

A Qualitative Study on Increasing and Decreasing Factors of the School Principals' Motivation

Emek Özden

Gülşen Yılmaz

This study aims to figure out the situational factors that increase and decrease the motivation of school principals while they are carrying out their duties. Qualitative research method is used and it is designed in phenomenology model according to the nature of the study. Ten participants who work as school principals in primary and secondary schools in Ankara were selected by criterion sampling among the purposive sampling method. Results were obtained by using semi-structured interview technique including open-ended questions. At the end of the study, It is found that "private life" decrease the motivation of school principals and high "burnout" level affects their intrinsic motivation negatively. In addition, information and complaint-line "Alo 147" and "financial difficulties" are internal factors that decrease the motivation of school principals. On the top of the internal factors that increase the motivation of school principals comes "loving kids" and on the top of the external factors comes "student achievement", "to be appreciated" and "dedicated teacher" .

Keywords: School principal, motivation, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation

Schools have training responsibility in accessing information and using information appropriately. School administrators, without a doubt, have the most crucial role in this responsibility (Bensghir, 1996) and a significant effect on individuals especially on teachers and students (Şişman, 2004: 29). Initiating and perpetuating events in schools are responsibilities of school administrators. (Akçay, 2003). Therefore, managing school is an exhausting job as school administrators work for long hours which is unbearable physically (Chung & Miskel, 1989). The works of a school administrator will have results related with motivation. The thing to do is making these results better. The first step is understanding the psychology of the work; trying to understand what motivates people. Certainly, well-motivated people are more successful than unmotivated ones (Forsyth, 2006:7-18). Motivation is the intensity of effort, direction, stability (Mitchell, 1997), leading force (Hagemann, 1997:37) towards achieving a goal and can be defined as the summary of all events that inspired people (Adair, 1996: 19). In management science literature, motivation is defined as the willingness of an individual striving to achieve the objectives of the organization in demonstrating this effort with the conditioning that as a result of this effort he can satisfy his needs (Decenzo & Robbins, 1996: 296-297).

Motivation is a group of energetic power results from internal and external features of the individual (Hoy & Miskel, 2005: 381). For this reason, studies in the field of motivation are considered in two categories as "intrinsic motivation" and "extrinsic motivation". With intrinsic motivation, identification of motivation and conditions in internal structure of motivation are studied and it is focused on mechanism of goal oriented action. The extrinsic motivation is referred to the use of motivation as reinforcement mechanism, observing changes based on reward and punishment system and generating possible solutions to change behaviours (Önen & Tüzün, 2005: 12).

Researchers reveal that there is a positive relationship between efficiency and success; motivation increased the success highly (Aydın, 2000; Başaran, 2004: 271; Erdoğan, 1994; Özdemir & Muradova, 2008). Motivation items play a key role in the selection of the action and description of the degree of success (Hoy & Miskel, 2005: 381). The school principal is the key person in ensuring the success of all events in the school (Strong, 1997:50).

However, the answers to questions such as what and who motivates managers are not studied much in comparison with the managed. The phenomenon of motivation should be evaluated just as "two-way like communication". Because the main factor in productivity is the human being (Şahin, 2003). This research is regarded as significant due to the fact that it will shed light to the behaviors in professional experiences of the school principals having an important place in the educational system and increase the sensitivity about the subject.

The aim of this study is to figure out the situation that increase and decrease the motivation of school principals while they are carrying out their duties. In order to achieve this goal, the study tries to find out the internal and external factors that decrease and increase the motivation of school principals.

METHODOLOGY

Research Model

In this study, it is tried to find out the conditions that increase and decrease school administrators' motivation. To analyse these conditions deeply, qualitative research method (Patton, 2002; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008; Silverman, 2009; Punch, 2009; Bernard and Ryan, 2009) and phenomenology model, appropriate to the nature of the study, were used. In this model, the focus is the phenomena that we are aware of but we don't have deep understanding. It paves a way for investigating cases that are not only fully unfamiliar to us but also we can't comprehend completely (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008: 72).

Participants

Participants consist of 10 school principals working in Ankara city center in 2012-2013 education year. In phenomenological studies, it is suggested that the number of participants shouldn't excess ten in order to interpret the case deeply (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008: 74). For this reason, the number of the participants to be interviewed is limited to ten principals. In this study, criterion sampling, among the purposive sampling (Punch, 2009), was used. Main principle of this sampling is studying all the cases meeting several pre-determined criteria. Herein, the mentioned criterion and criteria can be determined by the researcher or a pre-determined criteria list can be used by the researcher (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008:112). A criteria list is made up by the researcher before determining the participants. In accordance with the privacy policy, a nickname is given to each each principal (eg. P1, P2, P3...). The data related to school principals are shown in Table 1.

