



## **Demotivating Factors on Foreign EFL Teachers: A Case Study in Private School in Turkey**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that impact upon foreign EFL teachers' motivation levels in a Turkish context. The participants were four foreign EFL teachers working at primary and secondary schools for more than two years in Turkey. This qualitative study used multiple data collection tools (e.g., profile information form, open-ended questions, and semi-structured interviews) to examine their de-motivational reasoning. Findings showed that unsuitable content of course book, students' bad attitudes towards native EFL teachers, high expectation of parents, the low process of students' language learning, lack of communication with colleagues, not being awarded, low salary, lack of discipline, long workhours, crowded classroom, duties, and students' unwillingness to learn English are demotivating factors on foreign EFL teachers.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Motivation is one of the individual differences, which affect the language-learning process. Studies (Almashy, 2018; Baaqeel, 2020; Tatar, 2017) focused on learners' motivation and show that demotivating factors should be eliminated to have a better learning environment, in language learning. For teachers, lack of motivation causes reducing productivity (performance), therefore teacher motivation has been popular to investigate on Second Language Learning (Börü, 2018). Teacher's motivation plays a role in students' motivation level and learning process because students communicate with their teachers a lot (Han & Mahzoun 2017). If teachers lose their motivation, it may cause weak education outcomes for students (Hettiarachchi, 2013). In other words, less motivated teachers cause a less effective learning environment (Koran, 2015). Stressful work life, lack of self-efficacy, repetition of content, lack of professional knowledge, and lack of self-determination are among the factors that reduce teacher motivation (Yaghoubinejad, Zarrinabadi, & Nejadansari, 2017). One of the affecting factors on teacher motivation is students (Addison & Brundrett, 2008; Erkaya, 2012; Kızıltepe, 2008; Koran, 2015; Song & Kim, 2014).

Teacher motivating and demotivating factors can be divided into two; intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Koran, 2015). For instance, while being successful is one of the intrinsic motivator (Börü, 2018), communication problems with administrator is among extrinsic factors, which demotivate foreign EFL teachers (Han and Mohzoun (2017).

Several studies have been proposed to explain what demotivates EFL teachers (Addison and Brundrett, 2008, Aydın 2012, Barın, Han and Sarı, 2018, Börü 2018, etc.), but there is just one study, Han and Mahzoun (2017), explains demotivating factors on foreign EFL teachers in Turkey. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the reveal of demotivating factors on foreign EFL teachers in Turkey.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The research below has examined the factors that affect the motivational level of EFL teachers depending on different contexts (e.g. Turkey, England, Iraq, Japan, Iran, Sri Lanka, and South Korea).

Some research in the Turkish context; Barın, Han, and Sarı (2018) investigated the motivational and demotivating factors that affected teachers in a second service area in Turkey. In this qualitative single-case study, the data was collected from an experienced teacher who works in the second service area. Data collecting tools were an interview, self-assessment papers, and a diary. This study classified motivating and demotivating factors into two groups; intrinsic and extrinsic factors. While the deficiency of self-motivation has a negative effect on teacher's motivation, being rewarded has a positive effect on it. Besides, for inexperienced teachers, the most demotivating extrinsic factor was the exam that is applied by the government to select teachers. However, Börü (2018) revealed that the biggest motivator of teachers was being successful and all of the factors are important because of triggering success. This study investigated what influences teachers' motivation in Turkey. Participants were two EFL teachers who work for gifted students. Data was collected from open-ended interview questions and a qualitative research method was used. On the other hand, Han and Mahzoun (2017)'s study was the first study that investigated foreign EFL teachers' demotivating factors in Turkey. Participants were two foreign teachers who work in Turkey. It was a qualitative study and face-to-face interviews, profile forms, field notes, and diaries were used to collect data. Results showed that miscommunication was the most significant problem for foreign EFL teachers. Especially they complained about miscommunicating with administration and colleagues. On the other hand, living or working conditions, lack of communication with parents, low salary, and work hours have a negative effect on foreign EFL teachers' motivation level.

