5%
	English	2	
Indifference to French and German	French	1	25%
	German	1	
Lack of Communication	Turkish	2	62,5%
	German	1	

	French	1	
	English	1	
Alphabet Difference	Turkish	3	50%
	Arabic	1	
Inappropriate Physical Conditions	German	1	37,5%
	Turkish	2	
Lack of Social Facilities	German	1	25%
	Turkish	1	
Non-participation in Decision-making	Turkish	3	100%
	English	2	
	German	1	
	French	1	
	Arabic	1	

(A.Ö., Female, Lecturer of English Language, 8 years of experience): “... I want my students to learn well and be successful in their classes. The more successful they become the happier and the more I feel motivated. In my workplace, the management of the faculty and the department do their best for the students and us to keep success, which motivates all of us lecturers in our department. This makes the teaching activities perfect for the students. The physical conditions of classrooms are compatible for the students’ requirements such as library, canteen, and atmosphere, size, light and ventilation of the classrooms. As we see how motivated the students are, so do we feel motivated to teach language.”

From the views and the statements of the lecturer, we can argue that the extrinsic motivators are of importance for the lecturers to be motivated in teaching activities. The extrinsic motivators include the interest of the directors in teaching and the achievements of the students, the physical and social facilities of the school such as library, gym, canteen, café, boutique cinema, and theatre hall. In the study carried out at high schools by Ada et al (2013), it is emphasized that the external factors are more influential than the internal factors in the provision and deterioration of the motivation of the teachers. The researchers such as Bock et al. (2005), Ivancevich and Matteson (2002), Greenberg and Baron (1997) and Einstein (2004) argued in their studies that an organizational climate with innovative and fair qualities, in which the needs of the employees are appreciated, created by environmental conditions that motivate the employees brings about positive effects on motivation.

(A. Ö. Female, Lecturer of Turkish Language, 19 years of experience): “... When I am valued by my principals and the other teachers, I become very pleased and feel very happy and motivated. I think that all the lecturers get happy if the directors give them opportunity to voice their opinions. Although limited and not so possible due to some formal procedures, taking part in some duties and decision-making process in teaching activities makes me motivated as well...”

Keeping the teachers away from the process of preparing educational contents undermines their professional authority and removes the educational relationship they have established with their students and colleagues. The lecturer, who cannot perform his/her professional role, also loses his/her activity in the school, thus it is no longer possible to influence a number of hierarchical decision-making bodies, beginning with school management.

It can be argued that in school management, it is important to establish an effective communication between the manager and the educational staff and to participate in the decision making process in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the students. The consequences of

the unequal power relationships between the students and the academics could be caused by the lack of communication (Zengin and Hacifazlıoğlu, 2013). The participation of teachers in decisions about education and training activities will increase their effectiveness, thus promoting their motivation levels. However, it is not possible to participate in the present structure of the Higher Education System because the school administrator does not have the authority to determine the school policy, to set new goals according to the environmental conditions and to make decisions in this direction, more precisely the school administration does not have decision making authority (Celep, 1990). This confirms the statements of participant lecturer on the limitation of principal's authority for their participation in decision making process.

(F. K., Female, Lecturer of German Language, 15 years of experience): *".....The physical conditions of classroom in which I and my colleagues have done the teaching do not meet the expectations of the students. Educational materials for language courses are not enough for students to learn language effectively. My efforts to teach my students foreign language do not satisfy them, causing me to be depressed and stressed. On the other hand, the director has not tried to solve the problem, which leads me to feel burnout in my profession..."*

*"... Another important point that causes me to lose my motivation is the fact that German and French languages have lost their importance compared to English. The students who have to learn French and German Languages to meet the requirements for graduation are aware of this and not interested in the courses..."*

From the statements of the participant lecturer, who has been teaching German language in the university for fifteen years, it is understood that the physical conditions of the classrooms are not enough to motivate lecturers and the students. This results in feeling burnout and stress on the side of lecturers. The inappropriate conditions for learning leads to apathy and indifference to courses, resulting in failure in teaching efforts, which causes loss of motivation. Furthermore, the circumstances like this and the negligence of the directors make lecturers stressed in classroom environment, as a result the lecturers may have to cope with stress. The inability to cope with stress, which is an effective factor in the teachers' personal and professional achievement, and the fact that they are not supported by the management to overcome the stress, and inability to prevent the working environment from becoming stressed will increase the dimension of the problem. Indeed, the responsibility to overcome this problem is not only that of teachers but also of the administrators and their institutional practices. In this case, It is very important to find out the elements causing negative stress in organizational aspect and the sources of positive stress that increase the professional performance by supporting and motivating the lecturers and the elements that cause negative stress in the schools should be known and recognized; it is very important to control negative stress sources and to diagnose the problem that creates it and to take the necessary precautions.

From the statements of the lecturers of French and German Languages, the attitudes of the students who learn French and German to these languages lead the lecturers to lose their motivation. The other important European languages such as French and German have remained inferior to English. It is because English is the language of trade, science, aviation, maritime, diplomacy, international communication, cinema and the Internet. For the first time in the history of humanity, a language has been able to find so many users and a widespread use of it. This makes the students indifference to French and German languages.