Data Collection

In this study, semi-structured interview technique consisting of open-ended questions is used to figure out the conditions increasing or decreasing school principals' motivations. Semi-structured interview technique is more flexible than the structured interview technique. Here, the interviewer prepares the interview protocol including questions which will be asked in advance. Besides, researcher can influence the flow of the interview via sub-questions and also triggers elaborated answers (Türnüklü, 2000). Before preparing the interview questions, related literature is analyzed (Mitchell, 1997; Şahin, 2003; Yıldırım, 2008; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008; Bernard & Ryan, 2009; Yıldırım, 2001). The questions in the interview form; What are the internal factors that decrease your motivation while doing working? What are the external factors that decrease your motivation while working? What are the internal factors that increase your motivation while working? What are the external factors that increase your motivation while working? In order to determine the underlying causes of the participants' answers, interview questions are rearranged during the interview. Every opinion expressed by the participants is discussed in detail.

Data related to research were collected from school principals between 1st and 25th December by interviewing. In order to prevent data loss, recorder was used during the interviews. Participants were informed about the recording. Information on the study was given during the interview. During the meeting, four participants stated that they will express their opinions by writing. Upon that, explanations on the relevant form were done, they were given to participants. No unconformity was determined between the ones who express their views in writing and those who express verbally.

In the study, the researcher chatted with the participants before the interviews. By the researcher, a healthy environment based on trust and empathy was tried to make in order for participants to express their opinion freely and reflect their feelings comfortably. Participants were informed that their personal and professional information would be kept secret, their ideas and suggestions would be used by giving nickname. In order to increase the reliability of the study, social environments and the processes in the research process were described. All processes were given in detail.

Table 1

Information about the participants

Participant	Demographic Features	<i>n</i>
	<i>Type of school</i>	
	Primary school	6
	Secondary school	4
	<i>Teaching Branch</i>	
	Primary School Teacher	6
	Branch teacher	4
	<i>Terms of Office</i>	
	1-9 years	1
	10-19 years	7
	20 years and over	2

Data Analysis

Content analysis method was used in this study. Content analysis, is defined as the process of summarizing and specifying main contents of the available written information and included messages (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The study is done to determine the presence of certain words or concepts in a cluster consisting of the text or texts (Büyüköztürk, Lighter, Ahmed, Black & Demirel, 2008).

In the analysis process, the participants are given nickname (eg K1, K2, ...). The reason why computer package program wasn't preferred is that such programmes make a selection on the basis of just words and are insufficient for meaning to be told. Without delay, the notes about interviews converted to plain text and data set is made. Data set is read more than once, then analyzed in content. After this stage, data is arranged, grouped according to the codes and presented turning them into digital data when it is appropriate. Finally, the findings are interpreted. In order to ensure the validity of the research, from the preparation for data collection tool to implementation and analysis step, research process is explained in detail.

Findings

The answers to the questions of the participants are presented under the headings separately.

What are the internal factors that reduce your motivation while working?

As it is shown in Table 2, the circumstances that reduce the motivation of school principals are examined and it is found that there are five internal factors. These are the private life ($f = 4$), burnout ($f = 4$), the pressure of responsibility ($f = 2$), impatience ($f = 1$) and stress ($f = 1$). When Table 2 is analyzed, it is seen that most of the school principals stated that their private life especially family problems and the feeling of burnout about their job have negative effects on their work.

Table 2

The Internal Factors that Reduce the Motivation of School Principals

Participants	The internal factors that reduce motivation	F
P6, P7, P 9 ,P 10	The effect of private life	4
P 2, P 4, P5, P 8	Burnout	4
P 9, P 1	Responsibility pressure	2
P 3	Impatience	1
P 8	Stress	1

Some of the participants responded to this question as follows: *"If I have a trouble or I am unhappy because of the problems at home, It will, of course, affect my work at school."* (P 6), *"I do not want*

to come to school. I am exhausted because of the heavy work load and I think to resing everyday before coming to school." (P 5), *"It takes time to get result of our work. For example, a certain time is needed in order to increase students' achievement levels, but sometimesI can not wait that I want to see results as soon as possible. This has negative impact on my motivation"* (P 3)

What are the external factors that reduce your motivation while working?