Aydın (2012) investigated strategies to motivate teachers in Turkey. It was a qualitative case study. Face-to-face conversations, MSN talks, and a diary were tools to collect data. The participant was 26 years old EFL teacher. The study showed that six main factors demotivate EFL teachers, which were; teaching profession, curriculum, working condition, students and their parents, and colleagues and schools' administrators. This study revealed that the most demotivating factors were having less knowledge about the teaching profession and lack of knowledge of how to teach. Working conditions like having financial problems, working too many hours, lack of social activities, and regular duties were other factors that demotivate teachers. However, Erkaya (2012) revealed that the desire to be a teacher was on the top of the list of intrinsic motivational factors, which is also named automatically motivated. Students have the highest demotivating effect on teachers. Factors like; colleagues, work conditions, administration, classes, and play/benefit affect the motivation level of teachers. Participants of this study were eight EFL teachers from universities in Turkey. Data was collected from unstructured interviews. Research shows that motivating factors are divided into two intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Kızıltepe (2008) investigated the factors affecting Turkish university teachers' motivation and demotivation by using the mixed-method. The data were collected from 112 male and 188 female university teachers by asking two open-ended questions. This study

revealed that students have the greatest impact on university teachers' motivation. Results showed that there were some differences between male and female university teachers. Students have more affected demotivational factors on females. Kızıltepe (2008) categorized motivational factors into four, which were students, career, social status, and ideals. Demotivating factors are categorized into five, which are students, economics, structural and physical characteristics, research, and working condition.

Some studies in other contexts; Song and Kim (2014) investigated EFL teachers' motivation in South Korea. Participants were two experienced teachers; Anna and Bona. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews and background information profiles. Data was coded in two steps; first data was analyzed, then ordered and examined by using initial coding. Desire to teach and self-confidence were equal motivators for both participants. Research shows that talking with colleagues about classes was the most motivating factor for Anna. Non-active students and low English level of students were demotivating factors for Anna. For Bona, not being familiar with the school system was the most demotivating factor. However, Yaghoubinejad, Zarrinabadi, and Nejadansari (2016) revealed that absence of respect and high social status in society of teachers were the highest negative effect on teacher motivation Low salary was the second factor that affects teacher motivation negatively. According to Yaghoubinejad, Zarrinabadi, and Nejadansari (2016), the lack of parents' interest was the least demotivating factor on Iranian EFL teachers. In this study, data were collected from qualitative and quantitative research questions. Participants were 105 junior high school English teachers.

Addison and Brundrett (2008) investigated the motivation and demotivation of teachers in primary schools. Data was collected from six primary schools in England. Data collecting tools were questionnaires, diaries, and semi-structured interviews. The mixed-method was used. Research shows that motivators were; well-motivated, interested, or well-behaved students, supported by colleagues, and process of students' language learning. De-motivators were long work hours, too much workload, and non-interested children.

Koran (2015) investigated what factors motivate teachers to enter the teaching profession and intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate or demotivate teachers in Iraq. Data collected from a questionnaire, which consists of three parts; the first was biographical information second was yes/no questions and the third was open-ended questions. The mixed-method was used and participants were 37 English language teachers. The research revealed that having a good relationship with students was the most motivating factor for teachers. The other biggest motivator was students' process in learning a language.

Sugino (2010) investigated sources of demotivation of language teachers in Japan. Participants were 97 teachers, 52 of them were in the Defense Academy of Japan and 45 of them were in private and national universities. Five points Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data. Research findings categorized demotivating factors into four, which were students' attitude, classroom facilities, working conditions, and human relationships. As a students' attitude, using cell phones during the lesson was the most demotivating factor for teachers. Lack of consistency in curriculum, long working hours, and lack of appreciation from administrators were others de-motivator for teachers.

Hettiarachchi (2013) investigate factors that motivate and demotivate English language teachers in Sri Lanka. There were two different sources for collecting data the first was a qualitative interview and the second was a qualitative survey. Participants in the interviews were five English teachers and participants in the survey were 54 English teachers. All teachers work in public schools in Sri Lanka. Deductive qualitative content analysis was used in this study. Research cleared that students' performance and success have the greatest effect on teachers' motivation. According to the survey, limited facilities were the most demotivating factor for teachers. Overcrowded classes, school-based assessments, and colleagues who were not willing to work were the other factors that reduce teachers' motivational levels.

There are lots of factors that motivate and de-motivate EFL teachers. Kızıltepe (2008), Erkaya (2012), Addison and Brundrett (2008), Song and Kim (2014), and Koran (2015) found that students have the greatest negative motivational effect on teachers. Research of Barın, Han, and Sarı (2018) showed that self-motivation was the most motivational factor of teachers. Han and Mahcoun (2017) revealed that the most effective motivator was well-communicated teachers with administrations. Börü (2018) noted that being successful was the best way to motivate teachers. Yaghoubinejad, Zarrinabadi, and Nejadansari (2016) found out that lack of respect and social status have the highest de-motivational effect on teachers. Aydın (2012) revealed that lack of knowledge about teaching was the most demotivating factor for EFL teachers. All these research sorted motivational factors into two; internal and external factors.

## METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study was to understand demotivating factors of foreign EFL teachers by using profile information form, open-ended questions, and semi-structured interviews in a Turkish context. The current study aims to reveal and list demotivating factors of 4 foreign EFL teachers in a Turkish context.

### Participants

Samples were 4 foreign EFL teachers working at different private schools. While determining the samples of the study, convenience sampling methods were used. Teachers, more than two years of teaching experiment in Turkey participated in the study. All subjects are male. Subject A, C, and D have worked at primary schools. Subject B has worked at a secondary school. Subject A is American and his mother tongue is English. He held a TEFL certificate and he has worked in Turkey for two years. Subject B is Nigerian. His mother tongue is Igbo and he held a TESOL certificate. Subject B has also 15 years of teaching experiments but just 5 of them in Turkey. Subject C and D are Iranian. Subject C's mother tongue is Persian and he hasn't got any certificate. He has been in Turkey for 4 years and he has worked as a tutor. Subject D's mother tongues are Persian and English. He held a Tesol certificate and he has worked in Turkey for 4 years.

**Table 1.** Participants' Personal Information.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Male	Male	Male
<b>Age</b>	48	35	30	35
<b>Nationality</b>	American	Nigerian	Iranian	Iranian
<b>Mother Tongue</b>	English	Igbo	Persian	English & Persian
<b>Educational Degree</b>	Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S)	Chemical Engineer	Bachelor	Master Degree
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	2 ½ Years	15 years (5 in Turkey)	Tutoring	3 years in Iran
<b>Foreign Language</b>	German	Turkish	English	Arabic, Turkish, Indian, and Spanish

<b>Residence in Turkey</b>	Sivas	Sivas	Sivas	Sivas
<b>Teaching Certificate</b>	TEFL	Tesol	-	Tesol
<b>Experience in Turkey</b>	4½ years	5 years	4 years	4 years

### Data Collecting Procedure

The first step was to give brief information to participants about the research and they freely accepted to participate. Face-to-face interviews and WhatsApp were used to inform participants. After they accepted, the process of data collection started. Subjects A, B, and D accepted interviewing with the researcher but Subject C refused to interview because of his reasons. Subject C just answered open-ended questions. Data collecting tools were; profile information form, open-ended questions, and semi-structured interviews. Details of data collecting are given below.

Profile Information Form was used to collect personal information from participants to learn their gender, age, nationality, mother tongue, educational degree, teaching experiences, foreign language, residence, teaching certificates, and years that they have been in Turkey.

Open-ended questions were used to collect more detailed information about foreign EFL teachers. Face-to-face interviews and WhatsApp were used to ask open-ended questions to participants. The researcher asked the questions to Subject A, B, and D during interviews and sent questions on WhatsApp to Subject C. Open-ended questions had just one thought

Semi-structured interviews were the last stage of the data collection process. The researcher interviewed subjects A, B, and D. Before the interviews, demotivating factors among EFL teachers were listed in the light of the literature review. During the interview researcher asked participants' points of view on demotivating factors while they were commenting on demotivating factors, the researcher took notes.

All instruments were developed after doing a literature review. An advisor examined open-ended questions and profile information form and a native English teacher checked the grammar of the current paper. To provide internal validity peer examination was used and an advisor reviewed the synthesis of all data gathered. To provide external validity, the research methodology was fully described.

### Data Analysis

After asking few questions about their background, more specific questions were asked to the participants. In the light of the literature review, de-motivational factors of teachers were listed before interviews. During the interview, the researcher asked two open-ended questions to participants which were; "Which situations affect your motivation level negatively?" and "What is the most demotivating factor for you? And why?" Then researcher informed them of the other demotivating factors listed before and interviewers comment on them. Among the participants; students' bad attitudes, high expectation of parents, contents of course books, low salary, crowded classes, not being awarded, lack of discipline, long work hours, lack of communication with administrator and parents, and low process of students language learning were demotivating factors for native EFL teachers. By using the WhatsApp application the researcher sent a text to Subject C and asked him two open-ended questions after a while participant answered them and resend them to the researcher. Participants' points of view represent the data. Discourse and inferential data analyzing methods were used.

## Research Ethics

Before the investigation, all needed permissions were given by Ordu University Ethics Committee (no: 2020-67). Participants were informed in detail and they freely accepted to participate. Identity information of participants was reserved. The research's method, data collecting tools, participants, and data analysis were described in detail. This research includes no non-existed findings. All citations and references were designed based on APA 7. This study was conducted with two researchers and one who did not contribute to the study, was not added.