(T. T. Male, Lecturer of English Language, 14 years of experience): *"... I am teaching English online through Distant Education Program for three years. I do not think this kind of teaching will be useful for language learners, as neither I nor my students are pleased with it. I and my students do not know each other in person. I do not believe that teaching and learning a foreign language is possible without face-to-face interaction. I do not ever hear the voice of my students. Under these circumstances, I cannot become sure whether they are to learn what I have taught. Because of these shortcomings, loss of motivation is inevitable for me...."*

The statements of the lecturer suggest that distance education has some disadvantages, resulting in loss of motivation for lecturers. The complaints of the lecturers on distance education include facilitating face-to-face interaction environments and opportunities that are important in learning environments, limitations on the processing of application-oriented subjects such as laboratories, workshops, and limitations in communication. All these shortcomings and limitations resulting from online teaching lead to loss of motivation for the lecturers who believe that face-to-face teaching foreign language is more effective than online teaching. One of the reasons why lecturers experience loss of motivation is that individual communication and interaction between student-teacher and student-student are very limited, and this can affect the socialization of individuals negatively. According to Kaya (2002), frequent contact with teachers both inside and outside the classroom is vital for the motivation and development of students.

(S.S. Male, Lecturer of Turkish Language, 10 years of experience): *"... Most of the students in my language courses came from Turkic Republics, such as Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan. Their formal languages in their schools are Russian and Persian. The alphabets they are used to are different than Turkish alphabet. They are having serious problems in writing and reading activities in the courses. I am trying to best to teach them and make them learn easily. They are very resistant to different alphabet, which causes me to lose my motivation, as I feel failure in my teaching way...."*

There are various problems in the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language, especially teaching close Turkic dialects. Alphabet difference is the most common problems encountered in teaching Turkish dialects to the students from Turkic Republics. Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan started the transition process of the Cyrillic alphabet to the Latin alphabet. However, Cyrillic alphabet is still used in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkish Communities within the Russian Federation. It seems that this will continue for so many years. In this case, it is necessary to give great importance to them especially to study the dictation (correct writing) in the courses of Turkish Language. Dictation, which is a tool for gaining basic skills in language teaching, is even more important for those who write their mother tongue in different alphabets. The most important part of the matter is to write correctly for the tongue to use as a teaching language and to establish interest between letters of the mother tongue and those of the target language, otherwise this issue will create failure in courses, thus in the communication between teacher and the students. This is one of the main causes of motivation loss for the teachers and the students.

From the statements of the participant lecturer, he has experienced loss of motivation as he could not establish an effective interaction with the foreign students in the class, since their alphabets are different than his.

#### **4. Discussion and Suggestions**

From the replies to the questions we have the conclusion that the main sources of Motivation Loss for the lecturers teaching in various universities include distant-education, indifference to French and German languages, lack of communication, alphabet difference of foreign students, inappropriate physical conditions, lack of social facilities, and non-participation in decision-making process.

Loss of motivation is one of the important variables that cause adverse effects on the professional and private lives of individuals. This negative situation has a characteristic that can cause the decrease of the quality of education and teaching by affecting the actions of teachers who are the designers of the society (Doğan and Akçöltekin, 2012). From the investigation of the sources of motivation loss for the lecturers, it appears that the mood of the lecturers in the classroom environment plays an important role in the effectiveness of teaching process. For this reason it is very important to remove the circumstances causing adverse effect on lecturers in teaching environment.

Quality and happy working environments and opportunities should be provided in an effort to prevent teachers from losing motivation and getting desperate and to receive qualified teaching and training services from teachers. It is important for teachers to feel good about themselves in terms of their mental and physical health and to make them feel and see them as qualified individuals in the society from material and social aspect. Expecting a qualified educational work from a teacher who is having difficulties with the mentioned problems and who is dealing with these troubles can cause a lack of solution (Taner, 2008). In this respect, it seems important to meet the needs and expectations of the teachers in achieving the desired results in education and training.

The effectiveness and efficiency level of an educational organization depends on whether the management is developing the conditions according to contemporary management understanding (Celep, 1990). The management structure of an educational organization has an important role in the effectiveness of teaching staff as well as efficiency of personnel and efficiency of work. For this reason, efforts should be made to ensure the collaboration and fulfil the expectations between the management of the organization and teaching staff mutually, to prepare the organization in the most effective and efficient manner and to provide high job satisfaction to the educational staff.

The lecturers' participation in the managerial decisions will result in job success as it causes job satisfaction. What is important for the school administrator is to ensure that lecturers become appropriately involved in decision-making process. In a survey on the participation of teachers in administrative decisions, it is argued that teachers tend to participate in managerial decisions, and the teachers who participated in the decision making process were found to have a higher level of motivation than those who did not participate (Saka, 1985). With the provision of opportunities for participation to the teachers in decision making process, the motivation levels of the teachers should be promoted so that the students can have effective communication with teachers in school environment.

The lecturers in our study are of the common view that the school should provide all kinds of support for students' academic development as well as their social development. In this scope,

"Social Activity Programs" should be implemented in education practices, which are carried out in order to support the social, physical and cultural development of the students and to reveal their potential differences in their interests and abilities.

In order for the teachers to reach an adequate level of motivation, they should interact with the students regularly and they should gather and discuss educational issues with the students in face-to-face way for online courses. Lack of face-to-face interaction with the students causes indifference, neglect and apathy in the courses, which causes loss of motivation in both sides, teacher and the students. So as to prevent this negative situation emerging in online courses, the teacher should be provided with face-to-face courses a few times in a term.

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