As it is shown in Table 3, the circumstances that reduce the motivation of school principals are examined and it is found that there are eight external factors. These are Alo 147 (f = 4), financial difficulties (f = 3), the dissonance between law and practice (f = 2), inconsistency in the institution (f = 2), not being appreciated (f = 2), teachers' attitude (f = 1), oppressive form of politics (f = 1). As can be seen in Table 3, school principals reported that especially the complaints of parents by calling Alo 147 decrease their motivation. The limitations coming from financial impossibilities of schools are reported as another important factor that has negative impact on school principals' motivation.

Table 3

The external factors that reduce motivation of school principals

Participants	The external factors that reduce motivation	f
P 3, P 6, P 7, P 10	Alo 147	4
P 1, P 3, P 5	Financial difficulties	3
P 2 , P 7	Dissonance between law and practice	2
P 3, P 5	Inconsistency in the institution	2
P 4, P 6	Not being apreciated	2
P 8, P 9	Inconsistent with the law of the application	2
P 5	Teachers' attitudes	1
P 9	The oppressive form of politics	1

Some of the participants responded to this question as follows. *"As a result of unnecessarily Alo 147 line calls from parents, we are always questioned by the higher authority. It bothers me a lot. It is the biggest factor that reduces my motivation for my work."* (P 7), *"There are many shortcomings when it comes to the physical conditions of our school. There should be financial resources to provide better educational environment for our students. I can not do the things I want to do about our school as we lack of enough budget and it reduces my motivation."* (P 1), *"I see that there is a huge disconnect between administrators and teachers in our school and it influences me in a negative way."* (P 3), *" I think that I work too much, but none of them seen by higher authority. The higher authority only comes to school to inspect us. This situation often affects my motivation in a negative way."* (P 6), *"Teachers for some reason, tend to take dim view of managers, it makes me sad."* (P 5).

What are the internal factors that increase your motivation while working ?

As it is shown in Table 4, the circumstances that increase the motivation of school principals are examined and it is found that there are six internal factors. These are; loving kids (f = 7), the love of service (f = 3), the feeling of accomplishment (f = 3), job satisfaction (f = 1), job excitement (f = 1). As can be seen in Table 4, the largest internal factors that increase the motivation of school principals were found to be the love of students. In addition to this, the good feeling of serving the others and the feeling of success are the other main factors that motivate the school principals as internal factors.

Table 4

The internal factors that increase motivation of school principals

Participants	The internal factors that increase motivation	f
P 2, P 3, P 6, P 8, P 4, P 9, P 7	Loving kids	7
P 2, P 7, P 9	Love of service	3
P 1, P 5, P 6	A sense of accomplishment	3
P 1	Job satisfaction	1
P 10	Career excitement	1
P 10	Small things to be happy	1

Some of the participants responded to this question as follows: *"The most important factor for doing this job is loving children, If you don't love children you can't stand this job even one day."* (P 8), *"Doing something for teachers, students and parents makes me happy and motivates me."* (P 7), *"When our students accomplish something, I feel that I have accomplished the same thing too. Seeing the successful results of my work always increases my motivation."*(P 1), *"Regardless of many difficulties, to be in an important position and seeing the successful results of my works increase my motivation."* (P 1), *"While managing the school, even little things make you happy. For example, when you have solved a small problem of a student, the feeling of success is able to motivate you. Because of these, I feel excited before I am coming to school every day."* (P 10).

What are the external factors that increase your motivation while working?

As it is shown in Table 5, the circumstances that increase the motivation of school principals are examined and it is found that there are seven external factors. These are; student achievement (f = 6), to being appreciated (f = 6), dedicated teachers (f = 6), harmonious working environment (f = 4), equipped with the physical structure of the school (f = 3), parent support (F = 3), changing the location / place (f = 1). As can be seen in Table 5, the largest external factor that increase the motivation of school principals is the student achievement. In addition to this, to being appreciated, harmonious working environment, equipped with the physical structure of the school and parents support are the other major motivating factors.