## FINDINGS

In this current study, the researcher conducted three participants to reveal demotivating factors. Findings showed that students' bad attitudes (dancing, walking, and shouting) in classrooms, unsuitable content of students' course book, high expectation of parents, the low process of student's language learning, lack of communication with colleagues, not being awarded by administrators, low salary, overcrowded classrooms, long workhours, much duties, living conditions, students' unwillingness to learn English, and disrespectful behaviors towards native EFL teachers.

Students' unwillingness to learn English is one of the demotivating factors among EFL teachers. Participants expressed that students pay more attention to other lessons than English, so teachers have to show extra effort for teaching this situation demotivates them. Subject A mentioned that unwillingness may source from proficiency in which students live.

Subject A: "In Sivas, it is not easy to teach English because students do not have to use English outside and they do not realize the importance of learning English so they do not pay attention to my lessons"

Another demotivating factor participants mentioned was low salary. Sometimes they compare their salaries with other foreign EFL teachers. If they have a much lower salary than their colleagues, it demotivates them.

Subject A: "I compare my salary with teachers work in other companies. When I heard they have a higher salary than me I feel bad"

Subject B: "I came to Tukey to earn lots of money as a foreigner if I have a low salary, it demotivates me"

Subject D: "If I were a Turkish citizen I would have more opportunities. I could take a loan from a bank or I could buy a house in Sivas"

The unsuitable content of students' coursebooks is also a demotivating factor for foreign EFL teachers. Students encounter so many abstract concepts in the coursebooks and for primary students, it is hard to explain them.

Subject A: "Course books are not suitable for students sometimes I have a hard time explaining some vocabulary. Students do not know what they exactly mean in Turkish but I try to explain it in English"

Subject D: "It is hard to understand the coursebooks because they were designed for native English learners"

School administrators have negative effects on foreign EFL teachers. Participants emphasized that school administrators should ensure discipline on students otherwise foreign EFL teachers may face many problems.

Subject B: "It is really hard for me to make them quiet. They stand up during my lesson and start walking dancing and shouting. If there is not enough discipline it causes chaos"

Subject D: "School administrator hold foreign EFL teachers all responsibility for students' language learning. I don't have a change but working in this company so there is too much pressure on me"

Participants expressed that the more students there are in classrooms, the more responsibilities teachers have. They have to satisfy parents' and school administrators' expectations but crowded classrooms reduce the possibility of analyzing students' errors to increase and satisfy parents' and school administrators' expectations.

Subject B: "Overcrowded classes are problems. I don't have enough time to speak to each of the students"

Subject A "If I see no process, it demotivates me"

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study was to contribute to the literature on demotivating factors of foreign EFL teachers. To reveal demotivating factors we used different data collecting tools (background information papers, interviews, and open-ended questions). Low salary is in agreement with Han and Mahzoun (2017) and Yaghoubinejad, Zarrinabadi, and Nejadansari (2016). Living conditions and long work hours were in agreement with Han and Mahzoun (2017). Lack of communication with colleagues is in agreement with Aydın (2012), Erkaya (2012), and Han and Mahzoun (2017). The low process of students' language learning is in agreement with Addison and Brundrett (2008), Koran (2015). High expectations of parents and duties were in agreement with Aydın (2012). Not being awarded agreed with Sugino (2010). Crowded classrooms were in agreement with Hettiarachchi (2013). Students' bad attitudes (dancing, walking, shouting in the classroom) were in agreement with Addison and Brundrett (2008), Aydın (2012), Erkaya (2012), Hettiarachchi(2013), Kızıltepe (2008), Song and Kim (2014), and Sugino(2010).

Outcomes of investigations show that students' bad attitudes (dancing, walking, shouting into classrooms) are the most demotivating factors among participants. School administrators should design an orientation program to inform foreign EFL teachers about students' profiles before each semester therefore foreign EFL teachers can reduce their expectations. School administrators also let them design or choose their materials. School administrators and colleagues (Local English Teachers) should encourage and support them to communicate with parents and also foreign EFL teachers' salaries should be satisfactorily adjusted by school administrators.

The research was limited to four participants in a city of Turkey and just qualitative data collection was used. Participants did not accept voice records during interviews so taken notes and open-ended questions were used to analyze data. Another limitation of this study is the low number of research on foreign EFL teachers' demotivating factors in literature so results cannot be generalized. It is believed that larger sampling and different data collecting tools can generalize this issue.

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