Table 5

The external factors that increase motivation of school principals

Participant	The external factors that increase motivation	f
P 1, P 2, P 3, P 7, P 8, P 10	Student achievement	6
P 3, P 4, P 5, P 6 P 7, P 9	To being appreciated	6
P 2, P5, P4, P6, P 7, P 8	Devoted teacher	6
P 1, P 4, P 7, P 10	Harmonious working environment	4
P 5, P8, P 9, P 10	Equipped with the physical structure of the school	3
P 2, P 6, P8	Parent support	3
P 8	Changing the place	1

Some of the participants responded to this question as follows: *"To see that my students are in good positions motivates me."* (P 3), *"If we do the right things or the things right in our job, to be respected by no matter who encourages a lot."* (P 6), *"The dialogue between school principals and teachers is very important at school. I enjoy coming to school when there are positive relationships with the staff and management itself."* (P 4), *"If the school is equipped physically well and If there is a little deficiencies in our school, not only will the success increase in that school but also it will surely affect the administration in a positive way that the principal can be channeled more comfortably for other stuff for school"* (P 9), *"Seeing happy and smiling parents is enough to make*

me happy for coming to school." (P 2), "As an assigned school manager to a new school, to meet new people and work with them excite me." (P 8).

Result

At the end of the study, as an external factor which decrease motivation, the effect of private life of the school principals were much higher. Koçak and Çelik (2009) shows that private life has important effect on school principals' work, too. Another factor that can reduce the motivation of school principals is burnout. Izgar (2001:69-70) has reported that one of the factors that affect mental health of school principals is burnout which is inversely proportional with the job satisfaction. In line with this finding, Altay (2009) observed in her study that there is high burnout rate among the school principals, too. However, Koçak and Çelik (2009) have found in their study that there is lower levels of burnout than expected between school principals. One of the major factors that reduce the school administrators' motivation is Alo 147 (ME, 2011) call line which is established to solve problems about school effectively and quickly by the ministry of education. School principals were reported that especially those complaints made by parents reduced their efficiency and motivation. Another important factor in reducing the motivation of school principals is revealed that financial difficulties. Yıldırım (2011) in his study claims that the most important external factor that reduce the school administrators' motivation is financial difficulties, too.

The majority of school principals were reported that the most important factor in increasing their intrinsic motivation is the love of students and Yıldırım (2011) was pointed in his study that in line with this outcome.

The student success is coming first among the external factors that increase school administrators. As the school exists for the students, student achievement can be seen as a direct external factor that motivate school administrators. As a manager, to be appreciated by the top of the authority, the teachers or the parents is another element that motivates school administrators. Yıldırım (2011) claims that, regarding to their activities, school administrators' most motivating factors are being appreciated and admired. Other motivating factor of school administrators are devoted teachers and teachers' high motivation about their job.

School administrators emphasized that the deficiencies in the physical structure of the school reduced their motivation and the good physical conditions of school lead to an increase of their motivation. Şahin (2003) in his study revealed that with the healing of physical conditions of the school, there is a certain amount of increase in motivation of school administrators.

This study shows that moral incentives such as being appreciated or students success are more important for the school principals than material incentives. None of the participants mentioned about material incentives for motivation factor. Like this result, Ozturk and Dundar (2003) reported that moral incentives are more effective on increasing motivation for employees than material incentives.

Suggestions

The results obtained in this study, can contribute to the preparation of training programs for school administrators to increase the intrinsic motivation. Programmes related to the preparation of school principals of this kind can be utilized to increase motivation.

In the future studies, the motivation words that have emerged in this study can be used as a resource for researchers who prepares in a Likert-type scale.

In this study, to reveal the motivational factors for school administrators interview method was applied. In future studies, the interview method can also be supported by survey method.

In future studies, the research will take place with the participation of private school administrators can be made.

References

- Adair, J. (1996). *Effective Motivation. How to Get Extraordinary Results from Everyone*. London: Pan.
- Akçay, A. (2003). Okul müdürleri öğretmenleri etkileyebiliyor mu?. *Milli Eğitim Dergisi*, Sayı 157, Web: www.meb.gov.tr adresinden 11.12.2012’de alınmıştır.
- Aydın, M. (2000). *Eğitim Yönetimi*, Ankara: Hatiboğlu Yayınevi.
- Başol, G. ve Altay, M. (2009). Eğitim yöneticisi ve öğretmenlerinin mesleki tükenmişlik düzeylerinin incelenmesi. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 15(58),191-216.
- Başaran, İ.E. (2004). *Yönetimde insan ilişkileri*. Ankara: Nobel.
- Bensghir, T. K. (1996). *Bilgi teknolojileri ve örgütsel değişim*. Ankara: TODAİE.
- Bernard, R.H. and Ryan, G. W.(2009). *Analyzing qualitative data*. Thousands Oaks: Sage Publications
- Büyüköztürk, Ş., Kılıç-Çakmak, E., Akgün, Ö. E., Karadeniz, Ş. ve Demirel, F. (2008). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Pegem.
- Chung, K.A. and Miskel, C. (1989). A comparative study of principals’ administrative behavior. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 27, 45-57.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Çetinkanat, C. (2000). *Örgütlerde Güdülenme ve İş Doyumu*. Ankara: Anı.
- Decenzo, D.A. and Robbins, S.P. (1996). *Human Resource Management* (5. Ed.). USA: Von Hoffman press.
- Erdoğan, İ. (1994). *İşletmelerde Davranış*. İstanbul: Beta
- Forsyth, P. (2006). *Yaratıcı Motivasyon Teknikleri* (D. Demiray, çev.). İstanbul: Kaizen. (Eserin orijinali 2000’de yayımlandı)
- Güçlü, N. (1997). Eğitim lideri olarak okul yöneticisi. *Milli Eğitim Dergisi*, 135, 50-54.
- Hagemann, G. (1997). *Motivasyon El Kitabı* (2. basım). İstanbul: Rota.
- Hoy, W.K. and Miskel, C.G. (2005). *Educational Administration; Theory, Research and Practice* (7th ed.). New York: Mc-Graw-Hill.
- Izgar, H. (2001). *Okul yöneticilerinde tükenmişlik*. Ankara: Nobel.
- Karatepe, S. (2005). *Örgütlerde iletişim-güdüleme ilişkisi*. Ankara: SiyasalKitabevi.
- Kinman, G. and Kinman, R. (2001). The role of motivation to learn in management education. *The Journal of Workplace Learning*, 13(4), 132-144.
- Koçak, R. Ve Çelik, C.K. (2009). Okul yöneticilerinin mesleki tükenmişlikleri ile evlilik doyumları arasındaki ilişkinin çeşitli değişkenler açısından incelenmesi. *Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Dergisi*, 4(31), 52-60.
- Mitchell, T. R. (1997). Matching motivational strategies with organizational contexts. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 19, 57–94.
- Önen, L. ve Tüzün, B. (2005). *Motivasyon*. İstanbul: Epsilon.
- Özbek, S. (1998). *İlköğretim öğretmenlerinin okul müdürlerinin iletişim ve motivasyon becerilerine ilişkin algı ve beklentileri* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İzmir.
- Özdemir, S. ve Muradova, T. (2008). Örgütlerde Motivasyon ve Verimlilik İlişkisi. *Journal of Qafqaz University*, s. 146-153.
- Öztürk, Z. ve DüNDAR, H. (2003). Örgütsel motivasyon ve kamu çalışanlarını motive eden faktörler. *C.Ü. İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, 4(2)....
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousands Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Punch, K. F. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. Thousands Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Silverman, D.(2009). *Doing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousands Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Şahin, A. (2003). Yöneticilerin iş tatmini ve iş memnuniyeti. *Selçuk Üniversitesi İktisadi İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Sosyal ve Ekonomik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 1(5), 137-157.
- Şişman, M. (2004). *Öğretim Liderliği* (2. basım). Ankara: PegemA
- Tevrüz, S. (1999). *Davranışlarımızdan Seçmeler*. İstanbul: Beta.
- Türnüklü, A.(2000). Eğitimbilim araştırmalarında etkin olarak kullanılabilecek nitel bir araştırma tekniği: Görüşme. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi Dergisi*, 6(24),543-559.
- Ünal, S. (1997). İlköğretim Okulu Yöneticilerinin Okullarında Motivasyonu Sağlama Etkinlikleri.Web:http://pau.egitimdergi.pau.edu.tr/Makaleler/1666200657_15-%c4%b0LK%c3%96%c4%9eRET%c4%b0M%20%20OKULU%20%20Y%c3%96NET%c4%b0C%c4%b0LER%c4%b0N%c4%b0N%20%20OKULLARINDA%20%20MOT%c4%b0VA%e2%80%a6.pdf.
- Yıldırım, A. ve Şimşek, H. (2008). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri* (6. basım). Ankara: Seçkin.
- Yıldırım, N. (2008). İlköğretim okulu müdürlerinin öğretmenleri güdüleme düzeylerine ilişkin öğretmenlerin ve okul müdürlerinin görüşleri. *Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 6(2), 132-140.
- Yıldırım, N. (2011). Okul müdürlerinin motivasyonları üzerine nitel bir inceleme. *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 11(1), 71-85.